DIVERSITY, IDENTITY AND EDUCATION: SOME PRINCIPLES AN DILEMMAS

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It is a pleasure to be invited to take part in this international conference on Philosophy of Education with the theme of 'Diversity and Identity'. It is a particular pleasure to meet the Portuguese Philosophy of Education community and to engage in debate about the theme of the conference and other matters of mutual interest. International exchanges of these kinds in our subject are especially timely and important. This is particularly true when different philosophical traditions, styles of argument and methods of approach are involved, with their related demands of careful and sensitive dialogue.

Before proceeding to the topic of this paper, I shall offer as a contribution to this dialogue some general reactions to some of the kinds of arguments which I have witnessed at the conference, and to the debates which have taken place. I am not sure whether these arguments and debates are typical of, or characteristic of, Portuguese Philosophy of Education in general. Whether or not this is so, however, I trust that my remarks will further the cause of the dialogue to which I have referred.

Differing Philosophical Traditions, Styles of Argument and Methods of Approach

In terms of philosophical tradition, style of argument and method of approach, many of the arguments and debates I have encountered at the conference seem unfamiliar to philosophers of education working from the approach of analytical philosophy, which, whilst it has not been the only approach to the subject in the English speaking world,[1] has been a very influential, and even dominant, one. The unfamiliarity here can be illustrated by reference to three general features of argument and debate at the conference which have attracted my attention.

First, many of the arguments and debates have been couched at a very high level of generality. An example of this is the statement 'diversity is a condition of identity' which was made at one of the recent sessions by a presenter. Philosophers of education working within the analytic tradition are inclined to react to a statement such as this by first asking what the statement *means* and then by engaging in argumentation to determine the extent to which the statement is *justified.* A concern with questions of meaning and justification are central to the analytic approach to philosophy.

As it stands, the statement 'diversity is a condition of identity' lacks clear meaning. How, for example, should 'diversity' be understood? Which matters are seen as the objects of this 'diversity' and what is the extent of the 'diversity' envisaged? In addition to, and partly as a consequence of, uncertainty about the meaning of the statement, the justification of the statement is similarly uncertain. As a general statement without further illumination or qualification, 'diversity is a condition of identity' is certainly unjustified, or false. One can readily think of counterexamples to the claim. For example, identity formation can be inhibited by too much diversity in, say, upbringing. A child who is subjected to an unduly wide and conflicting range of values, beliefs, practices and expectations is unlikely to experience the 'cultural coherence' which is a necessary ingredient in an upbringing likely to bring about autonomy and other desirable personal qualities and achievements.[2]

The analytical approach to philosophy of education is therefore suspicious of unduly general statements and claims. It seeks a more fine-grained and detailed argument and debate in which attention to questions of meaning and justification act as an antidote to undue generality. The analytical approach to philosophy of education also tends to begin its work not from general statements or theories but from specific questions and problems. It is therefore opposed to the view expressed by one contributor to the conference that in philosophy of education we must 'begin from the general'.

These considerations lead to the second feature of argument and debate at the conference which has attracted my attention. This is the tendency for arguments and debates to begin from discussions of the work of philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant and Hegel and then to proceed to more directly educational questions, often through a kind of 'application' of the insights of such thinkers to these questions. The analytical tradition in philosophy of education tends to approach things the other way around; to begin with the directly educational questions and to seek their appropriate illumination from the resources of broader philosophical argument. One reaction to this approach is to object that the 'directly educational questions' addressed in this approach are likely to be unduly low-level or practical in nature. The analytical approach, however, is concerned with educational questions which have a clear philosophical dimension or resonance. Examples of such questions include: 'What principles should govern the handling of significantly controversial moral issues in the common schools of a liberal democratic society?' and 'Do the demands of education in religion in a liberal democratic society favour a plurality of different kinds of school, some basing their educative influence on the religious faith of the family?' These questions are not, of course, wholly or exclusively philosophical. They do, however, have clear philosophical dimensions and implications. Whilst philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant and Hegel may well have a contribution to make to an illumination of these dimensions and implications, the analytical approach to philosophy of education tends to seek this illumination from a prior direct consideration of the questions themselves. As David Carr has pointed out in his contribution to this conference, the analytic tradition does not attempt to *reduce* philosophy of education to these smaller questions. What is at issue is a question of an appropriate starting point.

The third feature of argument and debate at the conference which has attracted my attention relates to other wide ranging issues of style and method. The preoccupation of the analytic approach to philosophy of education with questions of meaning and justification has already been mentioned. This preoccupation leads to an emphasis by this approach upon a form of argumention which emphasises *inter alia* the clarification and analysis of concepts, premises and assumptions, the consideration of counter-examples, the detection and elimination of defects of reasoning of various kinds, the drawing of important distinctions, a concern to identify and address strictly philosophical considerations rather than those of other kinds, a particular spirit of criticism and the structured development of an argument leading to the establishment of clear conclusions which aim to be (in some sense) true, interesting and important. Central to the analytic tradition is an exploration of the conceptual schemes embedded in our everyday language in a form of analysis which is 'connective' in the sense that it examines the philosophically interesting connections and relationships between concepts. This does not, of course, imply that philosophers of education in the analytic tradition are interested only in language. What is at stake are our understandings, beliefs and values and these have clear significance for human life generally.

These remarks about the style and method of the analytic tradition in philosophy of education constitute, of course, only a brief sketch of some salient features. Much more needs to be said in illumination of them.[3]

The style and method of many of the contributions to the conference differ from that characteristic of the analytic tradition in philosophy of education. This makes sensitive and engaged dialogue important, despite difficulties. One requirement for this dialogue is for those who work in the analytic tradition to acknowledge the possible shortcomings and limitations of this tradition, which has not lacked critics of various kinds.[4] Part of the process of achieving a judicious understanding of the analytic tradition is a need to avoid some characteristic misunderstandings of it, and to acknowledge clarifications and re-statements of the tradition in the light of these misunderstandings. David Carr, for example, has, in his contribution to the conference, defended the tradition against claims that it is positivistic. His rejection of the claim that it is reductive because it reduces philosophy to a preoccupation with small-scale questions has already been mentioned.

Turning now from these preliminary reflections about differences in philosophical traditions, styles of argument and methods of approach, what does the analytic approach to these matters have to say about the particular theme of the conference: Diversity, Identity and Education?

My paper has three sections. First, I offer a clarification and analysis of central concepts and issues. Second, I turn to an examination of relevant principles, and, third, I indicate a number of dilemmas which emerge. It should be remembered, of course, that the matters under discussion cannot be fully understood solely in philosophical terms. Complex political, social, cultural and demographic considerations, amongst others, require attention in any attempt at a fuller understanding.

Diversity, Identity and Education: Concepts and Issues

I shall look in turn at each of the notions diversity, identity and education.

(a) Diversity

Here five points are worthy of mention. First, diversity (or difference) can arise in relation to many different things, including *inter alia* differences relating to the physical world (eg climate, terrain and the like), to the constitution of human beings (eg health, aptitude and ability) and to aspects of human culture (eg language, values and political structures). Many differences are not morally or educationally significant. We are interested not in diversity or difference as such, but in the sorts of diversity which *matter* morally and educationally.

Second, diversity or difference (including that which is of moral and educational significance) is not *ipso facto* a good thing. It is incoherent to 'welcome' diversity or difference *per se.* Some differences are immoral, harmful or problematic. The student who expresses allegiance to a neo-nazi party, or who becomes addicted to hard drugs is, after all, different. Differences can therefore invite clear-cut moral criticism, or at least regret. Even differences which are more clearly within the moral pale need to have their value clearly articulated. For example, it cannot be merely assumed without further argument that a liberal, pluralist society is a good thing. The evaluative work here cannot be done by merely appealing to the fact that we live in such a society. It is possible for a person to accept that, as a matter of fact, we live in a society which contains a good deal of diversity of various kinds but to go on to express sorrow or even anger at this state of affairs. The respects in which diversity and difference ought to be valued in some way therefore requires careful consideration. The central questions here are: in relation to which matters are diversity and difference seen as valuable, and for what reasons?

Third, the answer to these questions is intimately associated with the notion of pluralism[5] which has at its heart precisely the notion of valuing diversity and difference and an aversion to strategies of domination and assimilation in relation to them. However, the nature and extent of the valuing of diversity and difference seen as required, the grounds on which diversity and difference are valued and the kinds of diversity and difference which are thought worthy of value are all by no means clear cut. The nature and extent of valuing of diversity and difference can be roughly plotted on a continuum from mere toleration on the one hand through to a more full blooded welcome and encouragement (as in forms of 'celebratory pluralism') on the other. The grounds on which diversity and difference are valued can range from merely utilitarian ones to grounds of an epistemological and moral kind on the other. Epistemological grounds invoke considerations about the value of diversity in extending our knowledge and understanding, whilst (related) moral grounds appeal to considerations involving justice and rights in relation to matters of legitimate difference. It is clear that the kinds of difference which are candidates for valuing (in whatever sense) are of certain specific kinds. One kind of difference here is related to issues which are regarded as 'significantly controversial' in that they are rooted in deep seated and well grounded disagreements of an epistemological and ethical kind. Another kind of difference is seen as worthy of value because of its relationship to matters which are importantly identity-constitutive or significant for individuals or cultural sub-groups.

Fourth, it is important to note that, despite its emphasis upon diversity and difference, pluralism requires a parallel emphasis upon matters of commonality. Without common values, ideals and procedures, a pluralist society would not only disintegrate but would also lack, amongst other things, freedom, equality and tolerance: values essential to the very idea of pluralism itself, as well as to democracy. A pluralist society involves a balance of unifying and diversifying elements. The unifying elements involve a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures. On the political side, they are embodied in a common political and legal system and fundamental democratic commitments, such as those relating to freedom, justice and equality. Further, it has been strongly argued by Harvey Siegel, amongst others, that these kinds of commitments are incompatible with an epistemological stance such as relativism which gives too much room to diversity.[6] Considerations of these kinds provide further illustration of the point that pluralism and unrestricted diversity are incompatible with each other. Common values, ideals and procedures of the sort which have been indicated limit, and make possible the coherent valuing of, diversity.

Fifth, discussions of diversity and difference, and of pluralism, are typically situated within the context of a liberal democratic society. This conception of society needs therefore to be brought into focus if issues relating to diversity and difference are to be properly illuminated.

(b) Identity

Matters of identity arise in relation to a number of different things, including nations, organisations, sub-groupings and so on. Here attention will be focused upon the notion of the identity of persons. Leaving aside matters of considerable complexity,[7] three points can be usefully made about personal identity.

First, the self-awareness which is at the heart of personal identity is composed of many different ingredients both 'external' and 'internal' to the person. These include culture in its multifarious and wide ranging aspects, personal circumstance and experience, individual temperament, capacity and character, and beliefs and values. At the heart of personal identity is the attempt on the part of the person to achieve a unity of purpose and outlook in which the notions of 'harmony', 'integration' and 'wholeness' are prominent.[8]

Second, there is a clear link between identity and personal well being in that an adequate sense of personal identity is a central element in flourishing personhood in general and in the achievement of particular elements of well being such as self-esteem, self-respect and personal autonomy.

Third, the phenomenon of diversity is clearly related in a significant way to personal identity. One reason for this is seen in Charles Taylor's argument that, in the circumstances of modernity, individual identity is no longer shaped by fixed social hierarchies or by societally dictated values and roles. These are now often fragmented, diverse and disputed. Each individual must therefore, at least to a significant extent, shape his or her identity personally in the face of this diversity, through an exercise of authentic self-determination. One of the conditions required for this process on the part of the person is appropriate forms of recognition by others which can be frustrated by inadequate recognition of forms of diversity which are identity-constitutive or significant for individuals or groups.[9]

(c) Education

Education cannot avoid addressing questions of both identity and diversity.

Education must be concerned with questions of personal identity because it is concerned with the development of persons.

It is wrong to see education as concerned solely with the transmission of knowledge and understanding. In addition to knowledge and understanding, education seeks to develop in individuals *inter alia* attitudes, feelings, emotions, skills, dispositions and qualities of character. These differing elements of the achievements sought in education cannot, of course, be seen as separate from each other, and are interrelated in complex ways.

What is clear, however, is that education seeks to achieve the development not only of the minds of individuals, but of their wider development as persons also. Educational influence therefore impinges, often to a significant extent, upon the personal identity of individuals, and that influence requires articulation and justification. Lying behind such a justification is the fundamental question: 'What sort of people should there be?' A further reason why education cannot neglect questions of personal identity is that educational aims and processes are inevitably influenced by the personal identity of the students to whom they are addressed.

Education must be concerned with questions of diversity for at least two reasons. First, as indicated earlier, various kinds of diversity can be significant for the development of personal identity in the sorts of ways which have been indicated by Charles Taylor. Second, education is concerned not just with the formation of individuals, but also with the development of society. One way in which education contributes to the development of society is through education for citizenship,[10] an important part of which is concerned with the preparation of citizens to live in an appropriate way in relation to the diversity characteristic of a liberal democratic society.[11]

Diversity, Identity and Education: Some Principles

We are confronted in modern liberal democratic societies by people holding many different, and often incompatible, beliefs and values, including 'comprehensive' theories of the good, or overall views of life. Catholics, Jews and Muslims live alongside atheists and agnostics. These comprehensive views are significantly controversial because, it is claimed, there is no way of objectively and conclusively adjudicating between them to the satisfaction of all citizens. Nor are these disagreements likely to be conclusively resolved in the future. They are deep seated and tenacious, the result of fundamental differences of belief and value. Yet many of these comprehensive theories of the good can be regarded as 'reasonable' or 'within the moral pale'. They do not conflict with, even if they go beyond, values acceptable to all. Liberal democratic societies, and the philosophical theory of liberalism in terms of which they are frequently articulated, tend to approach educational questions relating to identity and diversity by invoking a number of general principles. I shall mention three such principles here.

The first principle involves a distinction between 'public' and 'non-public' values and spheres. The nature of this distinction is illuminated by the observation by Jonathan Sacks in his 1990 Reith Lectures, that in modern democratic societies, people 'speak' two 'languages of evaluation': a 'first' language of public (or common) values and a 'second' language of their own substantial traditions reflected in familial, religious and cultural communities.[12] Public' values can be regarded as those which, in virtue of their fundamentality or inescapability, are seen as binding on all persons. Frequently embodied in law and expressed in terms of rights, they include such matters as basic social morality and a range of democratic principles such as freedom of speech and justice. 'Public' values can be affirmed by persons whose wider framework of beliefs differ from each other. They do not presuppose some particular metaphysical theory of the self, or of the nature of human destiny. For example, atheists and Catholics differ profoundly on such matters, but they can share common ground in condemning cruelty and supporting a democratic way of life, even if their different overall frameworks of belief give them a distinctive perspective on such matters. It is the 'public' values which constitute the common or unifying values which are necessary for a democratic society and on which its characteristic notions of pluralism and multiculturalism depend. 'Public' values, in virtue of their fundmentality and inescapability, give wide ranging relativism pause for thought.

In contrast to the 'public' values, 'non-public' values go beyond what can be affirmed by, and insisted upon for, all members of a society. They are part of a range of options from which, within a framework of justice, persons might construct their lives. Such values may involve wide ranging views of life as a whole, such as a religious faith or a substantial political creed. Since such 'comprehensive' theories of the good are significantly controversial, they cannot be imposed or insisted upon for all members of society but are seen as matters for individual and family assessment and decision. It is in relation to these 'non-public' values that the notion of 'respected difference' associated with pluralism and multiculturalism arises.

The distinction between 'public' and 'non-public' values, and the precise determination of the 'content' of each of the categories, is not free from difficulty. The distinction, is, however, a key principle in relation to the handling of significantly controversial matters in schools.

The second principle insists that a sensitive balance be found in a liberal democratic society between the demands of commonality and diversity. As indicated above, despite a tendency to emphasise diversity and difference, pluralism requires a parallel emphasis upon commonality. The respects in which pluralism and multiculturalism involve a balance of diversifying and unifying elements is well brought out in the vision of a democratic pluralist multicultural society outlined in the report of the Swann Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups.[13] In this vision, the society -'...values the diversity within it, whilst united by the cohesive force of the common aims, attributes and values which we all share.'[14] It therefore seeks to achieve a balance between -'...on the one hand, the maintenance and active support of the essential elements of the cultures and lifestyles of all the ethnic groups within it, and, on the other, the acceptance by all groups of a set of shared values distinctive of the society as a whole.'[15] The vision of the report is therefore of a society stressing 'diversity within unity'[16], where a stark dichotomy between assimilation and separatism with respect to minority groups is avoided[17].

Although the Swann Report is concerned with ethnic diversity, many of its basic principles are relevant also to a number of other aspects of significant diversity.

The third principle sees education in such a society as engaged in exerting a two-fold general educational influence. On the one hand, education seeks to bring about the substantive commitment of its students to the public or fundamental values which have been mentioned above. They include basic social morality, ideals (such as the importance of the autonomy of the individual), methodological principles (relating to the way in which public disputes are settled), and moral and political values (such as respect for persons and toleration). In view of the close connection of many of these values with the domain of the political (they include 'civic virtue'), educational influence with respect to public values is seen as requiring a significant form of political education - in particular, education for citizenship. In relation to public values the school seeks more than simply understanding and critical assessment on the part of students, and there is little room for pluralism and a concern to present alternative points of view. On the other hand, in relation to the diversity characteristic of the non-public domain, the school seeks exploration, understanding, debate and critically reflective decision by individuals. On this view, education places a strong emphasis on students thinking for themselves, and achieving a form of personal rational autonomy (itself an important value of a public' kind, though requiring careful interpretation). In the non-public sphere of value, this leads to the fear of undue influence or indoctrination in matters which are significantly controversial and uncertain; hence the emphasis upon 'critically reflective decision by individuals' in these matters.

This principle of two-fold educational influence can be illustrated by reference to the Swann Report. The Report argues that all students must be educated to -'...an understanding of the shared values of our society as a whole as well as to an appreciation of the diversity of lifestyles and cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds which make up this society and the wider world.'[18] In relation to 'shared' or 'common' values, the report sees the development of the autonomy of the child as in an important sense non-negotiable. The report insists that all pupils must be given the 'knowledge and skills' needed not only to contribute to British society but also -'...to determine their own individual identities, free from preconceived or imposed stereotypes of their 'place' in that society'[19] Thus the report regards as entirely wrong' any attempt to -'...impose a predetermined and rigid 'cultural identity' on any youngser, thus restricting his or her freedom to decide as far as possible for themselves their own future way of life.'[20] The report insists that a range of personal qualities and dispositions be developed in all students, including flexibility of mind, an ability to engage in 'rational critical' analysis, a global perspective, a willingness to find '..the normality and justice of a variety of points of view' non-threatening and stimulating, and the skills to resolve conflicts positively and constructively[21]. The report also insists that racism be presented as wrong and invites all schools to combat it.[22] Such elements of non-negotiability underlie the insistence of the report that all students should - '...share a common educational experience which prepares them for life in a truly pluralist society'[23] On the other hand, with regard to values which are not shared or common (for example those relating to a particular religious faith) the report insists that the common school has no role in bringing about substantive commitments in pupils, as distinct from the development of their understanding and critical reflection. With regard to religion, for example, the report holds that it is not the role of the school to encourage in pupils belief in a particular religion - 'It is... the function of the home and of the religious community to nurture and instruct a child in a particular faith (or not), and the function of the school to assist pupils to understand the nature of religion and to know something of the diversity of belief systems, their significance for individuals and how these bear on the community'[24] Pupils must therefore be enabled, through an approach to religious education which seeks to illuminate the character of the religious domain rather than to engage in religious nurture, to - '...determine (and justify) their own religious position'[25].

Diversity, Identity and Education: Some Dilemmas

This general vision of a liberal democratic society and its educational requirements is a familiar one to philosophers of education working in the analytic tradition. The vision is not, however, unproblematic, and is open to a number of significant and searching lines of enquiry and criticism. A number of these relate to the fundamental principles which articulate the vision itself. Questions need to be faced about the justification of the broadly liberal framework of belief and value in term of which the vision is articulated, in the face, say, of criticisms of the framework arising from thinkers of a communitarian persuasion.[26] Some of the central issues which arise here concern the need to interrogate the nature, extent and grounding of the shared values that emerge on this view, and to address the question of whether this general approach can yield a 'thick' enough set of public values to facilitate human and civic flourishing and to do justice to the nature of individual identity, moral psychology and moral objectivity. Further general issues which arise concern the question of how views and practices which are explicitly non-liberal should be responded to. Is the vision seen as having validity and justification cross-culturally or only for certain societies? More precise questions requiring attention relate to the exact way in which the distinction between 'public' and 'non-public' values is being drawn. What can be regarded as a 'public' and a 'non-public' matter respectively?

All these important lines of enquiry and criticism, among others, generate and are linked to important educational dilemmas which arise for this general perspective. These educational dilemmas are wide ranging. They include questions relating to the educational rights and duties which parents can be seen to have on this view, the difficulties of principle and practice which arise for the educational treatment of matters of significant controversy in schools, and questions relating to specific schooling arrangements, including the question of whether separate schools (say of a religious kind) can be justified.

A consideration of the full range of educational dilemmas would require a wide ranging discussion. However, attention will be focused here on a family of educational dilemmas which link identity and diversity together in a very clear way. The dilemmas arise because the general perspective under discussion has tended to emphasise what Charles Taylor has called 'a politics of universalism'. The 'politics of universalism', as its name suggests, involves the unifying features of pluralism and multiculturalism. It stresses the equal dignity of all citizens and the equalization of rights and entitlements; the securing for all of - '...an identical basket of rights and immunities'[27]. As Amy Gutmann notes, from such a perspective - '...our freedom and equality as citizens refer only to our common characteristics - our univeral needs, regardless of our particular cultural identities, for "primary goods" such as income, health care, education, religious freedom, freedom of conscience, speech, press, and association, due process, the right to vote, and the right to hold public office. These are interests shared by almost all people regardless of our particular race, religion, ethnicity, or gender. And therefore public institutions need not - indeed should not - strive to recognize our particular cultural identities in treating us as free and equal citizens'[28]. For Gutmann, a key question posed by the 'politics of universalism' is: -'In what sense should our identities as men or women, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, or Native Americans, Christians, Jews, or Muslims, English or French Canadians *publicly* matter?'[29].

However, the 'politics of universalism' is in tension with the sorts of 'demands of recognition' which Taylor sees as required for the flourishing of personal identity, and which were alluded to earlier. Taylor argues that, since our identity is partly shaped by recognition, a failure to accord it can, by causing a person or group to form a misleading and demeaning picture of themselves, constitute a significant form of harm and oppression[30] This is particularly so where democratic values and other cultural influences assert the notion of the equal dignity of all citizens[31] and where the modern ideal of the authenticity of the individual is salient.[32] Taylor's concern with 'the demands of recognition' lead him to the notion of a 'politics of difference, ' which involves the recognition not of some 'universal identity' but of -'...the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else'[33] At the heart of the 'politics of difference' is the claim that -'...we give acknowledgment and status to something that is not universally shared'[34].

Taylor discusses at some length the question of the extent to which 'the politics of universalism' (and rights-based liberalism more generally) can give due acknowledgement to distinctiveness. Much of his discussion concerns restrictions placed by the Quebec government on its citizens with the aim of securing the collective survival of its Francophone culture.[35] Such restrictions seem to infringe the notion of universal individual rights and the principle of non-discriminatory treatment by insisting that francophones and immigrants may not send their children to English language schools, by requiring that businesses over a certain size conduct their work in French and by outlawing non-French commercial signage. Quebec is therefore espousing collective goals (or a collective view of the good) in contrast to the liberal requirement that a society eschew any commitment to a collective or publicly endorsed conception of the good which goes beyond the procedural[36].

Taylor develops an argument to the effect that such a society need not be wholly in conflict with the values of liberalism. There can, he argues, be a second form of liberal society in addition to that which takes the form of a 'procedural republic'. On this second view the society is non-neutral with regard to a definition of the good life, as in the case of Quebec. Here, because the character of the good in question requires it to be sought in common, it is seen as a matter of public policy. However, the society can be seen as liberal if fundamental rights (say, those relating to rights to life, liberty, practice of religion and the like) are given to, and 'unassailably entrenched' for, minorities within the society. However, other privileges, immunities and presumptions of uniform treatment, which are typically protected within procedural liberalism (such as those relating to the matters on which Quebec sought to exercise restrictions), may be revoked or restricted if they conflict with the integrity and survival of the dominant culture.[37].

Although Taylor's arguments about these matters cannot be entered into in detail here, his suggestion that the principles of liberalism need to be construed more flexibly in the face of 'the demands of recognition' is one which is of educational significance for matters of identity and diversity.

The 'demands of recognition' can be argued to generate three forms of acknowledgement of diversity in an educational context, each giving rise to a corresponding educational dilemma. These forms of acknowledgement I shall describe as acknowledgement of presence; acknowledgement of value and acknowledgement of salience.

At the most basic level is acknowledgement of the *presence* of an aspect of diversity. The claim that certain aspects of cultural diversity are 'invisible' in the curriculum and in the life of schools is a familiar one, and is a powerful strand in much advocacy of pluralist and multicultural policies in education. One response to this claim is to suggest that (say) racism can best be combated through developing a 'colour-blind' society and a loss of perception of differences. From such a perspective, 'recognition', even in this minimal sense, is problematic. A more typical response involves a sensitivity to potentially ethocentric and racist elements in the curriculum and in the relationships within the school, and an attempt to address them. In its most developed form, this response involves the sort of systematic and sustained attention to the curriculum of the school, and its life more generally, of the kind recommended by the Swann Report. Understood simply as a request for aspects of diversity to be *noticed* and *included* , the demand of recognition in this sense might be thought to be relatively unproblematic. However, the demands of recognition typically extend beyond the claim that elements of diversity be merely *noticed* and *included* to the claim that these elements be *valued*. To notice and include is, of course, also to value in some sense, but often a more significant sense of 'value' is intended here, as in the commonly voiced claim that 'all cultures are of equal value'. In discussions of 'value' in the context of pluralism and multiculturalism, the complexity of the concept of value is often overlooked. There are many different kinds of value (moral, philosophical, religious, aesthetic, pragmatic and so on). The respects in which value can be attributed to 'cultures' or to elements of diversity therefore has many dimensions and levels. Some of these elements (such as certain manners and customs) are 'shallow' in the sense that they are not strongly related to more fundamental questions of (say) a moral or religious kind. What is at stake evaluatively in these elements is therefore relatively narrow in scope. In contrast, other elements of diversity are 'deep' in the sense that fundamental questions *are* implicated. The evaluation of these 'deep' elements involves engagement with questions of morality, truth and the like. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I shall use 'value' in a rather general way in order to draw attention to a number of important dilemmas which arise in relation to the evaluation (in whatever sense) of 'cultures' and elements of diversity.

A central dilemma concerns the severe difficulties which arise in relation to any wide ranging claim that 'all cultures are of equal value' and that the demands of recognition require acknowledgement of their equal worth. Such a claim has an *a priori* character to it, and typically invokes a relativistic thesis in its defence. Charles Taylor deploys some strong arguments against claims of this kind and against the demand that *as a matter of right* all cultures be equally valued[38]. One of the most telling of Taylor's arguments against these positions is that if the evaluative judgement is to 'register something independent of our own wills and desires' it cannot be determined by an ethical principle [39] A favourable judgement *on demand* is, for Taylor, nonsense, and cannot meet the demands of recognition. These demands, after all, seek genuine respect, and this involves more than subscription to an *a priori* ethical principle with the peremptory and inauthentic judgments of the value of particular cultures which follows from it.[40].

Taylor considers that the claim 'all cultures are of equal worth' is best seen as a presumption or 'starting hypothesis' with which we should approach the study of any other culture, rather than an *a priori* assumption. The worth of any culture must be assessed in the light of a detailed study and evaluation of it and cannot be determined in advance on principle. Taylor insists -'On examination, either we will find something of great value in culture C, or we will not. But it makes no more sense to demand that we do so than it does to demand that we find the earth round or flat, the temperature of the air hot or cold'[41]. For Taylor, the 'presumption of equal worth' is a kind of act of faith, ultimately grounded in a kind of humility - '...it is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time - that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable - are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject'[42].

This kind of view invites attention to the criteria of evaluation that should be properly invoked in the assessment of different cultures, and to the problems relating to them which were outlined earlier. Taylor concedes that what is involved in adequate forms of evaluation in these matters is complex, and in this connection he invokes Gadamer's notion of a 'fusion of horizons', where new standards of evaluation emerge in the contrasts between frameworks of judgement[43].

Contrasting interpretations of the claim 'all cultures are of equal value' yields contrasting educational implications. Interpreted as an *a priori* assumption, the claim may promote a form of education which is hospitable to relativism and in which critical enquiry and challenge is muted. Interpreted as a 'presumption' in the way Taylor suggests, the claim is conducive to a form of education in which wide ranging critical analysis and debate about the issues at stake is encouraged. Gerald Graff has argued -'The best way to make relativists of students is to expose them to an endless series of different positions which are *not* debated before their eyes'[44]. He therefore insists that -'...when what educated persons should know is deeply disputed, the dispute itself becomes part of what educated persons should know'[45]. Graff is writing in the context of higher education, and doubts must arise for secondary school students about the extent to which -'...conflict, disagreement, and difference might themselves become a source of educational and cultural coherence'[46].

Problems here include the ability of the students to understand the complexities inherent in the debates, and the danger that, in stressing the notion of evaluation and potential conflict at too early a stage the achievement of forms of appreciation and open-mindedness will be frustrated.

The final form of acknowledgement I shall consider concerns the 'acknowledgement of *salience*'. One of the issues at stake in the contrasting 'politics of universalism' and 'politics of difference' discussed earlier concerns precisely this issue. One of the major concerns of the Quebeckers, for example, is their desire to create a situation in which their culture is not merely noticed and valued, but also *salient* in that it is dominant and 'normative' in their context. It is precisely the aim to establish this salience, with its consequent limitations on the rights of individuals, which creates the conflict with rights-based liberalism. These issues are highly relevant to dilemmas about schooling arrangements which arise from the principles outlined in the last section.

One school which is particularly associated with the kinds of principles which have been outlined is the 'common' school. This kind of school is intended for students of all backgrounds and is not based on any particular, detailed, 'view of life'. There are clear limits to the extent to which the 'acknowledgement of salience' of diversities of various kinds can be given in the common school. The Swann Report, for example, insists that it is not the role of such schools to *reinforce* or *preserve* the 'values, beliefs and cultural identity' which each child brings to school, but rather to *develop* these in order to help the pupils to -'...gain confidence in their own cultural identities while learning to respect the identities of other groups as equally valid in their own right.'[47] The common school therefore gives salience to the shared or common cultural and values and identity discussed earlier which, together with the common educational values, are insisted upon for all pupils. More distinctive and non-public values and identities, such as those relating to religious faith, are regarded as matters for individual reflective evaluation and decision, and in relation to them the common school seeks to exercise a principled forebearance of influence. This general stance is related to the obligation of the common school to develop in pupils a kind of 'moral bilingualism', where the status and scope of the demands of civic or public virtue are distinguished from those relating to virtue seen from the perspective of a particular cultural community.[48] Religious believers (for example) whose children attend common schools may be unhappy for various reasons with the sort of religious education which the common school can provide. They may feel that such an education may not do justice to the 'architectonic' or life-shaping character of their beliefs, may fail to bring about genuine understanding of them, and may generate a context in which religious belief may, for various reasons, be eroded. Such parents may therefore seek a greater salience for their religious beliefs within the common school. Recent attempts to achieve this can be seen in continuing disputes about the role of religious worship in common schools in England and Wales, and in proposals from the Islamic Academy that, since survey evidence suggests that most people in these countries believe in God, a form of theistic belief shared by the major religions in the country should form the normative basis of the common school. By implication, agnostics and atheists, though able to articulate their perspective against this norm, should if unhappy, seek separate schools.[49] There is room for considerable debate about matters of cultural salience in the common school, not least because, despite its unease with particularities, the common school cannot be culturally-neutral and must have a cultural content which selectively favour some beliefs, practices and values in ways that go beyond what could be justified from a strictly neutral point of view.[50] It might be felt by some parents, however, that, just as in the 'politics of universalism', scope for the 'acknowledgement of salience' in the common school is inadequate.

Such parents may therefore turn to the separate school as a context in which their desire for the 'acknowledgement of salience' can be met. Such schools are able to offer a form of education which goes beyond that acceptable to society as a whole, and may invoke a distinctive philosophical basis. In such schools, particular values and identities are given normative status, as in certain sorts of religious school. Whilst such schools, like Quebec, are non-neutral with respect to a definition of the good life, they might be seen, for reasons broadly similar to those invoked in relation to the 'the politics of difference', to be compatible with liberal values and with pluralism and multiculturalism. In the case of 'the politics of difference' compatibility is achieved through the ensuring of fundamental rights for minorities of the sort discussed earlier In the case of at least certain sorts of separate school such compatibility could be achieved through measures to counteract the danger of indoctrination and to protect freedom of conscience. Certain kinds of religious school, for example, could therefore be seen as providing through their particular religious tradition a context of relative stability of particular, salient, belief, practice and value, with the aim not of trapping pupils within it, but of providing pupils with a base from which their growth towards autonomy and citizenship in a pluralist, multicultural society can proceed. I have attempted to provide a detailed defence of this claim elsewhere.[51] Such a claim is not, however, free of dilemmas. How, for example, are such schools to teach a particular religion as true in a way which respects the demands of criticism and the personal autonomy of the students?[52]

Conclusion

In this necessarily limited discussion, I have attempted to outline some principles and dilemmas relating to diversity, identity and education. It is hoped that this discussion will contribute to an understanding of the issues at stake. However, in the context of the conference and its aftermath, it is also hoped that the discussion will assist in the development of the sort of dialogue between contrasting philosophical traditions, styles of argument and methods of approach which is essential.

Notes

1- See, for example, Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish 1998.

2- On the notion of 'cultural coherence' and its significance for upbringing see Ackerman 1980 Ch 5.

3- For fuller accounts of the analytic tradition in philosophy of education see, for example, Hirst 1998, Hirst and White P 1998, Hirst and White P (Eds) 1998, White J 1995, White J and White P 1997. On the nalytic tradition in philosophy generally see, for example Wilson 1986.

4- For critical perspectives see, for example, Kohli 1995 Part 1, Hirst and White P (Eds) 1998 Vol 1 Part 1.

5- For complexities in the notion of pluralism see, for example, Kekes 1993 Ch 2.

6- Siegel 1995.

7- On matters of complexity relating to personal identity see, for example, Parfit 1984.

8- On these matters see McLaughlin 1996 .

9- See Taylor 1992.

10- On education for citizenship see, for example, Kymlicka 1999.

11- On this see, for example, Callan 1997.

12- Sacks 1991.

13- Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons 1985 Ch 1.

14- Swann Ch 1 para 6.

15- Swann Ch 1 para 4.

16- Swann Ch 1 para 6.

17- Swann Ch 1 para 3.

18- Swann Ch 6 para 1.4.

19- Swann Ch 6 para 1.4.

20- Swann Ch 6 para 2.5.

21- Swann Ch 6 para 2.7.

22- Swann Ch 2; Ch 6 para 2.3.

23- Swann Ch 8, II, para 2.11.

24- Swann Ch 8, I, para 2.8.

25- Swann Ch 8, I, para 2.11.

26- On such matters see, for example, Mulhall and Swift 1996.

27- Taylor 1992 p 38.

28- Gutmann 1992 p 4.

29- Gutmann 1992 p 4.

30- Taylor 1992 pp 25-26.

31- Taylor 1992 p 27.

32- Taylor 1992 pp 28-37.

33- Taylor 1992 p 38.

34- Taylor 1992 p 39.

35- Taylor 1992 pp 52-61.

36- Taylor 1992 pp 56-59.

37- Taylor 1992 pp 59-61.

38- Taylor 1992 pp 63-73.

39- Taylor 1992 p 69.

40- Taylor 1992 p 70.

41- Taylor 1992 p 69.

42- Taylor 1992 pp 72-73.

43- Taylor 1992 p 67.

44- Graff 1992 p 15. See also Ch 6,9.

45- Graff 1992 p 44.

46- Graff 1992 p 143.

47- Swann Ch 6 para 2.5.

48- McLaughlin 1995 pp 88-90.

49- The Islamic Academy 1990.

50- McLaughlin 1995 pp 85-88.

51- McLaughlin 1992.

52- For more discussion of common and separate schools respectively see McLaughlin 1995 and McLaughlin 1992.

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