

**BEYOND INCLUSION:  
Transforming the Educational Governance Relationship  
Between First Nations and School Districts in British Columbia**

by

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## **Abstract**

The dissertation is a philosophical and historical investigation of the political and ethical relationships between cultures as they attempt to develop just governance practices in post-colonial educational institutions.

It is grounded in 30 years of personal experience and professional practice as an educator in British Columbia. The development of a Community Healing Circle process is initially described as a co-constructed means for the sharing of responsibility for First Nations students in their educational experiences.

The Circle is placed within the context of a history of First Nations people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, primarily after contact with Euro-Canadian society, followed by a consideration of relevant philosophic thought.

Charles Taylor's ideas on the politics of recognition, and its relation to identity, forms the theoretical location upon which the dissertation is based. Taylor's 'modern social imaginaries' provides a way of conceptualizing the interaction between Euro-Canadian and First Nations views of today's world. In this way, the forms of difference between 'others' are explored and articulated so the richness of difference can be fully acknowledged.

Beyond the investigation of the significant cultural differences and communicative challenges, the dissertation also identifies the ground upon which ethical communication and the building of community capacity can take place. James Tully's work on a 'common ground,' Nancy Fraser's ideas about claims for recognition and redistribution, Jürgen Habermas' thinking about communicative ethics, and Seyla Benhabib's writings about diversity in the global era, are all interwoven into the fabric of the discussion.

Finally, the study returns to a consideration of the Community Healing Circle as a forum in which different cultural partners can engage and contend with each other over substantive educational issues. In the conclusion there are suggestions about how we might proceed to transform the educational governance relationship between First Nations and the dominant polity, creating a more just form.

To Calli Romy Robbie

## Acknowledgements

In my capacity as a secondary school principal and a superintendent of schools I have had the honour over the past decade of participating in Community Healing Circles and other restorative processes involving First Nations young people, their extended families, and community members. Over that decade my thinking about restorative processes generally, and the working of the Community Healing Circles, has evolved from appreciating their value to individual students and schools, to understanding that Circles represent an environment where people from different cultures can interact, negotiate, and mediate over issues common to those in the Circle. It is also a place where people from different cultures can act ethically with each other.

I would like to thank Joan Gentles, Director of Instruction for First Nations Education, for helping me to better understand that cultures can contend with each other, learn with each other, and change for the good as a result. I would also like to compliment Joan for the courage she shows in the face of misunderstandings about First Nations people almost every day in her work. She demonstrates the patience and strength that will be required if progress is to continue for First Nations young people and their communities.

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This work is dedicated to my granddaughter Calli, with *the wish to live well, with and for others*, in the world of the future.

Byron Robbie  
May 11, 2005

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## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **Narrative Framework**

#### **Introduction**

This dissertation explores questions I have considered and concerns I have had for many years as I have lived and worked in the Cariboo-Chilcotin area of British Columbia. This is an area that is distinct in many ways, especially in its varied and stunning physical landscape, but also in the diversity of its people. At the same time it is also similar in many ways to many small towns and rural areas in British Columbia and Canada. The longer I live in the area and the better I know the people and history, the more I have become interested in the relationship between First Nations people and the Euro-Canadian society. Indeed, on occasion I often wonder if people from each of the cultures live in a world-view with such firm boundaries that although they occupy the same physical space, they exist as two solitudes.

I have become especially concerned about and interested in looking at this relationship in regard to the public education system where I worked, until recently, for three decades. As an educator in the public school system, I had long been involved directly with First Nations children and youth and their parents and extended family members with regard to educational concerns. In more recent years I have become more involved on a political level as my professional responsibilities changed. As I moved from classroom teacher and counsellor to school and district administrator, my

relationships expanded to include the social and political agencies of First Nations communities, including band social workers and education coordinators, as well as chiefs and band councillors. At the same time, my earlier involvement with individual students was expanded to include issues of a political nature and involvement with policy and structures of governance. These policy concerns and structures of governance have always been critical, in my mind, for they reflect in a complex way the normative attitudes and understandings of the people of the area and impact First Nations communities and children with the pedagogical, curricular, personal, and social context they provide for educators in the institutions in which they work.

Alasdair MacIntyre (1981/2002) has some thoughts about practice that are useful for the work of educators in their responsibilities to their practice and to the institutions of education. And while MacIntyre does not consider teaching to be a practice,<sup>1</sup> he makes some important distinctions about the responsibilities people have to practice and to the institutions in which they conduct that practice. According to MacIntyre, a practice is,

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p. 187)

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dunne (2003) argues that MacIntyre has an insufficient sense of the nature of teaching. Dunne argues that teaching does meet MacIntyre's definition of practice, not in knowledge of content, but in the critical element of care for students. According to Dunne, "what good teaching especially aims at is the kind of enablement in one practice that can bear on other practices, so that through all of them students acquire intellectual and moral virtues that are goods in their own lives and in those of their friends and communities" (p. 368).

The practices that take place in institutions have a specific nature, as in the case of schooling; for the institution has a focus that is primarily concerned with external goods such as certain individual material results, money, status, and position while practices have as their focus internal goods that benefit the whole community. Yet, while educational practice is dependent upon institutional structures, it needs to be separate from the interests and focus of the institution, for practice, according to MacIntyre, has a wider and different moral purpose beyond the material goods produced by institutions. This moral purpose of practices requires certain relationships and responsibilities within practices that reflect the internal goods that are their concern. In regard to relationships, MacIntyre argues that those involved in a practice must subordinate themselves within the practice, sharing with other practitioners common standards of excellence about the practice in a just, honest, truthful, and sometimes courageous way. In regard to responsibility, he argues that practitioners have an obligation, not simply to the institution in which they work, but to the improvement in the standards of excellence that form the basis of the practice. That responsibility, in conjunction with the moral purpose inherent to the internal goods, gives practice its ethical core (MacIntyre, 1981/2002, p. 194). It is this responsibility and obligation that underpin the investigations of my dissertation.

There is more to this responsibility, however, than the experience of my professional practice. While I have long understood the pervasiveness of prejudice and racism in the relationship between the peoples of First Nations cultures and those of the Euro-Canadian society, I have become more intrigued with the need to understand the nature of this racism and the influence it has on people of both cultures. This is all relevant to my personal experience as it is impossible to live and work in the area

without being effected directly by features in the relationship, including those of racism and prejudice. So my personal narrative is not only relevant but also critical to my living and understanding the world in which I live. According to Barbara Hardy, "we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy, 1968, p. 5). And so it is with acting as narrative as well, as those personal experiences that cause me to be inquisitive are also a source of frustration, concern, and determination. As part of that personal narrative, I feel an obligation to wonder about and investigate that relationship. I also share a sense of the injustice done to First Nations people. I say this knowing full well that my 'whiteness' and education has seemingly provided me with privileges not available to many others from both cultures. Yet for all the seeming privilege made available and obtained by me, and my family, we live in a complex and powerful economic, social, and political structure that provides an ever changing advantage to some and disadvantage to others. While I will need to return to this point later in examining the historical roots of the Euro-Canadian society in the area, it is sufficient for now to recall that my presence on this land at this time originated with the emigration of Scottish ancestors in the second wave of Highland clearances and of Irish ancestors escaping from the colonial land tenure system of later nineteenth century Ireland, followed by family moves to various places in Canada to take advantage of land granted by the Dominion Lands Act (Library and Archives Canada, 1872) and work provided in infrastructure development projects, but all to escape poverty and powerlessness in both the 'new' and 'old' world. The familiar memories of that poverty were not lost on my immigrant grandparents, my parents, or the people of their generation, who suffered through the depression years of the 1930s on the Canadian

prairies. Indeed, for many first-generation immigrants, it appeared they had been driven from one physical and political landscape of poverty to another in thirty short years. And while I may not subscribe to the individualistic explanation of poverty and powerlessness held by many, the experiences are close enough to my family memory for me to understand that 'whiteness' does not simply correlate with prosperity and privilege. My awareness of the various explanations for poverty, prejudice, and racism, and my own class-based experience and explanations form a perspective that I believe offers the opportunity to uncover new understandings about the life experiences for all who live in the Cariboo-Chilcotin (Nearman, 2002, p. 195). At the very least, it motivates me to paint quite a different picture of the social relationships in the community than the one commonly viewed.

My understanding of my personal experience, then, is not a narrative of guilt and good intentions originating in my 'whiteness.' It is, instead, an appreciation of the harm and uselessness of any analysis based on race, and an awareness of the deep and harmful prejudice and injustice suffered by many, especially people of First Nations ancestry. While this work begins with my own shared sense of injustice with First Nations people, including a shared sense of the loss of an intimate connection with the land, a connection mostly forever lost and forgotten to immigrants and their ancestors, its concern is fundamentally with better understanding the present day relationship between people of different cultures so that improvements in that relationship can make progress in social justice for all. The focus of the dissertation, though, within that general concern, is with the harm caused by the lack of due recognition of the culture and history of First Nations people and the influence that due recognition might have on their lives.

## Recognition

This lack of recognition of the culture and identity of First Nations people is not a matter unique to the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Issues in relation to diversity, such as recognition, have become ever more critical to societies around the world in recent times. And while some societies are made up of more distinct groups than others, Canada is among the most diverse (Schouls, 2003, p. viii). Issues about that diversity have permeated the social and political life of Canadian society and its institutions. In British Columbia, the demands for recognition made by recent immigrants from Asia, Aboriginal organizations, and gay and lesbian groups, are good examples of the diverse challenges posed to the society as a whole, its political processes, and to public education. They all reflect the challenges to leadership in education today.

This concept of 'recognition,' and what has been called the 'politics of recognition,' has taken on a multifaceted role in contemporary political and philosophical discourse. The purpose of my dissertation is to bring that discourse to the educational debate and examine the relationship between the First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures in the Cariboo-Chilcotin in relation to recent writings about the politics of recognition, focusing primarily on the work of Charles Taylor (1989, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2004), James Tully (1995/2004), Jürgen Habermas (1976, 1981/1984, 1981/1987, 1994), Nancy Fraser (1997, 2000, 2001) and Seyla Benhabib (2002) to consider what might be done to develop a more just, equitable, and recognitive public space in the local community of my educational practice. At issue here in relation to that practice is the general exclusion of First Nations children and youth from successful educational experiences.



As I explained in the introduction, this politics of recognition is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is my intention to consider some important thinking about recognition from a variety of theorists, focusing in a pragmatic way by bringing their thinking into an exploration of circumstances and ideas with the purpose of furthering my investigations into the relationship between First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures. I will begin these explorations in the history of First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Based on this history I will explore some recent and useful research about modern social imaginaries, the politics of recognition and its relationship to identity, the nature of liberal society, the nature of culture, and the communicative environment in the interactions between cultures. I expect that this examination will allow me to uncover some useful knowledge about both First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures and the relationship between the two. I will make use of Nancy Fraser's (1997, 2000, 2001) perspective on the politics of recognition, placing the current preoccupation with recognition in political and philosophical discourse in the context of historical claims for justice. Once I have established a definition for recognition and an historical and philosophical context, I can then exploit the concept of recognition and its correlation to identity to illuminate the relationship that is central to my concern. Once I can demonstrate the depth of those significant features, and show how due recognition of the culture of First Nations people is denied through non-recognition and misrecognition, I can examine the harm resulting from that denial. That harm can best be explored in Taylor's (1994, 2004) work with his examination of the identity of the self in the modern era and the need for recognitive processes between diverse cultures in a society. The work of Dussel (1996, 2002) is useful here, not only as a critique of Taylor's Western perspective, but also as a framework for understanding the impact of European contact

on First Nations cultures. Taylor's work on recognition leads naturally here to issues about liberalism and its capture of our political and social imagination. I will then examine the implications of theories of liberalism for their ability to facilitate or deny due recognition of First Nations culture and the development of authentic identities. The context of the liberal state and the constitutional arrangements of that state for the recognition of culture and difference is my next concern. Tully (1995/2004) and Benhabib (2002) are particularly helpful here for their examination of intercultural interactions in public space and public processes. Taylor (1994) also suggests how we might create recognitive structures in the context of the modern constitutional state. Both Tully and Habermas (1994) suggest resolutions to this liberal dilemma and argue for a different conception of the modern liberal constitutional state where due recognition of diverse cultures is not only possible, but required, if the modern liberal state is to survive. They both propose a state that acknowledges the importance of individual rights, as liberal states presently do, but one that also guarantees and recognizes deliberative processes and the involvement of cultural groups in those deliberations. I will then return to Fraser (2001) to better situate identity within the politics of recognition, building on the dynamic views of culture presented by Tully and Benhabib and an analysis of the communicative environment in relations between cultures by Habermas (1976, 1981/1984, 1981/1987) and Benhabib (2002).

While there may be nothing new about the belief that the due recognition of First Nations culture and people is long-overdue, the purpose of my research is to discover what that recognition might best look like (especially in structures of governance in public education) and explain why it is so critical to First Nations people and the

community and nation in which they are so thoroughly involved. To do this I will need to examine the history of both First Nations people and Euro-Canadian society in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and construct an understanding of the different world-views of these cultures retrieved from that history. It is my contention that if we are to understand the educational interests and identity of First Nations children and youth it is necessary to retrieve this understanding about how it is they and their family and community view themselves, the community, and the world. Finally, I hope to be able to make some useful suggestions about how educational governance might be better understood and better designed to facilitate the just and equitable inclusion of First Nations children and youth in public education.

In recent years increasing demands for recognition have been made on public institutions. Public schools especially have come under severe criticism for their failure to recognize the interests of various elements of their communities, including those elements that define themselves as distinct cultural groups (Gutmann, 1994, p. 3). As these demands can no longer be ignored, they need to be better understood. They are not, however, a phenomenon limited to the local area of my practice, the province, or the country. Tully identifies a range of forms to the demands for cultural recognition that I will consider in detail later. For now, it is important to be mindful that while the demands of First Nations people are unique in their history and nature, they are now part of a wider social and political development that includes demands by national, supra-national, ethnic, linguistic, gender, religious, sexual orientation, and other associative groups.

## **First Nations Demands for Recognition**

For centuries, Aboriginal and Indigenous people from around the world have been making demands for recognition of cultural distinctiveness and historical rights. Included in this are demands for recognition under international and national laws and redress of losses suffered under centuries of colonialism and imperialism. Of critical importance to my practice are the demands for recognition of the distinctive nature of First Nations communities and the accommodation of cultural difference in public schools. These demands by First Nations people are made in ways that are not always easily understood by those who work in public institutions, for they are demands for a hearing often in a place and in a manner that reflect a First Nations world-view, one that appears foreign to the dominant culture (Tully, 1995, p. 3). I will look at the site and the nature of these demands in greater detail later, but it is important to acknowledge at this point that demands for recognition are an essential feature in the public space and in the political process at all levels in Canada, from a national and international perspective, from provincial to local politics, and in all public institutions. The politics of recognition permeates the political landscape and practice of all in these early decades of the twenty-first century.

The nature of this politics of recognition, however, is not always recognizable. Tully (1995/2004) identifies three forms of public demands that have as their background the demand for recognition. The first is in the demand for various forms of self-government in forms appropriate to the cultural group making the demands. The second, related directly to the first, is the demand for the acceptance of cultural forms of self-government and self-determination that are not consistent with the constitutional forms

and normative thinking of the dominant society. The third, arising from the earlier demands, is “that culture is an irreducible and constitutive aspect of politics” (p. 5). While demands for self-governing forms of political and institutional structures may be difficult to accept, they become increasingly harder to accept when the forms demanded are outside the normative understandings of the larger society, and even harder to accept when the basic belief of cultural neutrality of liberal democratic government is challenged in the demand (p. 5).

This dissertation grows out of my desire to better understand the cultural nature of demands for recognition and the implications to public education and reflects my concern for the ongoing political landscape of the community and its schools. I will need to look at these demands as they apply to education generally and to schooling specifically, and identify within the issues of injustice and exclusion the demands for recognition. For in response to the demands for recognition, there have been a number of initiatives over the past several decades that have been designed to address the difficulties First Nations students experience in public schools. Of these, some of the most significant in British Columbia include Local Education Agreements, the targeting of funding for First Nations programs and the concomitant creation of First Nations Education Councils, and most recently, Enhancement Agreements. In addition to the imposition of these more senior governmental initiatives, formal studies of the difficulties experienced by First Nations students have been conducted in many school districts, resulting in long lists of recommendations for change. There have been other initiatives as well, including in the local school district, a Role Model Program and the development of restorative justice processes with Community Healing Circles, hereafter referred to as

Circles. It is my hope that the findings of the research conducted in this dissertation will be useful to examine the effectiveness and values embedded in programs designed to assist First Nations students and their families and communities. I further expect that the findings will be of use in the design of future processes and programs. I might ask, then, to what extent a particular program meets the need for self-government and self-determination, to what extent First Nations cultural forms are accepted into the structures and processes of a school, and to what extent the interests and identity of First Nations children and youth are reflected in educational structures and processes. I would like to illustrate that examination with regard to the Circle process for what that investigation can illuminate about the recognition of First Nations cultures and the accommodation of First Nations students in the public school system. I will show that the Circle process has both pragmatic and symbolic qualities: it can serve to resolve practical issues for a young person and the community in which the young person is embedded as well as generate and reflect real changes in the social understandings for the people involved as they contend with the issues and differences among them.

A decade ago, Arlene Stairs (1994) observed correctly, in my view, that issues about the education of First Nations children and young people were issues about culture. She argued then that while First Nations control of education and the culture of schools for First Nations children were viewed as a solution to the dismal record of public schools with First Nations students, the problems and relationships were too multifaceted to be resolved so easily. "The issues are complex," she wrote, "beyond the dichotomy of 'inside' Aboriginal control versus 'outside' domination, since schooling has been pivotal...in the conjoining of Native and intruding cultures, and Aboriginal education

cannot be approached from either cultural perspective alone” (p. 122). Consequently, she argued for cultural mediation and negotiation between First Nations and public educational communities, and saw improvement in the educational lives of First Nations students in this meeting of cultures. The dissertation will consider the underpinnings and implications of such a commitment, as well as the obligation to engage in such a cultural project. Indeed, I will argue that there is no alternative to engagement of this sort, both in spite of, and because of the cultural diversity in our midst. The dissertation, in this sense, can be seen as a cultural project of such an engagement.

### **Community Healing Circles**

Although I will need to return to the Circle process in the context of what I discover about culture and recognition in this work, it is necessary to sketch out a general outline of its development, purpose, and structure at this point. It would be misleading to try to understand the Circle process as a typical program initiative of the school district. Its development was more interactive and informal. It would be better to describe its development as a co-constructed process involving different people from the bands and the district over the past decade. It is not a structure of the school district, ‘owned,’ as it were by the district as other programs are. It would also be misleading to think that the language of a professional educator, as I am, would allow the kind of deep understanding of the cultural forms of First Nations communities. Language, in this way, becomes part of the struggle to contend with each other’s cultural beliefs and meanings and to come to new understandings. Circles, however, have appeared within a historical period where First Nations people and their representatives have made increasing demands for the recognition of the specific nature of the difficulties experienced by First

Nations students. In these terms, the demands ask for an increasing appreciation of cultural difference and recognition of the interests and identity of First Nations children and youth for what that recognition can offer First Nations students, their parents, and community. This has resulted in a structure of governance shared with First Nations communities that reflects a purpose consistent with cultural ways not easily understood in the Euro-Canadian community and its institutions. So the Circle process arose from the demand that the district and its schools find solutions and support for First Nations students who were experiencing significant difficulties in the school environment. The most audible message in the demand was that students were not to be excluded from school for the difficulties they experienced there, as they had been in the past.

The Circle process, then, is an organic and constantly changing structure. The process developed over a period of time as First Nations communities and the school district struggled to come to terms with sharing the responsibility of education. It led to changes in the ways in which schools, the district, and band education authorities, worked together on issues involving First Nations students. Unlike many school and district programs, the structure of each Circle was dependent upon principles and possibilities as opposed to a set criterion and structure. As the area of the school district encompasses three First Nations language groups and eleven different bands, the demands and expectations for the Circle process from each band were not only different but were also subject to the requirements of time and place. For instance, in one more isolated school, primarily attended by First Nations students from one band, the Circle was, in my experience, always attended by the student, or students, their immediate and extended family, the chief and all the band councillors, elders, the education coordinator



and social worker for the band, as well as the Director of Instruction for First Nations Education for the district, a district staff representative, the school principal and teachers. In another school, closer to town, the student and parents, the band education coordinator, the principal of the school and district staff, attended Circles. The process of the circle was also different in each case, with the chief taking the facilitating role in the first, while a district staff did the same in the second. In some Circles the process began with sharing of food, in others it began with a prayer. In some, everyone sat around a large table, in others, everyone sat in a circle. I have attended Circles lasting two hours and others lasting up to an entire afternoon. They all have a pace dependent upon the needs of the student, the community, and the district. The natures of the issues brought to a Circle were also different from band to band. One band, for instance, focused on the difficulties experienced by individual students, while another claimed those issues of student misconduct as well as complaints against teachers or the principal, or the practices of the school, be dealt with in the same Circle process.

In my experience, the nature of the dialogue was also different at each Circle session. Some could be characterized as free flowing informal discussion. In others, dialogue was more formal, and more consistent with traditional community decision-making processes where everyone spoke in turn about the issues at hand. In some, a talking stick was used. Decisions arrived at in Circles were always made by consensus, including the district's commitment to the decisions determined by the participants at the Circle.

As Circles were conducted over time, it came to be accepted that they met the interests and recognized the identity of those involved in serious abuse of alcohol and

other drugs, the use of violence, or an unwillingness and/or inability to attend school. For many years, difficulties of this sort had often led to permanent exclusion from school. The goals of the Circle process was to acknowledge the significant difficulties experienced by First Nations students and involve their extended family, community, and band political authorities in providing interventions and support. The expectation was that participants in the Circle had responsibilities to the student and the community, and that with full participation of the student's school and band community, and the commitment of the student, the student would be able to return to school with their peers.

It is my view that the development of Circles was dependent upon several decades of work by First Nations people in placing demands for the recognition of their interests and identity on the educational agenda of schools, the district, and the province. These demands have become ever more determined over the past four decades following the closure of residential schools in the 1960s and 1970s. They amount to demands for the full inclusion of First Nations children and young people in successful experiences in public schools. I will consider the nature of those demands later and place them in the context of wider demands for recognition from First Nations people. But before I do that I would like to consider the social, political, and cultural landscape upon which social circumstances, public education, and these struggles for recognition are taking place.

## **Social Landscape**

In Canada we are experiencing significant social change as we enter the twenty-first century. The change is both significant in its breadth and depth: it is influencing all aspects of Canadian life and institutions and disturbing our deeply held notions of who we are as individuals, as people in a social context, and as a nation. In public institutions, and in particular, public education, the change has significant implications. Unfortunately we may not have a good understanding of the changes or an appreciation of the way in which they influence society as a whole and impinge on the practice of those of us who work in public education. While it is often the case that those experiencing social change are least aware of the dimensions and nature of the change, it does not diminish our need to better understand the forces that impinge on our lives and our work. In fact, it makes understanding all the more critical if we are to make wise decisions in our educational practice. For educators, the future of each child and the community are at stake. In the debate about how to cope with the changes there is much in contention, however, as the debate often reflects different views of the individual and society and the relationship between the two.

## **The Individual in Community**

There are three interrelated issues here; the first is the very nature of citizenship and the nation-state. For Canadian journalist Richard Gwyn (1995), Canadians are suffering a "progressive loss of control over the character of our collective citizenship" (p. 8). For the American writer, Lansing Lamont (1994), the question is more blunt and the future more bleak: "Maybe Canada is not meant to survive," he wrote in *Breakup: The*

*Coming End of Canada and the Stakes for America* (1994). "Maybe it isn't destined to live out its span as a nation" (p. 1). While both Gwyn and Lansing came to these pessimistic conclusions shortly after the 1994 referendum in Quebec, their concerns reflect an apprehension that Canada is undergoing significant change that threatens the very existence of the nation. These changes are reflected in all aspects of the institutions in our society, especially in the education of the public.

The second issue is more basic, but ultimately ties together the issues of Canadian society and citizenship. This issue is related to the pluralistic nature of many modern societies, including Canada, and the role of the individual in the context of community in that world. I will consider a number of views and approaches to this issue, including a discussion of the debate between liberal, communitarian, and relational approaches to pluralism, and the implications these approaches have for constitutional arrangements. I will illustrate the connection between the individual and society in this analysis, and argue for a framework for understanding that is informed by ontological considerations.

The third issue is the role of education in society and in our modern preoccupation with the identity of the individual. This issue goes beyond citizenship as we have come to know it and poses a more thorough connection between democracy and citizenship, to human identity in a social context and the need for society to define in a deliberative process the goods common to education. It is not my intention to resolve all the issues here, but to offer a framework for the important issues behind some of the forces shaping Canadian society and public education.

## The Changing Social Landscape

Two Canadian authors have published recent books that provide valuable insight into this changing social landscape. Their life circumstances have provided them with experiences that have allowed them to acquire a thoroughly grounded understanding of Canada in combination with the perspective of an outsider. In returning to Canada in 1992 after a seven-year absence, Richard Gwyn, international affairs columnist for the Toronto Star, characterized the cultural shock of returning to Canada as severe as the one he and his wife had experienced in first moving to Britain. "We realized," he wrote in *Nationalism Without Walls* (1995), "that a good deal of the Canada we had left behind in 1985 had evaporated. In its place a quite different kind of society was emerging, far more diverse, and funkier and livelier, but also far more stressed out, self-doubting, and, above all, far more fractured" (p. 2). The second author, Michael Ignatieff, has not lived in Canada since 1969. In his book, *The Rights Revolution* (2000), he views his examination of the revolution as his "attempt to catch up with the turbulent history of my country in the very years I was abroad" (p. x). He offers an insightful analysis of this era of turbulent social change that has value for both Canadian and international readers.

For Gwyn (1995), his return to Canada in 1992 found a country whose foundation "was becoming almost meaningless to the emerging, polyglot, urban Canada" (p.2). He was especially struck, as many are who live outside the large urban areas, by how the rural areas were being "hollowed out by population decline and economic contraction" (p. 2). Canada no longer resembled the nation described by Innis (1956), and Easterbrook and Watkins (1967); a nation founded on lumber, wheat, mining, and the required infrastructure of transportation, labour relationships, international trade, and

investment by government and national and international capital. The historic role of the hinterland had all but disappeared. Instead, he found Canadians focused on economic insecurity, national unity, and the decline in traditional economic and political activity. He also found a widening gulf between the governing and the governed, a break in the traditional Canadian deference to authority, a new resistance to paying taxes, and a new skepticism about social programs like welfare, unemployment, and foreign aid. There were changes in citizenship as well. Not only were the urban centers more multicultural, he discovered that "ethnic groups had acquired the right to define the terms of their citizenship" (Gwyn, 1995, p. 5). Aboriginal people were redefining themselves as well. Where once the state had separated them from the rest of the population on reserves, they now demanded to separate themselves from other Canadians "in self-governing territories" (p. 5).

### **Rights Talk in the Midst of Diversity**

Canada as a nation state had also changed. While globalization had eroded the authority of the state as it had in most countries, this was particularly worrisome in Canada where the state had always played a pivotal role in the definition of the nation (Gwyn, 1995, p. 247). In addition, the external walls of protection from the United States were "levelled by continental free trade" (p. 9). Even more powerful, however, was the new way in which Canadians viewed themselves as individuals and as a political entity. While there was "economic angst and identity anger" (p. 147), the changes were more fundamental. For Gwyn, this fundamental change was in the demand by many Canadians that their identity rights be acknowledged and realized in daily life. This

reflected the new Canada he believed was emerging, a nation newly founded on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

The new Constitution handed around more rights to more different people than any equivalent national document.... All individuals were equal, before and under the law. But also all kinds of groups were more equal than other individuals: Women, in section 28, aboriginals in Sections 25 and 35, multicultural Canadians in Section 27, also French-speaking Canadians and underdeveloped provinces...and, by way of Section 15(2), all kinds of unnamed "disadvantaged groups". (p. 148)

The intersecting of the Charter and the social changes described above led to what Madam Justice Rosalie Abella described as "rights frenzy" (p. 148). It is no surprise then that Gwyn began his analysis with social and economic change in Canada, and ended with the "rights revolution." For Gwyn, the significant social, economic and political changes of the past several decades fed the rights revolution, but the critical change was in the revolution itself. Although Gwyn has more to say about rights, we can better pick up the threads of this investigation with Ignatieff.

Where Gwyn views the rights revolution in terms of the Canadian nation state, Ignatieff (2000) views the revolution in a different context, focusing on the individual in a democratic society. Their different perspectives reflect almost contrary views: for Gwyn, the rights revolution is a threat to Canada as a communitarian state; for Ignatieff, the revolution is about individual and group rights and the balance between these two in a rights community where individuals are not forced into a "communitarian strait-jacket" (p. 34). Rooted in his focus on individualism, for Ignatieff, rights talk "has transformed how we think about ourselves as citizens, as men and women, and as parents" (p. 1). And while, like Gwyn, he views the Charter as important to the development of rights talk, he believes that the rights revolution took off in the 1960s, long before the Charter (p. 1).

That the rights revolution is a major force in Canada, as well as the other industrialized nations, and the source of a fundamental transformation of Canadian society, there is agreement.

Although talk about, and demands for rights, has become part of our deliberations in institutions and civil society, it is not well understood. The rights revolution has two main features: with regard to individuals it is about “enhancing our right to be equal and protecting our right to be different” (Ignatieff 2000, p. 2). With regard to groups it is about demanding rights for political autonomy while demanding rights for inclusion (Schouls, 2003, p. 2). In the western industrial societies the rights revolution is, according to Ignatieff, the first attempt to create a democratic society on the basis of full inclusion. Although it began before the Charter was passed in 1982, it was fuelled by Pierre Trudeau’s sensitivities to the delicate nature of Canadian unity and the desire, consistent with his liberal philosophy, to “anchor Canadian unity in the equality of individual rights” (p. 7). But there were powerful forces for group rights operating on the Canadian political stage by the 1970s and early 1980s, and Trudeau’s original focus on individual rights for the Charter was expanded, in the face of significant opposition, to include group rights as well. In its final form, the Charter included guarantees of language rights for Quebec, and rights for women, multiethnic Canadians, Aboriginal people, and other disadvantaged and associative groups.

The group rights provisions did not arise out of a political vacuum. They revealed the new social mosaic of Canada and a new awareness of that mosaic. The provisions also reflected the reality of our civil society, and made up an integral but often invisible part of the practice of individuals and groups in our public and private institutions. This



social composition of the country, nevertheless, often goes unnoticed or unappreciated in practice. There are three distinctive features to these national characteristics. The first is that we have become one of the most “ethnoculturally diverse countries in the world” (Kymlicka, 1998, p. 1). As a nation we have pursued the most determined immigration initiatives to the point that sixteen per cent of Canadians are foreign born (p. 1). Second, Aboriginal people have become an increasingly vital and visible element in our diversity. The empowerment of their legal and social stature by the Charter and recent court decisions, where Aboriginal rights are confirmed and the duty of the federal government to negotiate the meaning of those rights is established, has only enhanced this status. The third fundamental component of this diversity is in the presence of the province of Quebec within the Canadian federal system. According to Kymlicka (1998), a leading world authority on group rights, it is not that Canada has recognized minority language rights that is so remarkable about this feature, but that Canada has made accommodations to this national minority in the federal structure that we take so much for granted (p. 2). The rights revolution, then, is remarkable in Canada, for a variety of reasons. The individual and group diversity, the delicate nature of national unity in a federal state embracing the “two solitudes,” a multitude of distinct First Nations, the nature of the country as one of the British settler societies with strong ties to British liberal thought and traditions, and the close proximity of the American presence in culture and thought, are all important features of the revolution.

### **The Landscape of Community in the Context of Rights**

It is easy to take for granted the positive features of the rights revolution, without any serious consideration of its more negative impacts. Ignatieff (2000), himself a strong

supporter of the rights revolution and its liberal elements, is quick to point out the difficulties: "the rights revolution makes society harder to control, more unruly, more contentious. This is because rights equality makes society more inclusive, and rights protection constrains government power" (p. 6). Gone is the meaning behind the residual clause of the British North America Act of 1867: "to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Canada" (Dawson, 1966, p. 87). After three short decades of the rights revolution, it can be argued that Canada could more accurately adopt the American "right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." On the positive side of the balance sheet the rights revolution has made our society more inclusive for both individuals and groups.

There are significant problems with the rights revolution, however, that impact on civil society in general, and on practice, including educational practice. After decades of rights talk there has not been much delivered to the lives of individuals and groups. Ignatieff (2000) asks if "the Aboriginal renaissance in our country cut into the suicide rate among teenagers on Northern Ontario reserves? Hardly" (p. 15). Nor have the Aboriginal student success rates improved as quickly as the rates for non-Aboriginal students in British Columbia schools. (Ministry of Education, 2002). For many Aboriginal people "rights talk remains just talk" (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 16). Indeed, for Ignatieff, "rights talk may have become a substitute for reform" (p. 16). Mary Glendon (2000) echoes this view in her book *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse*. In the United States, rights talk, for all its noble beginnings, has become a simplistic demonstration of American individualism and liberty. Glendon argues that it distorts American culture in its

shallow view of the American traditions of hospitality, care, and the value of community (p. xii).

Similarly, rights talk and demands for recognition have penetrated deeply into the social and political environment in Canada. I would argue that it has penetrated so deeply into these beliefs that most people are not aware of the power it holds over our imagination or the difficulties it presents, including its failure to provide concrete improvements in peoples' lives. In relation to education, its inability to define the essential features of the educational purpose for both young people and the wider society is very evident. While protocols of due process, deliberative consultative structures, and formal demonstrations of accountability have become an integral part of all decision-making in the public education system, substantive issues of what is to be taught, and how, have become increasingly less important. Recent initiatives by many of the provincial governments across Canada, regardless of their political rhetoric, have only served to turn rights talk into structures of governance that formalize the rights agenda and monopolize political discourse. The introduction of School Planning Councils in 2002 in British Columbia, as a vehicle for parents' rights, is a good example of such initiatives that occupy the attention of school principals to the detriment of their focus on instructional leadership.

It is also clear that the rights revolution has not provided all groups with increased recognition of their rights or the differences they represent in identity and culture. There are other forces at work in our society as well; organized labour, for instance, has fewer rights and less power compared to the 1960s (Ignatieff, 2000, p. 16). And while Trudeau believed that his vision for a Charter guaranteeing individual rights

and freedoms would bring us together as a nation, we have never been more fragmented, and indeed, in some instances, more at odds with each other. Canadians have discovered that rights alone cannot create a nation, or in fact, provide the basis for community. Shared rights, both group and individual, can deepen the sense of community, however, when it is based in shared experiences, culture and history (p. 33). There are elements of this in our civil society and in our practice. I will return to the issues of community, solidarity, and reciprocity in later chapters.

In this introduction I have described the social and political landscape, the influence of the distinct nature of Canadian society on the rights revolution, the intentions of Trudeau in his work with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the nature of the rights revolution, the impression of rights talk on the perceptions of individuals and groups, and the positive and negative implications for individuals, community and country. The description has been to some extent superficial, but it has defined sufficiently the political, social, and cultural landscape upon which social circumstances and public education rests in these first few years of the new century. The description has also provided the broad context for questions of educational leadership practice that are of concern in the dissertation to which I would like to now turn.

### **Liberalism in Modern Society**

How then does education fit into this landscape, a landscape once occupied by a public education system designed in the nineteenth century specifically to educate a democratic citizenry of Euro-Canadian men for the building of the nation? There are a number of critical issues here, including questions about curriculum, pedagogy, and

governance. This is not simply an issue of citizenship, as we have known it in the past. It is about educating the individual in the context of the modern search for and creation of identity in the historical context of recent Canadian multi-national, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic circumstances, all made even more complex by our increasing demand for and expectations of individual and group rights.

The principles of liberalism have formed the basis for Western societies and their education systems for more than just the last century. Although there have been profound social, political, and cultural changes in that time, the traditional principles of liberalism have remained consistent: that “individuals should not face unfair impediments in pursuing the lives they choose for themselves, and the purpose of politics is to guarantee that such impediments will be removed” (Beiner, 2003, p. 15). John Locke (1693/1996), as one of the founders of liberalism, argued that it was not the role of public education to shape the character or form the opinions of young people. “Every man must sometime or other be trusted to himself and his own conduct;” he wrote, “and he that is good, a virtuous and able man must be made so within” (p. 31). While for the most part we take these sentiments for granted in the modern age, their focus on the individual as a separate entity was a radical concept for Locke’s time. In modern society, liberalism is grounded in individual choice and well-being. In modern education, liberalism has meant that young people need the support of schools to become authors of their own lives (Callan & White, 2003, p. 96). The individual, on this autonomous view, is understood to be personally independent, with the capacity and responsibility to make independent decisions.

However, there has been a serious re-examination of liberalism as a political and educational philosophy in the Western representative democracies in recent years. This debate has been in response to questions about whether liberalism can provide satisfactory answers to many of the new demands of national and ethnic groups within states (Callan & White, 2003, p. 95) and the fragmentation of national communities for social, economic, and political reasons. The critical question is whether the liberal idea about the primacy of the individual in society and in our educational systems can meet the challenges posed by the increasing pluralism and its recognition. What is meant by these challenges? On an ethical level, in the Western democracies with their focus on the individual there are significant disagreements about "What is the good life? What is the source of truth and meaning in the world? What are our obligations to each other? and so on" (Chambers & Kymlicka, 2002, p. 1). While these questions abound in even relatively homogeneous societies, they challenge the very existence of a wider community in an emerging heterogeneous society such as Canada. On a functional level, there are certain aspects of a modern industrialized economy that can only be met by a wider national purpose. Chief of these characteristics has been the development of a mobile, educated and literate work force existing within a culture of some degree of equality of opportunity in combination with some degree of a social safety net. To create and maintain this welfare state requires some sort of solidarity, some sense of obligation to each other, and some sense of common identity and common membership (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 77). In recent years, there has been much attention to questions of community and solidarity as the sense of community has been eroded. The renewed interest in civil society reflects this concern, as it allows us to look critically at our associational life, and

the ways in which we create and maintain solidarity within our communities and the nation (p. 1).

While an influential critique of liberalism has come from the communitarian position and its concern for community, there have been other critiques as well, all based in political philosophy, but with direct connections to the philosophical underpinnings of education. Ronald Beiner (2003) has defined each of these with an examination of their core ideas. Elements of each appear to some lesser or greater extent in the educational systems in Western societies. The first, the nationalist idea, is "that membership in an ethnos is an essential aspect of a properly human life" (p. 17). The second, the multicultural idea, is that relationships between different cultural groups is the most important element of modern societies and that national states must mediate the conflicts that arise in these circumstances. The third, the civic idea, is that shared citizenship is essential to human identity and to justice whatever the nature of the political entity. The fourth is the communitarian idea "that the attainment of character in one's moral life and full engagement in one's civic life require thick identities..." (Beiner, 2003, p. 17). These 'thick' identities involve embracing experiences rooted in the family, the local community, and the associative group to which one may belong, as a basis for an engagement in the larger community and within elements of civil society. All of these core ideas have implications for education. It is no coincidence that they all appear to have a special relevance to the circumstances of the "ethnoculturally diverse" country of Canada described earlier by Kymlicka (1998). And it is no wonder they all appear in the ongoing debate about what really amounts to an ontological discourse, the nature of

being human in the circumstances of the modern society of Canada in the early years of the twenty-first century.

### **Research Questions**

It is my intention to begin in the practical demands for recognition of diversity and build a historical and philosophical context in which to illuminate the nature of these demands. It is my hope that in that process new ways of living and working together in the same space can be explored for their impact on identity and social justice. So, I would like to answer the following question: How can public education recognize and accommodate the cultural difference represented by First Nations people? Within this general framework I would also like to know what can be learned about the history and culture of First Nations people and the Euro-Canadian society in the Cariboo-Chilcotin that would assist in designing ways of living together in a just and equitable way in the same identity space. And, in turn, I will need to consider what concepts can provide a useful framework of ideas to uncover a deeper understanding of the world-views of First Nations and Euro-Canadian peoples.

### **Method**

In beginning the introduction in a personal narrative I have examined some of the circumstances of my life and some of the important meanings I have given to, and explanations I have for, those circumstances. I have begun in this way to reflect my view that leadership is a moral activity, that we all exist and act in the world, and that we must take responsibility for the nature of those actions. Leadership, on this view, is not just a technical exercise, but part of an ethical project. To fully appreciate the nature of that



project it is critical that leaders understand those ethical dimensions as well as the historical context of their practice (Madoc-Jones, 2004, P. 1). Taylor (1989, 2004) is particularly useful here for he has attended to the retrieval of the ethical nature of the modern world by examining the historical construction of the self in that world. While I will need to discuss this in greater detail later, what is important here is the interaction between history and philosophy for what it can offer to a better understanding of the institutions and communities in which “leadership is embedded, as well as in the consideration of issues that form the contingent reality of decision making” (Madoc-Jones, 2004, p. 1).

It is my intention, therefore, to employ this historical and philosophical approach in my research. This is a method of investigation that looks at historical circumstances and the ways in which people view these circumstances. It is my intention to begin with those circumstances and events and the hegemonic ‘picture’ we have of that ‘reality.’ I will then show how the hegemonic view of this ‘reality’ is not the only interpretation available: and that indeed, these views have become sites of struggle between contending views of the ‘reality’ of the circumstances. In conducting an historical investigation of First Nations people and their involvement in public education in the area, I will show that the hegemonic view of the issues in the relationship between First Nations people and the Euro-Canadian society are deeply held and commonly understood to be both universal and indispensable to what are also thought to be the core beliefs that underpin the liberal state. While I will not present a history of racism, I will show how these beliefs are unmindful of their ethical content and not helpful in devising ways to improve the relationship. It is my intention to build a critical and

reflective understanding of that relationship, one rich in ethical discourse with the potential to free us from the entanglements induced by our conventional thinking.

It is my intention that this investigation will be more consistent with Taylor's hermeneutical approach than a critical theory approach. Taylor's work reflects an allegiance to the importance of historical memory as a dependable guide to tease out the richness of the broad and deep understanding for which I am looking. Taylor has long considered the nature of this retrieval and has written more about it in his recent book, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004). This work on the concept of social imaginary is a good contribution to historical method and to the debate about whether ideas or material forces are responsible for historical change; for Taylor makes use of both, looking to an examination of the interaction of material factors (the circumstances of history) and the way in which people understand these factors and forces in their social environment. Taylor places particular importance on the influence of this understanding (social imaginary), believing that the way people act upon the social and physical environment around them is determined by the meanings they give to understanding that environment. An examination of this complex interaction between the social imaginary and material forces is what feeds Taylor the rich understandings of meaning that he is able to retrieve from the past. This same historical retrieval is consistent with the approach I intend to take. My investigations are about building a 'picture' of the context that allows us to see the circumstances of the relationship between First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures in a new and different way, one that will allow us to build new understandings that recognize culture for its value to identity and its contribution to equity and the redistribution of resources for social justice.

## **Sites of Struggle**

The nature of the description of the participants in my investigations is critical for it underpins the purpose of the project and the historical approach of my work from the beginning. My investigations will need to acknowledge the dominant language that has heretofore defined the boundaries around and between cultures that occupy the same physical, economic, social, and political space. Critically reflecting on this prevailing language, understanding its historical roots, and redefining the participants to the cultural relationships will allow me to begin to better understand the sites of the struggle between contending world-views, the nature of the differences, and the possibilities for improvement in that relationship. In this consideration, Taylor, and the other theorists upon which this work is based, can offer different views that will, in their examination, allow me to enrich the possibilities for those improvements. As my project is directly concerned with examining the social, economic, and political context of the involvement of First Nations children and youth in the public school system in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, I will need to begin by exploring the language defining First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures and in doing so, begin to redefine the 'picture' we have of the cultures in themselves and in their relationships with other cultures, and the impact these relationships have in public institutions such as schools.

In the Cariboo-Chilcotin and British Columbia as a whole, there is general agreement that the term First Nations "refers to the people who can trace their ancestry to the populations that occupied the land prior to the arrival of Europeans and Americans in the late eighteenth century" (Muckle, p. 2). In fact, in the Cariboo-Chilcotin area it was determined by First Nations communities about a decade ago that the term First Nations

would be used in the public school system of the area. Since that time, the use of the term First Nations has become more common in the community and its institutions. Although the term First Nations had been used for some time before that in some settings, non-Aboriginal people commonly referred to First Nations people as 'natives,' 'aboriginals,' or 'indians.' Up until the 1990s, all of these terms were commonly used in the educational system. The use of these terms has been, and to some lesser extent, remains a site of struggle between First Nations communities and people and the Euro-Canadian culture and non-Aboriginal people. In written language this has extended to question whether the various terms are to be capitalized. It is not exceptional in the community to hear First Nations people referred to as 'natives' or 'indians,' as people from the dominant culture attempt to continue to impose their definition and image of First Nations people. Indeed, while First Nations people, communities, and organizations, demand the right to determine the common descriptor for their identity, and have that identity recognized in the language of non-Aboriginal people, elements of the dominant culture have resisted the change and the due recognition of that identity. And while this is no longer a site of struggle within some of the formal and organizational areas of the school system, it remains one in some segments of the larger dominant culture, including the local press, and is reflected in the views of some children and young people in schools.

The use of language and the struggles for recognition around that language are still important sites of struggle for recognition for First Nations people. There are good reasons for this as language is irrevocably tied to identity. Although I will look more deeply into this relationship between language and identity later, it will be sufficient for

now to acknowledge the connection and discuss the advantages of the term First Nations. As both 'native' and 'indian' have disparaging connotations, the use of the term First Nations avoids negative stereotyping. Its use also corrects the colonial legacy of the mistaken belief that Christopher Columbus had reached India. There are also positive and useful definitions for the term itself. First Nations recognizes the presence of nations of people in the area before the arrival of Europeans and acknowledges the original sovereignty of those people. It also recognizes the multicultural, and indeed, multinational, nature of the diverse bands. There is also a more formal site of struggle around terms with the continued use of 'Indian' and 'Aboriginal' as a reflection of the terms as they are used in the Canadian Constitution and the Indian Act (Indian Act, The 1996 Annotated, S2, p. 4), a site of struggle that occupies the attention of both the federal government and national First Nations organizations. For the purposes of this work I will use First Nations to refer to all Aboriginal people and communities.<sup>2</sup>

Less of a site of struggle, and perhaps more a response to insecurity or lack of understanding, are the descriptors regarding the dominant society. There is and has been for some time, an inability among non-Aboriginal people to recognize the presence and identity of First Nations people and communities and at the same time define themselves in a way that does not express the cultural values of the 'old' settler society. I will need to return to this point later, but for the purposes of the dissertation I will use Euro-Canadian to refer to the dominant 'settler' culture, realizing full well that this culture is made up of more than just people of European ancestry. When I refer to people of the

<sup>2</sup> Métis and Inuit do not include themselves under the term First Nations. This is because the term reflects Aboriginal people whose ancestry can be traced to a band. As a result of this distinction, the term Aboriginal is used in some areas and in some public institutions so that Métis and Inuit are included.

dominant culture I will refer to them as non-Aboriginal. This use of terms is by no means accepted within the dominant culture, as the terms as I have defined them also define the relationship between ethnic cultures within the dominant culture itself, and threaten the commonly accepted liberal view within that culture that all people are equally protected, supported, and provided with equal opportunity, by the rule of law and the processes of government. Before I go on I need to also acknowledge that the use of the term non-Aboriginal refers specifically to ethnic diversity within the dominant culture, excluding for my purposes other associative differences such as religion, sexual orientation, and gender. These are not irrelevant issues for my work, but not of direct interest to my investigations at this time.

## **Conclusion**

In this introductory chapter, I have described my personal interest in the relationship between the people of First Nations cultures and the larger and dominant Euro-Canadian culture in the Cariboo-Chilcotin area of British Columbia and explained my intentions in undertaking the study. I have described the social and political landscape of Canadian society in these early years of the new century and outlined some of the challenges posed by cultural difference and diversity. I have explained that I will approach the study from an historical and philosophical point of view with the intention to better understand how the community might proceed to improve that relationship and with regard to my practice, construct more equitable policy and structures of educational governance.

I have also introduced the main theorists upon which I will rest my explorations. They include Taylor (with the concept of modern social imaginaries and the politics of recognition and identity), Tully (with a useful alternative to Taylor's point of interaction between cultures and for a good grasp of the constitutional arrangements required to facilitate the recognition of diversity), Habermas (with the nature of recognition in relation to contending views about the liberal state and the concept of communicative action), Fraser (with a historical perspective on the politics of recognition, the dynamic nature of culture, and a more useful view of the relationship between recognition and identity) and Benhabib (with a thoughtful view of communicative ethics and the nature of culture and cultural interaction) . It is my intention in the remainder of this work to engage some of the important thinking of each of these theorists, in support and contention with each other, to inform my investigations. And lastly, I have introduced the First Nations and Euro-Canadian participants in my study as they contend with each other, within the parameters of language and understanding, over demands for recognition of difference and just inclusion in the broader society.

Chapter Two will lay out the political, economic, and social relationship between the Euro-Canadian and First Nation societies in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. It will also examine the historical background to that relationship and identify the ongoing issues of contention between the two world-views, focusing finally on those issues as they manifest themselves in struggles for recognition in the public education system. Of critical interest here will be the history of resistance in First Nations communities to domination by the Euro-Canadian society.

The next four chapters will consider a number of philosophical concepts. Chapter Three will situate the politics of recognition within the larger literature on citizenship and the nature of recent challenges to the nation-state. It will examine how the due recognition of First Nations people in the context of the Euro-Canadian society is critical to the full and authentic development of the individual and group identities of both communities. The chapter will focus on Taylor's thinking about the relationship between recognition and identity and consider a number of issues within and alternatives to the liberal view of society. Chapter Four will examine how Taylor's thinking about the modern social imaginary can help us appreciate the depth of the differences between Euro-Canadians and First Nations people. I will also engage Dussel's (1996, 1888/2002) critique of Taylor's views about the social imaginary and Lemert's (1994) critique of identity and the self. Chapter Five will take up a further discussion of liberalism and consider the theoretical and practical obstacles to the politics of recognition in the Western constitutional state. I will describe in detail Taylor's, Habermas', and Tully's solutions to the issues and dilemmas of the previous chapters and explain how certain kinds of liberal thinking do not provide a way forward. Alternatives to the present paradigms will be explored. Chapter Six will return to a consideration of Community Healing Circles and examine the possibilities for ethical communication in the Circle process. In this context, the chapter will also build on our understanding of culture and the dynamics of interaction between cultures in diverse societies such as Canada.

And finally, Chapter Seven will summarize what we have learned from the historical and philosophical investigations and identify how we might use that knowledge to better live together in the same identity space. I hope to be able to usefully speculate



about what can be done and suggest what further work with regard to policy development and educational governance might assist in that development. But before we begin any investigation of useful theoretical concepts or frameworks it is necessary to begin on the ground with an examination of the history of the peoples of the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

## CHAPTER 2:

### Historical Background

#### Introduction

There are three distinct First Nations in the Cariboo-Chilcotin - Dakelh<sup>3</sup>, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in – which make up a large and important part of the economic, social, and political make-up of the area and the work of the school district [see Appendices A and B for maps of the First Nations peoples of southern British Columbia and the bands that comprise the area of School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)]. There are also distinct non-Aboriginal cultures as well; immigrants primarily from Great Britain in the early years of contact, followed by other Europeans, Chinese, and American. More recently there have been a large number of South-Asian immigrants and in the past few years a steady stream of German and Swiss immigrants. There is also a wide range of smaller ethnic groups. While there are identifiable differences between people from the many immigrant ethnic groups and First Nations people, all of these cultures have much in common and to treat them separately would not recognize the ongoing and daily interaction and engagement that exists between them in institutions and public processes, however difficult and dysfunctional those

<sup>3</sup> Although I have used Dakelh, as it is the First Nations name for the nation, the term is not commonly used in the area, even among First Nations people. The term used is either Carrier, or Southern Carrier.

relationships may be at times. Elizabeth Furniss (1999) recognized this in her anthropological study of the area, when she portrayed each of the cultures not as enclaves, but as part of a broader community within a dominant cultural system (p. ix). This perspective is consistent with my experience in my work in public education with students, families, and political authorities, where people from many cultures, including First Nations people, are engaged in an ongoing basis within the larger and dominant culture. This perspective requires that we consider any one culture in the context of the other cultures and the larger culture that is shared by all. While I will focus on the history and culture of the First Nations communities of the area, I will return to examine the relationship between First Nations people and this broader and dominant Euro-Canadian culture by looking at the nature of both. It is my view that a reciprocal engagement between First Nations communities and the Euro-Canadian community can form the underpinning of a more just relationship. This relationship will require that it be co-constructed by both communities and that both communities learn about the nature of each other's world-view. This kind of recognitive relationship, worked out together over substantive issues of difference, can also form the basis of effective structures of educational governance. It is my intention in this dissertation to begin to consider the nature of those obstacles to understanding of the "other" by retrieving elements of the history and culture of the First Nations people of the area that ought to be understood and considered in any dialogue about the education of First Nations children and youth and the nature of the schools and classrooms they attend. It is critical that the public school system, its political authorities at all levels, and its educators, better understand the important features of history and culture that form the underpinnings of the

relationship between First Nations communities and schools and the public education system. In the study of the “other” is the purpose of this dissertation.

It is important to be realistic, however. While First Nations people and non-Aboriginal people share some features of a common culture and public space, the land, its resources, and access to economic, social, and political resources are not shared equitably and in many important ways the two communities exist as two separate entities. The dissertation will demonstrate this; that colonialism is about more than economic domination, but also “about cultural assumptions and agendas that have long outlived the gunboats” (Harris & Barman, 1997/1998, p. 4). Colonialism is also about the creation of cultural understandings that separate groups of people, rewarding some to the detriment of others (p. 5). So it is not surprising that the burden of history and change still rest on First Nations people, and the language used to describe First Nations people and their cultural artifacts, and indeed, the artifacts themselves, are still a point of significant struggle. While the public school system is also permeated with this legacy of colonialism, its schools and classrooms are also sites of significant formal and informal contact between members of the two communities. Community Healing Circles are one of those sites of contact where there exist possibilities for the co-construction of alternatives and the building of a more just relationship. The purpose of the dissertation is to engage in that discourse.

## **History**

It is fortunate that over the past several decades a body of research has established a much better understanding of the relationship between First Nations

people and the Euro-Canadian society generally and with regard to education. Of interest here includes the work of Robert Boyd (1994), Robin Fisher (1977), Cole Harris (2002), and Alan McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn (2004). Of special interest to me for my purposes is a recent ethnographic study by Elizabeth Furniss (1999) about the economic, social, and political relationships between First Nations and Euro-Canadian societies in Williams Lake, an essay by Reva Joshee (2004) on the history of nation-building of the federal government in the face of national and ethnic diversity, a volume edited by John Hylton (1999) on *Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada*, and an extensive study of aboriginal education across Canada edited by Marlene Brant Castellano, Lynne Davis, and Louise Lahache (2000). In addition, Tim Schouls (2003) recently published *Shifting Boundaries*, an examination of the identity of First Nations people as that distinctiveness relates to self-government and Andrew Woolford (2004) published a study of the treaty process in British Columbia, entitled, *Negotiating Affirmative Repair: Symbolic Violence in the British Columbia Treaty Process*. There is, then, a growing body of work of significance for the portrayal of past and present circumstances as well as for efforts to renegotiate the relationship between First Nations communities and the Euro-Canadian society at a variety of social and institutional levels.

The relationship between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people is fundamentally shaped by historical events and circumstances little known by many residents of the region. While there have been some recent changes in the relationship between First Nations peoples and the dominant Euro-Canadian culture, the settler society has for the most part determined the nature of the relationship and the terms upon which that relationship is considered. This dominance is not surprising in view of

the legislative framework upon which the colony of British Columbia and the Canadian state have been built. There are a number of key legal structures upon which that framework is based. The first, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Library and Archives Canada), was passed by the British Crown to establish the relationship of First Nations to the British state and provide for the development of the Canadian colonies. It acknowledged the prior right of First Nations people to ownership of the land but established a relationship where the Crown governed all aspects of the lives of First Nations people. In effect, the Crown could, and did, trade the granting of various traditional rights in exchange for legal access to the land. The act was a positive development for First Nations people in its recognition of title to the land, but negative for its denial of sovereignty to First Nations political authorities. In spite of these limitations, it has formed the basis of legal challenges to Canadian laws and underpins land-claim negotiations to the present day.

The second was the British North America Act of 1867 (Library and Archives Canada), again an act of the British parliament, which established the nation of Canada. The act structured the powers of the federal and provincial levels of government, ignored the earlier recognition of title to the land and the principles of negotiation granted by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and effectively made First Nations people the responsibility of the Canadian Parliament. The third was the Indian Act (Library and Archives Canada, 1869), which formalized the relationship of responsibility and control of First Nations people and established the Department of Indian Affairs to make good the intentions of the legislative branch of government. In the following decades the Department cooperated with other departments in actively pursuing the acquisition of land for

settlement and resource development through policies designed to control and assimilate First Nations people.

Another piece of legislation, one with far-reaching effect, never reached the floor of the House of Commons. In 1969, the government of Pierre Trudeau proposed a White Paper designed to extinguish any and all legal protection afforded First Nations people in the provisions of the Indian Act. It proposed that hunting and gathering rights, title to the land, and other provisions for the distinct nature of First Nations cultures should be removed so that there would remain no legal restrictions on or protections of First Nations people and culture. The White Paper was motivated by the liberal view that the recognition of any and all elements of distinctiveness was inherently discriminatory. The reaction of First Nations people was swift, for the policy alternatives proposed in the White Paper threatened the special status afforded First Nations people and jeopardized their very identity. In the end, the White Paper had the opposite effect than that intended. It caused the mobilization of political forces by First Nations authorities and put an end to the proposed government initiative, empowering significant change in the relationship between First Nations and the government (Schouls, 2003, p. 42). This then is the legislative context of the governance relationship between First Nations people and the Canadian government and forms the background to that relationship in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. To get a good sense of that relationship and the history of First Nations people of the area I want to begin, however, on the ground in the time before contact.

While there is little known about the history of First Nations people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin plateau by many non-Aboriginals, there has been considerable ethnographic and archaeological study by anthropologists. For the most part they have

focused on the coastal areas, the St'át'imc people of the Lillooet area along the Thompson and Fraser Rivers south of the central plateau, and the Dakelh people north of the plateau. From the evidence gathered, it is generally believed that the Cariboo-Chilcotin plateau was first populated 10-12,000 years ago by groups of people as the last ice age gradually receded. These people were primarily nomadic hunters and gatherers, whose numbers and economy were much affected by the changing climatic conditions over the centuries. Archaeologists, for instance, have been able to examine the availability of salmon and ungulates over thousands of years since the last ice age and compare that availability to changing climatic conditions, migrations of people, and the nature of economic activity in a variety of diverse societies. There have been a number of studies of this sort in the Lillooet area (Hayden, 2000; Kuijt, 1988). Farther north, it is believed that the Dakelh and Tsilhqot'in people, both from the Athapaskan ethno-linguistic group, moved into the plateau area west of the Fraser River and north of the Chilcotin River later than the end of the ice age from the north, bringing with them knowledge of a salmon economy with the specialized skills of catching, preserving, and storing salmon for the long winters on the plateau (Carlson, 1996, p. 36). That structure formed the basis of the economy of the plateau people and remained in place until the first contact with Europeans in the late 1700s. It is believed that the Secwepemc people from the Interior Salish ethno-linguistic group arrived in the area east of the Fraser River from the south (Fladmark, 1986, p. 140).

The economies on both sides of the River were similar. With the short growing season of the plateau, extended family units travelled about a particular area in predetermined seasonal patterns, year after year, hunting, fishing, and gathering the



available resources of the land. Each of the distinct cultural groups of the interior plateau, the Dakelh, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in peoples, came to be made up of a variety of bands whose families occupied a particular area, and were known by reference to that area. Each of the three groups occupied a particular geographical area, although there was always some controversy about the areas controlled by each. Those disagreements have lasted to the present day, focused now for the most part on the dislocations caused by epidemics and colonial edict. In the Cariboo-Chilcotin area at the time of contact the Dakelh occupied the Nazko and northern Ulkatcho regions, the Secwepemc occupied the land east of the Fraser River as well as the area west of the river around the mouth of the Chilcotin River. The Tsilhqot'in occupied the large plateau and southerly mountainous area west of the Fraser, including the area within the drainage of the Chilcotin River and the headwaters of several rivers that flow directly west to the Pacific Ocean to where the plateau drops off to the coastal valleys (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004, p. 184).

While there were some similar political and social structures across all three groups, each had distinctive cultural features. The Dakelh, for instance, did not have hereditary chiefs, but organized leadership around particular tasks. This is true for the Tsilhqot'in as well, while the Secwepemc bands recognized hereditary chiefs. It was mistakenly reported by Furniss (1999) that the Tsilhqot'in recognized hereditary chiefs, as at least two of the Tsilhqot'in bands and their reserves (Toosey and Anaham) were known by the names of their chiefs (p. 29). In fact, both Toosey and Anaham were appointed to their positions by the federal government, and Anaham was Nuxalk and had married into a Tsilhqot'in family (J. Gentles, personal communications, April 26,

2005). According to McMillan and Yellowhorn (2004), Tsilhqot'in "society was loosely divided into three classes: nobility, commoners and slaves" (p. 185). The same general structure existed in the Secwepemc as well (p. 177) At the time of contact they also report, perhaps mistakenly, that there was some recent development of potlatch activity in Tsilhqot'in societies in contrast to the more egalitarian societies of their Athapaskan neighbours to the north. There is contrary evidence that potlatch activity was integral to Tsilhqot'in society long before contact (J. Gentles, personal communication, April 26, 2005). There is agreement that warfare existed between each of the ethnic groups and with other ethnic groups on the periphery of their territories (McMillan and Yellowhorn, 2004, p. 177).

Before contact with Europeans, in addition to the seasonal economy, there was also a well-established trading economy between groups and bands of the area and the coast with a system of well-maintained trails to support the trade. According to Ulkatcho and Nuxalk Elders, the trail system was the life-blood of culture and the economy, for it made it possible to move quickly to hunting, trapping, berry-picking, and other resource gathering areas as well as for trading and visiting friends and neighbours (Birchwater, 1993, p. 3). It also enabled individuals and families to move to alternative resources to maintain community harmony and avoid open conflict (J. Gentles, personal communication, April 26, 2005). The Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh obtained such products as dried salmon, dentalium and abalone shells, and eulachon oil from the Nuxalk in the west and dried salmon and salmon oil from the Secwepemc in the east (McMillan and Yellowhorn, 2004, p. 185). This trading area extended further south and east as well, involving First Nations ethnic groups beyond the three of concern to me in this work.

Indeed, there was extensive trade, communication, and exchange between bands in particular ethnic groups and between ethnic groups over a vast area extending from the coast into the prairies. These complex social, economic, and political societies, spread across the interior plateau, intertwined by centuries of economic and political engagement, connected by a well-developed system of trails, is what Mackenzie found on his trip across the plateau in the summer of 1793.

From the late 1700s well into the next century the contact with Europeans was primarily through the fur trade. There are a variety of opinions about the effect of the fur trade on First Nations societies during this first contact. On one hand, European traders who first came into contact with First Nations communities found complex and intact cultures. There is evidence that First Nations people were effective traders and insisted on a good price for the furs they trapped. The European goods they received in exchange were of considerable benefit to themselves and their communities. At least on the coast, there was a flourishing of social and cultural life for a time with the advent of iron tools and other goods. On the other hand, there were negative aspects to the trade as well: these include the increased discord within communities as First Nations leaders vied for critical roles in the fur trade hierarchy, the conflict between First Nations people and the traders which was sometimes violent, and the diseases that accompanied the contact with Europeans (Fisher, 1977/1992, p. 61). Nonetheless, and especially in the interior, the general pattern of living was not much interrupted by the actual exigencies of the fur trade, at least not until the smallpox epidemics. It is unclear when the actual

disease reached into the interior plateau,<sup>4</sup> but by 1862-3 it has been estimated that the First Nations population of the area of British Columbia had been reduced by 62 percent (Boyd, 1994, p. 28). And while Robin Fisher (1996) finds this estimate to be too large, Cole Harris (1994) estimates the decline as a result of all the epidemics to be closer to 90 per cent (p. 75). The true number cannot now be determined, but it is known that the smallpox epidemic wiped out whole bands in some areas. The social and political structure, and the very cultural memory, of whole groups of people were disrupted, and in some cases, destroyed. Villages and communities, in some cases, ceased to exist, and survivors banded together to survive as best they could. It is thought that the Secwepemc people, for instance, abandoned the area west of the Fraser River at this time (Teit, 1909/1975, p. 466).

During the time of the fur trade and before 1849 and the creation of the colony of Vancouver Island there was little competition between Aboriginal people and Europeans for land. All this ended on Vancouver Island in 1849 (Harris, 2002, p. xviii) and in 1858 in the Cariboo. But it wasn't until the 1860s that the First Nations people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin were faced with massive change as communities were faced with devastating illnesses while thousands of miners, traders, merchants, and farmers flooded into the area in search of gold. While First Nations people had been able to adapt to the first contact with Europeans through the fur trade, the pace of change following the discovery

<sup>4</sup> There has been significant work in recent years with regard to epidemics in the Pacific Northwest of North America. And while the full effects of the epidemics is still unknown, and may remain so, it is now generally agreed that epidemics occurred both before and after the first visits by Europeans on the coast in 1774. Robert Boyd (1994) describes smallpox epidemics as early as 1769 in various areas along the coast and in the interior. Furniss recounts the reports in the Fort Alexandria Journals of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives of epidemics of whooping cough in 1845, measles in 1850, and smallpox in 1855.

of gold in the Cariboo was just too much to accommodate. With the flood of non-Aboriginal people came British law to support the settlers for the first time in competition with First Nations people for the land and resources (Fisher, 1977/1992, p. 116). While there was early indication that the Crown was willing to negotiate and sign treaties with Aboriginal people over land tenure on Vancouver Island, no such generosity existed for the First Nations of the interior plateau. During the tenure of Governor Douglas (1850-64), First Nations title to the land was ignored in the interior, allowing newly arrived colonists to simply take possession of any land not previously occupied by settlers (Harris, 2002, p. 32). First Nations village lands were eventually allocated as reserves, ostensibly to allow First Nations people to be self-sufficient until their absorption into Euro-Canadian society. Under this system the best land was simply taken by settlers and only when First Nations people protested were small reserves created. By 1864, even this policy was abandoned, and in spite of First Nations demands for recognition of their presence on and use of the land, any provision for First Nations title to any land was ignored. The situation was made worse in 1866 when First Nations people were effectively denied the right to pre-empt land as well. Within a short eight years from the beginning of the gold rush, First Nations people in the area were denied both their traditional title to the land and excluded from the legal provisions of the colonial government for land ownership. "British settlers," according to Harris (2002), "simply took what they wanted and, in so doing, relegated the dispossessed to marginalized fractions of land" (p. xxii).

It is not surprising, then, to discover that the 1870s were a time of periodic starvation for the Secwepemc with almost total dependence on the cyclical salmon

fishery, hunting, and small vegetable gardens. There was simply not enough land to feed the people. By 1880, all of the best land in the Williams Lake area had been pre-empted by settlers. By 1879, the condition of First Nations people in the area had reached a crisis and even been described in a letter by Chief William of the Williams Lake Band to the editor of the Victoria Colonist. Several years later in 1884, the Indian Agent reported to Ottawa that salmon were almost non-existent and the berry crop had failed (Furniss, 1999, p. 36). But there was little remaining agricultural land available for designation as reserves. As an alternative, the Reserve Commissioner, appointed to deal with the demands by First Nations bands for land, granted land for reserves, at Alkali Lake, for instance, that was rejected for pre-emption by settlers for its dry and poor quality and inability to be irrigated. (Fisher, 1977/1992, p. 201) The Commissioner could only offer suggestions for irrigation projects. "With minor exceptions," according to Harris (2002), "these reserves contained no arable land" (p. 210). Secwepemc demands for title to their traditional lands fell on the Commissioner's deaf ears. The story was similar for the Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh, although the reserves that were granted in the late 1880s contained some better agricultural land (p.210), as there was less pressure from pre-emptions on the west side of the Fraser River, isolated as it was from the Cariboo road and the gold fields on the east side. In fact, the western-most bands of the Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh were able to maintain the traditional pattern of their lives through much of this period as the communities recovered as best they could from the various epidemics of the previous century, the pre-emption of traditional lands, as well as the tragic aftermath of the 1864 attack on the Waddington road-building crew by a group of Tsilhqot'in. Nevertheless, the settlement of the land question in favour of the settlers and the crown "by deterritorializing Native people onto reserves, both conceptually and on

the ground...opened up the space..." (Brealey. 1997/98, p. 232), upon which colonial society was built. The hanging of five Tsilhqot'in men in Quesnel as a result of the attack was a reminder to all First Nations of the power of the colonial authorities (Emery, 1992; Rothenberger, 1978).

### **Aboriginal Title**

For all the bands of the interior plateau, and indeed, for those across the province, title to traditional lands remained an unresolved issue. Indeed, First Nations demands for recognition of title fuelled the development of a variety of First Nations organizations over the next century with concerns for issues beginning with land claims, but including education, social services, culture, and economic development. The evolution of First Nations organizations was closely tied with a number of significant leaders, whose lives were occupied with the development of organizations to better represent the interests of First Nations communities. Chief among these is Andrew Paull. Although Paull's leadership was involved with the interior bands on only several occasions, his work reflects the same concerns and demands as they evolved from the late 1800s. Patterson (1962) identifies four phases to this development. During the period immediately after the gold-rush until the years just before the First World War, as increasingly large numbers of settlers flooded into British Columbia and took possession of the best agricultural land, local First Nations bands petitioned various levels of government, often with the direct involvement of church leaders. Clergy from both the Catholic and Methodist churches were involved to the extent that more than one level of government complained that First Nations demands for title derived from church agitation within First Nations communities.

The second phase, from the first decade of the century to the depression, saw First Nations bands joining in province-wide efforts to coordinate their political efforts. In 1909, for instance, chiefs from the interior bands formed The Interior Tribes of British Columbia, and presented Prime Minister Laurier the following year in Prince Rupert and Kamloops with petitions asserting Aboriginal title to traditional lands (Kopas, 1972, p. 61). In 1916, sixteen tribal groups, including the Dakelh, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in, formed the Allied Tribes of British Columbia with the expressed purpose to bring their claim for Aboriginal title to court. This first provincial organization was a training ground for leaders such as Reverend Peter Kelly, a Haida from Skidegate and Andrew Paull, a Squamish from North Vancouver. The third phase, from the depression to the end of the War in 1945, saw the birth and activity of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, an organization representing coastal First Nations, under the leadership of Kelly and Paull, but including leaders such as Ambrose Reid, Alfred Adams, Clifton Heber, Guy Williams, William Scow, William and Dan Assu, and Frank Calder. The fourth phase, from 1945, saw the birth of the North American Indian Brotherhood, an organization founded and led by Paull. While Paull's leadership is often criticized for its conservative approach, it reflects the difficult evolution of demands for recognition of rights and title at the band level to ever-larger organizations at the provincial, national, and international levels. It also reflects the initial concern with land claims, leading to a full range of community concerns. Above all else, it indicates First Nations political resistance from the very beginning of contact with settler society, a resistance increasingly more cognizant of political processes in the dominant society and one more effectively geared to making claims (Patterson, 1962). And ultimately, it served as a foundation for the creation in 1982 of the National Assembly of First Nations.



This increasing sophistication and coordination of First Nations resistance was not earned without difficulty. The first formal claims for Aboriginal title to the land from a First Nations provincial organization in the form of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia in 1916 was met with a swift response from the federal government. Paul Tennant's (1990) study of the Allied Tribes organization, its internal difficulties, and the rejection of its claims, reflects what must have appeared at the time to be overwhelming obstacles in advancing the case for Aboriginal title. In the end, the claim was rejected by a joint Senate-House of Commons committee, and in 1927, the Indian Act (Library Archives Canada, 1927, s. 141) was amended to make the raising of funds for any land claims activity a criminal offence, effectively destroying the Allied Tribes organization and any further attempts of getting the case before the courts in the foreseeable future. Although the clause remained in effect until 1951, it was not the only law to restrict the rights of First Nations people. Others included their exclusion from the right to retain a lawyer (s. 141), prohibition of religious ceremonies and potlatches (Indian Act, 1880, 1884, s. 3), prohibition on federal and provincial voting rights (in a variety of legislation from the Electoral Franchise Act in 1885 to the Canada Elections Act in 1952, C. 23, s. 14 at the federal level and including the Municipal Elections Act 1948, s. 4 and the Provincial Elections Act 1948, s. 4 at the provincial level). In the Public School Act of 1948 [Section 92. (4)], it states "Chinese, Japanese, and Indians shall not be entitled to vote at any school meeting." Joe Matias and Gary Yabsley (1991) have compiled a list of the legislation that was designed to suppress the rights of First Nations people from the time of contact to the 1990s. They demonstrate that First Nations people and their political authorities were singled out for special attention from the legislative authorities of the state from the start and that First Nations resistance has constantly faced significant

sanctions from the state. They argue that it is important to understand the legislative framework that formed the underpinnings of the relationship between First Nations people and the dominant Euro-Canadian society. After 1860, then, “the Carrier, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot’in were all subjected to separate laws, regulations, and policies that,” according to Furniss (1999), “isolated them on reserves and exposed them to the coercion of Indian agents implementing a policy geared to the eradication of Aboriginal culture and identity” (p. 44). The structure of these discriminatory laws and regulations was consistent with the intentional assimilationist views of the powerful elements of the colonial society and its governments and part of the management of diversity that was part of the national agenda from the beginning (Joshee, 2000, p. 131). Indeed, according to Joe Mathias, Chief of the Squamish people, the “laws can be seen to be the root cause of much of the injustice and inequality that continues to permeate the Indian presence in Canada. By any just standard these laws are offensive” (Mathias & Yabsley, 1991, p. 34). Chief among these national government initiatives, along with the rejection of aboriginal title, was the creation of residential schools and the removal of all children of school age from their families and homes.

### **Residential Schools**

The establishment of residential schools was a part of an assemblage of interlocking harms imposed by Euro-Canadian society on First Nations communities and culture. Although a Roman Catholic mission had been established south of Williams Lake in 1867, and was actively involved in the education of settler children almost from the start, it wasn't until 1891 that the residential school was created at St. Joseph's Mission as a boarding school for First Nations children. Three years later, in 1894, the

Indian Act was amended to empower Indian agents to remove First Nations children from their families and require them to attend the residential schools (Whitehead, 1981). Although parents and families were reluctant to send their children to the schools, and became even more so as the years went by and they learned about the abuses suffered by their children, they were unable to withstand the pressures of the missionaries and Indian agents. There is a record of this resistance over the years, written in the formal complaints from First Nations bands about the treatment of the children, the records of children running away from the school, and in attempts by families to hide their children (Furniss, 1999, p. 44). By the 1930s there were over 100 children at the Mission from the Dakelh, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in nations. And as late as 1954, new buildings were constructed to house the school operations. But by 1957, demands by the First Nations to end the residential school system caused the federal government to begin the process of integrating First Nations students into provincial and band schools. In that year, for example, 41 Secwepemc children attended federally funded schools on reserves, while 154 attended school at the Missions. The transition was delayed in the Cariboo-Chilcotin until 1964, when the federal government took administrative control over the school, gradually establishing schools on the reserves and integrating students into the public school system. The Mission was closed in 1981, ending its influence on more than three generations of First Nations people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin (Whitehead, 1981, p. 135).

What was the legacy of this influence over almost a century? The answer is both complex and pervasive as First Nations people continue to struggle with the negative impact of the residential school experience. What is known is that the experience impacted multiple generations, disrupted community and culture, and led to decades of

destructive behaviour on the part of First Nations people themselves. It also impacted individuals in different ways. Indeed, while some reflect on the experience as a positive one, for many others the residential school experience remains a painful part of their daily life to this day. First Nations people have also made significant efforts to understand the impact of the residential school experience and work through the grieving process that is required for both themselves and their communities. For many this healing has been a source of renewed resistance to new forms of assimilation and a renewal of traditional cultural forms. For First Nations people had much to recover from. The residential school policy of the federal government was based on a cultural belief that was part of a wider social imaginary that First Nations people, and their culture, were inferior to Euro-Canadian people and society. From the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church in the case of the Mission, "indians" were wild savages who were incapable of making decisions and managing their own lives. They were especially not allowed to use their own language and were severely punished for doing so, resulting over several generations in the considerable loss of fluency in First Nations language with young people. In turn, parents lost important knowledge of parenting. As it was believed by school authorities that First Nations children needed to be civilized, a harsh system of discipline was imposed on the children from the start (Whitehead, 1981). In this paternal context, it was not surprising that public degradation and corporal punishment were regular instruments of the school authorities. And it was probably also not surprising that children, as the wider public discovered in the 1980s, were often whipped and physically and sexually abused.

The decades preceding and following the closure of the residential schools (1950s and 1960s) were difficult for all three nations of the interior plateau. Unemployment was high, the cultural memory and political structures of the First Nations bands had suffered much. Alcohol abuse, family breakdown, violence, and suicide were all rampant in many communities. But by the late 1970s leadership within the bands and within the nations as a whole began to make inroads into the troubling issues of the past. On the issue of residential schools, First Nations people could look to the history of resistance to the schools by parents, community members, and children. They could also look through the pain to the complaints adults were now able to bring forward against employees of the schools regarding physical abuse and sexual assaults that happened to them as children. As these cases found their way into the courts in the 1980s and 1990s new confidence was engendered in the communities. And by this time the nations of the Cariboo-Chilcotin were not alone. After the Cariboo Tribal Council hosted a national conference on the experience of residential schools in 1991, the Assembly of First Nations released their own study of residential schools in 1994. This was followed by an investigation of residential schools by the RCMP begun in 1995 and the study of the impact of residential schools on many of the Aboriginal people across the province (Furniss, 1992/1995, p. 115-117). This process of study and investigation has not only served to renew First Nations communities, but also to provide an opportunity for non-Aboriginal people to better understand the history of First Nations people and the nature of the relationship between First Nations people and the Euro-Canadian society. The legacy of residential schools, including the resistance by First Nations people to the schools, is a critical part of the historical experience of First Nations people and their communities. The impact of the personal experiences and the

impact on the culture and social and political structures of First Nations communities were immense.

### **Progress with Aboriginal Title**

Of equal historical importance, however, is the issue of Aboriginal title. As we saw earlier, it was a criminal offence, until 1951, to raise funds for any political activity around the issue of Aboriginal title. Although Aboriginal title had been extinguished by treaty in the other provinces in Canada, the Crown, and then the province after 1858, had simply made the land in British Columbia available to settlers for pre-emption. First Nations claims to living areas and even small village plots were either ignored or refused. Later, when formal claims were made to portions of land that constituted the traditional land used by a band for the hunting, fishing, and gathering pattern of their economy before contact, the government simply ignored the requests at first, and then refused when the case was formally presented in the early decades of the century. From that time until the late 1960s there was little response from government. But the issue had not died. And beginning in the early 1970s, as new leadership in the bands took over following the federal government's decentralization of the Indian Affairs Department, new efforts were made to attend to long-unresolved issues about the land. The activity coincided with the end of residential schools and local and national initiatives to renew the economic, social, and cultural health of First Nations communities. As part of this renewed activity, in the 1980s we can recall in Williams Lake the blockades of logging roads and the roads to the Canadian military establishment on Tsilhqot'in traditional lands. Needless to say, the efforts of the Toosey Band to establish Aboriginal title through direct action were not widely supported in the Euro-Canadian community.

It also coincided with a series of critical court decisions and subsequent policy changes by the federal government. A few years earlier, in 1973, in the *Calder* case, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled against the Nisga'a on technical grounds but established in principle that the Nisga'a held title over the land when the province was brought into confederation. This resulted in the federal government agreeing to negotiate land claims wherever treaties had not previously extinguished claims to the land. Then, in 1982, with the repatriation of the Canadian constitution, section 35(1) recognized the right of the First Nations to negotiate formal treaties with other levels of government. A decade later, in 1993, in the *Delgamuukw* case, the British Columbia Court of Appeal ruled that the colonial, provincial, or federal levels of governments did not extinguish Aboriginal rights, and that they exist today. On appeal in 1997 to the Supreme Court of Canada, the court went even further, ruling that Aboriginal title extended beyond the use of the land for "aspects of practices, customs, and traditions which are integral to the distinctive cultures of aboriginal societies" to include other purposes as First Nations societies develop in the future, but reflecting "the nature of the attachment to the land which forms the basis of the particular group's aboriginal title" (*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1998), 153 Dominion Law Reports (4<sup>th</sup>) 240, 241).

After almost two centuries of resistance to the Euro-Canadian rejection of Aboriginal title to the land, First Nations communities have made significant progress. And with the Nisga'a Treaty of 1998, there are opportunities and precedents for even greater progress in the future. At the present time the Secwepemc nation is involved in the formal treaty process while the Tsilhqot'in have rejected the process, pursuing title to traditional lands by more informal and independent means, including taking control of

various functions for the supervision of the land and its resources, roadblocks to establish ownership and control, and direct negotiation with government, public institutions, and industry over specific issues. By a variety of means, bands are actively and visibly involved in defending Aboriginal title as well as engaging in public discourse on issues of concern. In addition, bands are more involved in economic development than at any time in the recent past, some as independent projects and others in partnership with private industry, including initiatives from resource extraction to tourism. Band offices across the area have become the hub of economic, political, and social activities of their communities.

### **Recent Times**

This new and increasing political strength and visibility of First Nations people has coincided with significant changes in Euro-Canadian circumstance as well. These changes have been largely the result of economic and political forces impinging from beyond the local communities, a continuing fact of life for communities dependent upon resource extraction. This is especially true in the Cariboo-Chilcotin where the economy is structured around the lumber industry, mining, ranching, and to a lesser extent, tourism. The recent tariff difficulties in the lumber industry (accompanied by consolidations and hostile takeovers), weak copper and gold prices in the 1990s, the 2003 closure of the American border to the Canadian beef export market, along with provincial initiatives to centralize government services, have reminded all of the vulnerability of the present economic, social, and political fabric of the area. This exposure to world forces beyond the control of the community was not evident ten years ago when the economy and population had been expanding for decades as new



industries, schools, hospital beds, and businesses were opened on a regular basis. All has changed, however, as we see daily reminders of the implications to the downturn.

In the public sector, which has been a significant part of the local economy, there have also been significant changes in the past five years. As in many rural areas across the country, health care has been regionalized and centralized, leaving what was once a full service hospital with for the most part, only basic emergency and surgical services. The same is also true in the provincial forestry office, which once occupied two large buildings. The office has been centralized to larger regional centers outside the area. In education, six schools have been closed, including a large secondary school in Williams Lake. Other government services, those concerned with the environment, children and families, parks, and transportation have all been downsized as well.

Coinciding with the downturn in the economy, and reflecting some of the impacts of the difficulties, is a number of other factors. One is the changing demographic make-up of the population. The net increase in population from outside the area has slowed and the average age of the population is growing older after many decades of younger people migrating to the area. The percentage of First Nations people, and First Nations children especially, when compared to the total population, is growing at a faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population. In addition, non-Aboriginal families are generally having fewer children.

These changes have important implications. They draw attention to the negative impact on the general confidence of the world-view of the local Euro-Canadian community. The dependence on outside markets and the present difficulties with those

markets has highlighted the local economy for its insecure and temporary nature. This has made more visible the dominant political and social culture for its dependence on the world economic system and caused significant change to the economic structure and considerable insecurity for many as jobs are lost and families are forced to move. At the same time, the First Nations of the area have made visible progress and built a new confidence in recovering from the residential school years and establishing some degree of recognition of Aboriginal title. Nevertheless, in the Euro-Canadian community and in the lumber industry especially, Aboriginal title is perceived as a threat to the timber supply. Tensions between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people remain high, with issues constantly arising in public view.

If we are to understand the relationship between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people and the nature of the tensions in the relationship we need to appreciate the historical roots of that relationship. On the one hand, First Nations people have experienced a history of blatant discrimination, coercive regulations and laws, and the repression of rights and freedoms, including the rejection of Aboriginal title for almost two centuries and the forced removal of children to residential schools. On the other hand, the non-Aboriginal members of the Euro-Canadian culture have lived with an account of the life possibilities of the settlers that includes the freedom to make the most of their opportunities, "unoccupied" and free land for the first settlers, and unlimited natural resources "free for the taking" (Furniss, 1999, p. 44) for subsequent generations. Good paying jobs have been relatively plentiful. These are the historical and cultural understandings that underpin the relationships between First Nations people and the

Euro-Canadian society of our time. And they are reflected in the social relations, policies, and culture of the schools in the area. It is no wonder there are tensions.

### **Self-Government**

But while many in the Euro-Canadian community view Aboriginal title as a threat to the timber supply and those resources “free for the taking,” the foundation of the recent progress made by First Nations people is in the ongoing development of political structures of self-government. For in self-government is the ability of First Nations communities to regain control over their lives. While the concept remains contentious in Euro-Canadian communities across Canada and various levels of government, there is no doubt, in the words of John Hylton (1999) that “Aboriginal peoples in Canada are increasingly self-governing” (p. 9). And with this development in self-government has come a large body of research on Aboriginal rights to self-government and on various structural or institutional arrangements (Peters, 1999, p. 411). In responding to criticisms of the Nisga’a Treaty in 1998, Taylor (1998/1999) provided a defence of the need for self-government for First Nations communities. The first responds to the criticism that not everyone can join a First Nations band, and because of this, First Nations people will have special privileges that come from self-government of a special and restricted group. The argument is that all Canadians should be equal and receive equal treatment. This is the assimilationist view, even if stated in a modern form. Taylor finds the view lacking for several reasons: first, the assimilationist view is simply rejected by First Nations people; second, policy emanating from the view has led to the disastrous situation with regard to the health and education of First Nations people across the country; and third, the First Nations people of Canada are not simply an ethnic minority. Their communities existed

as part of a nation upon contact with Europeans, and nothing has extinguished their legal or moral right to that status. Taylor makes the argument here that there is no alternative for the Euro-Canadian society and its government but to work with First Nations communities on that basis. It means recognizing their right to self-government and contending in that recognition to their different world-views. It also means rejecting the assimilationist view of the Canadian state, and building a constitutional state of quite another sort (Taylor, 1998/99, pp. 37-40), one that will negotiate with Aboriginal nations and recognize structures of self-government and Aboriginal title. The Nisga'a Treaty, in the view of Cole Harris (1998/99), ushers in a different arrangement in the Canadian confederation, one found in an entirely different vision of Canada (p. 3).

Indeed, beginning with the devolution of responsibility from federal to local band authorities in the 1970s, there has been considerable progress in the development of structures of governance at the local and regional levels. That trend is reflected in the growth of self-government in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Band offices, for the most part, are well-organized political and social structures with divisions of responsibility and authority for health, education, social services, economic development, and land claims. On a regional level, the Cariboo Tribal Council represents four Secwepemc communities, while the Tsilhqot'in National Government represents five Tsilhqot'in bands. The Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council represents the Dakelh nations and one Tsilhqot'in band. All three organizations maintain offices in Williams Lake. The Secwepemc, Esketemc Band, is not affiliated with these organizations.

## **First Nations and Public Education**

So as a result of the intersection of a variety of forces, including especially the efforts of First Nations people themselves, the last two decades of the century provided an opportunity for First Nations people to make real progress in recovering from almost a century of the residential school experience, re-establishing aboriginal title to traditional lands, and developing structures of self-government. As I explained earlier, these changes have had an impact on First Nations people as well as on the relationship between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people. The changes have also had a significant impact on First Nations children and youth and the public education system and its schools. It is therefore, important to acknowledge the involvement of First Nations people in the public school system as a whole and in individual schools.

School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) is a geographically large district, with thirty schools in a variety of rural communities. There are three graduating secondary schools in the two larger towns. In the more isolated schools, Kindergarten to junior secondary grades are offered. There is a dormitory in Williams Lake, now the only remaining one in the province that provides a residence for rural students, both First Nations and non-Aboriginal, during the school week. Many of the schools have fewer than fifty students, and even the largest secondary schools in Williams Lake regularly meet the criteria for small secondary school funding. First Nations students now account for more than twenty per cent of the student population across the district and in some of the smaller rural schools First Nations students are in a majority. Moreover, the percentage of First Nations students has constantly increased over the past decade with projections for the present trend to continue. Although there are some First Nations

students from outside the area, for the most part the First Nations students come from one of the eleven bands in the area. These bands represent the Dakelh, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in of the area. Additionally, due to the distances between bands and the distinctiveness of the landscape, even bands from the same language and cultural group often have very different needs and perspectives. There are also Métis students in the schools in the District.

Not all First Nations students attend the public system. There are a number of schools on reserves for primary grades and still others for both primary and intermediate grades. Two band schools include junior secondary students. In the 2004-2005 school year there are also two adult education programs in First Nations communities, where secondary aged students attend on occasion. On the whole, however, First Nations students attend the public schools. Although there is a Grade K-7 School on the Anaham Reserve, for instance, many of the Grade K-7 aged students attend the public school nearby at Alexis Creek. There is a small number of students attending the band school on the Toosey reserve after the public school in the Riske Creek community was closed three years ago, but some of the students take the bus to town (almost an hour each way) and all attend secondary school in town for Grades 8-12. So, a large majority of First Nations children and youth attend the public school system (British Columbia Ministry of Education: District Profile). It is not widely known by educators and the public, however, that this involvement with the public schools is a relatively recent development. As we have seen, when all First Nations students attended school at the Mission there were few First Nations students in the public schools. It was a new experience for First Nations students and their families, band authorities, as well as for teachers and

administrators, to have First Nations students attend the public school system. And while I can only guess about the preparation of the teachers, administrators, parents, and students for their inclusion in the system, I expect many encountered significant difficulties.

Indeed, there was early recognition of those difficulties. Beginning with anecdotal complaints, often based on the results from the standardized testing of the day (Canadian Test of Basic Skills), the difficulties experienced by First Nations students were a concern from the beginning. It is also important to recall my earlier characterization of the world-view of Euro-Canadians. As teachers in the public school system, the non-Aboriginal teachers did not have the understanding and were not provided with the education or resources to cope with the challenges they faced in classrooms with First Nations students. There were, nevertheless, a number of responses by the system to the challenges presented by First Nations students. District First Nations coordinator positions were created to assist schools and teachers, language and cultural resources were created for classrooms, goals were established as part of strategic planning processes, and finally in 1991, a consultant was hired to investigate the lack of success of First Nations students. The Gleadow Report (1992) acknowledged the difficulties experienced by First Nations students and pointed to the systemic racism pervasive in schools. Perhaps not surprisingly, it discovered that both teachers and First Nations students were generally not aware of either the form of racism or even its presence (p. 114). More than fifty recommendations were published and presented in 1992. But while there was good support for the recommendations in the educational authorities of First Nations communities, most of the recommendations

were not implemented. In fact, the 2001 District Strategic Plan of almost a decade later included a recommendation to refocus on the Gleadow Report recommendations, recognizing their value as well as the lack of implementation.

In the years immediately following the Gleadow Report, however, a senior administrative staff position was created for First Nations education and a number of program initiatives and structures of governance were pursued. The government, intending to provide a mechanism to provide greater control by individual bands over the education of First Nations students in public school, developed the Local Education Agreement process that funnelled financial resources through individual bands to the school districts. The approval of the funding was delegated to the bands based on criteria that were to be negotiated between the bands and school district boards. At about the same time, the provincial government began to allocate funds specifically to support First Nations students. Finally, in the mid-1990s, the provincial education authorities moved these allocated funds to a targeted strategy with spending authority designated to local First Nations Education authorities, including representation from all eleven bands and the Métis community in the District. These targeted funds were specifically designated for the support of First Nations students, as well as language and culture programs. The ongoing lack of success for First Nations students in the public system, however, is a continuing concern that causes the almost yearly spin-off of new provincial initiatives. The latest versions include the addition of goals and strategies for First Nations students in Accountability Contracts and the community development of Enhancement Agreements. And while many of these initiatives originate with provincial



authorities, recent efforts have included the involvement of First Nations communities in their development.

There have also been a number of joint local initiatives to develop structures of governance to better meet the needs of First Nations students. As I explained earlier, one of these, created to assist individual First Nations students and their communities, is the creation of Community Healing Circles with several Tsilhqot'in bands and the Dakelh band. The Circle process was originally developed on the initiative of the Director of First Nations Education to provide a holistic and community based approach to providing school district, band social agency, community, and band political authority, support for students experiencing significant problems with drug abuse or violence. There is significant empowerment in this structure for its co-constructed nature and the willingness of the participants to contend with different world-views and different institutional and community needs. As a result of the success of the Circle, parents of First Nations students and band authorities increasingly request the Circle for their students. I will return to the Circle later.

But while schools and the operations of the District are much concerned with the education of First Nations children and youth, the success of these students has been and remains a cause for concern. In all areas where student success is measured, including student and parent satisfaction, the results for First Nations students, while improving slightly in the past few years, falls significantly below the results for non-Aboriginal students (British Columbia Ministry of Education).

## Aboriginal Education

There is some significant research on Aboriginal education that might help put these circumstances in context. The recommendations on education contained in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) clearly put education as a priority for development efforts with First Nations people. The recommendations follow two complimentary directions. The first is an endorsement of Aboriginal education that is provided by Aboriginal people and under their direct control. In fact, the commission reports that where Aboriginal people have taken control of the education of their children and youth, program completion, personal satisfaction, and appropriate preparation for employment and further education have been improved (Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000, xiv). The second perspective is directed towards initiatives that will lead to the adaptation of the present public institutions “so that they give appropriate recognition to the Aboriginal presence in Canadian life and foster a respectful, reciprocal relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples” (p. xv). The recommendations reflect a distrust of the public education systems across the country, hold those systems accountable for their assimilationist policies, and demand improvement of the system or the removal of Aboriginal students from the system. “Educators,” according to Marie Battiste (2000), “are challenged to unravel stereotypical assumptions and theories entangled in cognitive imperialism – the persisting ideologies from our colonial past that remain part of our educational systems” (p. ix). She argues that this unravelling must be accompanied by the due recognition of First Nations people for their “actualized selves” (p. ix). Battiste is talking about a reciprocal relationship of

recognition and respect, based upon knowledge of each other, including the history and culture that is the basis of that knowledge. Again, I will return to this later.

It is not surprising that First Nations people see education at the core of their agenda. This is reflected in a number of reports, including the *Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners* (Justice Institute), which recognizes “the interrelatedness of self-government, economic self-sufficiency, and higher educational achievement” (quoted in Abele, Dittburner, & Graham, 2000, p. 20). Along with the ongoing healing from the residential school experience, First Nations people view education, along with Aboriginal title and self-government as the cornerstones of self-reliance and community health.

### **Conclusions and Further Study**

So, what is it that we ought to know about the history and culture of the First Nations people of the interior plateau in order to assist educators to better understand their complex and varied world-view? As I have demonstrated, in my view, it is important to begin by considering the culture and pattern of life before contact. Although much has happened over the past two hundred years, including many changes to the culture, the pattern of life and the relationship to the land and its natural resources is an essential underpinning to the understandings First Nations people have about the world. This is not how First Nations people necessarily describe their culture (although they often do), but how they “imagine their social existence, and how they fit together with others...” (Taylor, 2004, p. 23). It is not always the same image as that consciously portrayed to others. Instead, it is a view of the world “carried in images, stories and

legends” (p. 23). And it cannot always be understood by considering it in what Taylor calls, a “disengaged mode” (p. 23). It can often only be accessed in an intuitive and experiential mode. But it is critical to communities of people for it makes possible a wide range of other understandings and enables people from the same community to understand and appreciate a variety of social interactions and community activities.

Within those social practices, with regard to the First Nations people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, we would need to appreciate the relationship they have with the land. We would need to consider that this is a spiritual relationship that is different than viewing nature as a source of enlightenment and spirituality as it is expressed in Western thought (Taylor, 1989, p. 355). We would have to consider that First Nations people, even after living in close contact with the dominant Euro-Canadian culture for two centuries, might have a different sense of what constitutes the individual and the community and the responsibilities each have to each other. We would have to consider that underlying the different cultural understandings of First Nations and non-Aboriginal people are different views about the nature of the land and its resources, the relationship between people and the land, and the responsibilities of the community for its children. From these difference we could expect that there would be different “horizons of significance,” (Taylor, 1989) and that Western science with its naive acceptance of instrumental reason, disconnected from the spiritual world in modern times, would play less of a role in the practices of ordinary life in the First Nations world-view.

There would also be beliefs and practices to be considered that can be traced back to historical experiences since contact. I have looked at these in some detail. They include sensitivity to and resistance against the assimilationist attitudes and policies of

the Euro-Canadian society and its various levels of government. This sensitivity is expressed in distrust towards institutions and those who represent those institutions. This is especially true with regard to educational institutions after the experience of residential schools. There are also some core understandings that need to be appreciated. These include First Nations determination to continue to wrestle back control of traditional lands, or in the case of the Secwepemc in their demands in the land claim process, to be also compensated for the loss. They also include the further development of self-government, the building of economic and political self-reliance, and political structures to contend with the dominant society. And, at the core of these development efforts is a focus on the education of children and youth.

If First Nations people are not to bear the full burden of colonialism and the legacy of history, however, there are responsibilities for the Euro-Canadian society and its political structures of government and law. These can be effectively examined against the concept of recognition where legislation and policy at all levels, including the institutional level, must inevitably meet the requirements of the 1982 Canadian Constitution and the court decisions based on the document since then (Chartand, 2002, p. 21). Indeed, as we have seen, some progress has been made.

What are the implications for these understandings for public education? How can educators in the public system become involved in making positive changes to the advantage of First Nations children and youth? If educators are to contribute to the improvement of education for First Nations students, it is necessary to better understand their history and culture. It is necessary to learn to appreciate that this history and culture needs to be recognized for its differences from the dominant culture and for its long

resistance to assimilation. Educators need to explore the nature of those differences and appreciate the forms of resistance. Only under these circumstances can there exist a useful dialogue and co-construction of alternatives for the future. As we have seen, however, there are vast cultural differences between the First Nations and the Euro-Canadian cultures, differences that cause attempts at dialogue to be fraught with tension and conflict to this day.

What are the next steps? While there is a need for further research and the focus of resources on curriculum and pedagogy, especially in language education and the teaching of First Nations children and youth in more culturally appropriate ways, there is much work to be done with policy and governance. Attempts to engage Aboriginal people in dialogue to design programs and structures of governance have not had the impact on achievement that was intended. I expect that more recent efforts will have disappointing results as well. I suspect that there are significant obstacles to those intentions in the cultural differences and often opposing world-views of First Nations students and communities and those political and educational officials upon whose leadership the public system depends. And I also suspect that provincial and district programs have still not appreciated sufficiently the need for governance to facilitate the cooperative work of teachers and students at the classroom level. Perhaps at that level, cultural differences can be recognized and appreciated for the richness they offer to us all.

## CHAPTER 3:

# The Politics of Recognition

### Introduction

In the next four chapters I will use a number of critical ideas to engage in a dialogue about recognition, its implications to individuals and the state, and ultimately to policy and governance concerns in education. Charles Taylor has focused much of his work in the past several decades on these issues, as has Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, James Tully, Nancy Fraser, and a number of others attentive to the discourse in political philosophy. Taylor has been particularly influential in this discourse, as his attention has moved from the sources of the self, to the politics of recognition, to modern social imaginaries. His concern with the identity of the self throughout, as we shall see, led him earlier to consider how the self is constituted, and in what circumstances the creation takes place (Taylor, 1989). I will focus here on two works by Charles Taylor: the *Politics of Recognition* (1994) and *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004). Indeed, as we shall see, Taylor has connected recognition in the political environment with identity and explored this in a great deal of detail in his consideration of the modern social imaginary. Tully has similar concerns, although his focus is less on the self and more on the recognition of diversity in societies, especially with regard to First Nations people in British Columbia. His investigations of the interaction between diverse cultures in their demands for recognition in the public space and political processes are particularly

useful to my purposes. It is his view that there is an important 'common ground' in the public space upon which progress for social justice can be made and that there are opportunities within the constitutional state to facilitate this interaction.

There are a number of important concepts here that can be profitably explored. But first of all I need to acknowledge, as I will throughout the work, the importance of language to both our understanding of concepts and the limitations and opportunities considerations about language place on understandings. For these concepts, such as recognition, public space, 'common ground,' nation-state, social imaginary, and identity, are complex. In considering the meanings we have for these terms we can engage in a useful dialogue that has the potential to illuminate that which is presently in shadow. Taylor and Tully are two important theorists in Canada engaged in this dialogue. To enter into that dialogue, relate it to the historical circumstances of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, and specifically to public education, is the concern of this work.

### **The Politics of Recognition**

Words on a page do little justice to the conflict, violence, and personal tragedy that are inflicted upon and by the world's peoples as we try to resolve the issues of difference between us. In recent times, from genocide in Rwanda and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, to the ongoing conflicts between and within nations, the politics of recognition has become the 'hot button' issue of the early years of the century. Internationally, this has been characterized by an end to the largely state-to-state conflict of the twentieth century to be replaced by conflicts between civilizations (Huntington 1996). Nationally, it has meant challenges to the primacy of the nation-state in conflicts



between national cultures, as we have seen, and the increasing importance of the politics of identity.

There are a number of circumstances and forces to account for this new importance of culture and identity. What Alan Cairns (1999) refers to as 'galloping diversity' (p. 6) is really made up of a number of features, some of increasing diversity, others of a new recognition of an already existing diversity, but all of which contribute to the creation of a social and political environment significantly different than the landscape of a few years ago. And yet the forces of diversity and difference, culture and identity are rooted in history. In her recent book, *Paris 1919*, Margaret McMillan (2003) describes the complex national and ethnic makeup of Europe after the First World War. The struggles of the "peace-makers" to resolve issues of national boundaries across the globe are described as they contend with actual national and ethnic mixing on the ground. And yet, her account of those frustrating difficulties in 1919 in deciding what to do about Slovakia, Iraq, or Palestine, resonates with present day difficulties in the same areas.

That rooting of difference in national cultures is true for Canada as well. For more than two centuries Canada has been composed of two colonizing national groups and many indigenous nations. In addition, Canada is made up of a complex mosaic of ethnic groups who have recently emerged from behind years of assimilationist policies of the federal government (Joshee 2004). Added to this mix, and moving beyond nationalism and ethnicity, are the many other associative groups who have made recent demands for recognition of their particular difference. The latest of these, from gay and lesbian groups for same-sex marriage to the recognition of Muslim law (Sharia) in family law

matters in Ontario, remain contentious in public space and political processes (Lithwick, 2004). Nowhere in Canada have these demands for recognition been more in the forefront of public concern and policy considerations than in Quebec. So while it is not surprising that the recognition of difference and the politics of that recognition should occupy the attention of political philosophy everywhere, it has been a primary concern in Montreal of Charles Taylor.

This concept of 'recognition' has taken on a multifaceted role in contemporary political and philosophical discourse. Whether we define the discourse as struggles for recognition (Taylor 1994, Fraser 2003), claims for identity (Young 1990, Calhoun 1994), or demands for multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka 2001, Banks 2004), they signal a renewal of issues of identity in the political landscape (Benhabib 2002, p. viii). In this chapter I will examine Taylor's thinking about recognition within that larger discourse and retrieve an understanding of the richness of his work from a historical assessment of its development. I then intend to look to critiques of Taylor's work that can assist me to explore the opportunities and challenges to recognition in Western liberal democracies and their institutions. In the next two chapters, I will prepare the way for a more practical discussion about constitutional arrangements with a focus on recognition and identity in the context of our liberal views about society and the individual. In the last chapters, I will return to issues of policy and governance and, having built a case for the recognition of First Nations cultures in the public education system, suggest what that recognition might best look like.

Policy and governance, in this case, is concerned with the structures through which political authorities (provincial governments and local school boards in British

Columbia) meet their statutory and normative obligations (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1980/1999). This subject is of particular interest to me as public institutions, from public schools to universities and the health care system, have all come under increasing pressures to respond to and respect the particular identities of both individuals and groups of citizens (Gutmann, 1994, p. 3). The nature of these pressures has created a contentious governance environment within each of the institutions themselves but also in the larger public sphere and political processes.

### **From Redistribution to Recognition**

I would like to first put the politics of recognition in a historical perspective. While much of the literature on recognition is preoccupied with the relationship between recognition and identity and the accommodation of demands for recognition from diverse associative groups, there is another direction in the literature reflecting a concern for the very presence of a politics of recognition, especially when that recognition is tied to identity. This position reflects an ongoing debate between those who find purchase for progress in social justice in recognition, and those who argue that redistribution of resources is a more important claim.

To a greater or lesser extent, Nancy Fraser (1997, 2000), Iris Young (1990), and Neera Chandhoke (1999) represent this position. Fraser is especially cautious about the politics of recognition. She argues that the recent visibility of the politics of recognition is an indication of a significant shift in the “grammar of claims-making,” (Fraser, 2000, p. 2) that drives political discourse. She characterizes the change as a cultural one that indicates a change in the “political imaginary” of many political actors. So while the central problem of social justice has for centuries been viewed as the redistribution of wealth and resources, the central problem has now become, in Fraser’s view, the

recognition of difference. It is also Fraser's view, however, that recognition and redistribution need not be viewed as dichotomous "claims-making." Instead, she argues for an examination of their respective values in promoting social justice. More specifically, Fraser argues that while an analysis of recognition can illuminate much about culture, an examination of redistribution can do the same for the economy. Additionally, such an analysis can show how both culture and economy work together to create and maintain injustice. Demands employing both recognition and redistribution, she argues, can perhaps more effectively unite in a political movement for social justice. So Fraser argues for a "critical theory of recognition," one that does not accept the politics of the recognition of difference without the inclusion of a politics of redistribution, and one that, as we shall see later, does not simply equate recognition to identity or allow cultural identity to go unchallenged in the public sphere or public processes.

### **Thinking About Recognition**

There has been some related work done with regard to the politics of recognition in recent years that I need to acknowledge for its relevance to this study and for the connections that will become evident as my analysis unfolds. The first is in the general field of multiculturalism and citizenship education (Banks, 2004; Cairns, et al, 1999; Callan, 2003; Ghosh, 2002; Kymlicka, 1989, 1995, 1998, 2001; Mitchell 2001). In Canada, the work of Will Kymlicka, especially, has influenced a significant body of research on developing "international norms for the treatment of ethno-cultural groups" (Canada Research Chairs, 2004, p. 1). His work has explored the differences and conflicts between various groups in societies and looked for effective means to resolve disagreements (p. 1). As part of this direction, he has theorized about the impact of

diversity on societies in general and the nation-state and its institutions specifically. Indeed, some of this work has been about education and the education of the public, as in Mitchell's (2001) analysis of the transnational and multicultural challenges to public education in Richmond, British Columbia. For the most part, however, the concept of recognition, and even less its connection with identity and the modern self, is not central to the multicultural analysis forwarded by such writers as Kymlicka.

There is another recent body of work focused specifically on recognition (Honneth, 1995; Fraser, 1997, 2000, 2001; Gutmann, 1994; Taylor, 1994, 2002; Williams, 1992, 1997; Young, 1990). While the work of Honneth (1995) and Williams (1992, 1997) specifically, has focused on the philosophical roots of recognition with Hegel, others have worked more closely with the concept of recognition to better understand political relationships and circumstances in Western societies. This latter body of work has looked critically at the impact of the politics of recognition on the nature of the nation-state and its institutions, the progress with social justice, and the nature of conflicts that arise from the non-recognition or misrecognition of difference. Within this strand of the literature there is a great deal written about the balance between social unity and the recognition of diversity and the beginnings of an understanding of the contradictions posed by the challenge of transnational conceptions of identity and citizenship to just and inclusive conceptions of the nation-state (Banks, 2004, p. xv). In this context, recognition has become the critical concept upon which alternatives are offered to contend with the diversity in the heretofore culturally neutral liberal state (Kenny, 2004, p. 148). There has not been a great deal written, however, about the concept of recognition as it applies to education or to governance in public institutions.

There is one exception in the work of Charles Bingham (2001) in education. In *Schools of Recognition* (2001), Bingham makes use of the concept of recognition to develop a vision for classroom practice. He argues that recognition needs to be taken out of those implicit understandings that educators have about working with students and placed in a central and conscious role of informed practice, where the school can become a "recognitive public space" (Bingham, 2001, p. 29). His approach is philosophical (as opposed to psychological or multicultural) and based on the need for recognition in classrooms if there is to be due attention given to the respect of the dignity of students (p. 9). Bingham begins with Hegel's thinking about recognition as a framework for his analysis, and focuses on the interface between "I and thou" (Buber, 1958/1986) in the instant of recognition. He employs the concept of mirroring from Charles Taylor (1994), confirmation from Martin Buber (1947/1965), subjection from Judith Butler (1990), and reciprocity from Jessica Benjamin (1988) to usefully structure his work.

My intention here, similar to Bingham's (2001) in utilizing recognition as a rich philosophical concept, is to engage in a "sustained discussion of recognition" (p. 6) around the issues that challenge us in the governance of public education, especially in regard to First Nations people. It is my hope that this discussion of recognition, which for my purposes is both philosophical and political as well as theoretical and practical, can inform administrative and leadership practice in schools and school systems to more effectively contend with the challenges posed to governance by diversity and at the same time contribute to greater social justice. There is no doubt this is a contentious

political and philosophical environment, but to ignore the challenges, places significant limitations on educational practice.

### **Taylor's Thinking on Recognition**

Demands for recognition have been of interest to Taylor for some time. The beginnings of this interest are found in his early involvement in the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s in Britain, with his attention to the cultural perspective of the British New Left, and with his sense that the concept of culture, both for its hegemonic implications and emancipatory potential, was a critical component for social understanding (Kenny, 2004, p. 155). Born and raised in Quebec, Taylor has demonstrated a concern for the complex and often contentious relationship between French, English and First Nations people. He has written and spoken widely about these complex relationships and been involved for decades with the issue in the political arena. He has also questioned the impact of demands on public institutions for the recognition of difference in this multinational context. Of equal concern to Taylor, however, are the implications of the demands for recognition on the human condition. His concern here, expressed in various ways in *Sources of the Self* (1989), *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991), *Reconciling the Solitudes* (1993), *The Politics of Recognition* (1994), *Democratic Exclusion (and its remedies)* (2002) and more recently, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), and a host of other writing, is with the identity and constitution of the self in the circumstances of modernity. So Taylor's life work has reflected both a practical approach to the challenges of present day political and social circumstances as well as a theoretical approach to the challenges that modernity has presented in that context.

Taylor's thinking about recognition begins with the increasing visibility of demands for recognition in political processes. We see a similar quality to the demands from First Nations people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, as resistance to domination has taken on the form of political demands for the recognition of rights and cultural distinctiveness, for the acknowledgement of the differences they represent. The urgency and vehemence of the demands can only be explained, Taylor (1994) argues, in the connection of recognition to identity: "the thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence" (p. 25). This connection is reflected in the Oxford Dictionary's (1969/1992) definition of recognition as the acknowledgement of the existence, validity, character, and identity of a person or group (p. 753). Further to the connection between recognition and identity, Taylor (1994) argues "non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p. 25). In the context of the society in which he has lived most of his life, Taylor has been particularly sensitive to the non-recognition and misrecognition of both Quebeckers and Aboriginal people. Taylor is blunt about these views: "due recognition is not a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need" (p. 26). Needless to say, Taylor is not alone in making this connection between recognition and identity. Recently, for instance, Honneth (1995) also argues that the "social practices through which recognition occurs are integral to the formation of the self..." (Kenny, 2004, p. 150). According to Kenny, however, Taylor is among the first to look seriously at the political and social implications of this connection between recognition and identity. While the preceding chapters have considered the depth of the significant differences between the cultures of the Cariboo-Chilcotin (including the significant differences between the cultures of the three First Nations), the remaining chapters will



consider the connection between recognition and identity and explore how that connection can be translated into political processes that are just and effective in enabling the building of authentic personal identities.

### **Sources of Taylor's Thinking**

Taylor identifies a number of significant historical changes in his book, *Sources of the Self* (1989), and his essay, *The Politics of Recognition* (1994) that have led to the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition. The first began about four hundred years ago with the disintegration of social hierarchies with their inherent inequalities and preoccupation with honour. In hierarchical societies identity is predetermined by birth and honour is bestowed within the upper echelons of the hierarchy by political and religious elites. In contrast, in modern democratic societies recognition of each and every citizen, and the identity derived from that recognition, is believed to be an unalienable right. The dignity that flows from recognition in democratic societies is available to everyone in this sense, but becomes in the modern era the responsibility of the individual to claim as identity. The source of identity is no longer determined by social position, but by acting in a social environment and being recognized for our actions in ways that define our identity. Being in touch with our feelings, understanding the moral nature of modern life, and acting in ways that are consistent with that understanding are all critical to who we are (p. 28).

For Taylor (1994) this reflects a "massive subjective turn of modern culture" (p. 29). It is a new form of the self that reflects a new form of inwardness, but a self with new responsibilities and new insecurities. It is also a self with entirely new possibilities

for an enriched individual identity. Taylor credits Rousseau (p. 29) for articulating the initial stages of this new understanding of individuality by identifying an inner voice of nature to guide our actions. For Taylor, Rousseau is the source of our understanding of the development of the modern self (as well as for his account of the rights of the individual). Rousseau, Taylor argues, provided a critical element in the modern understanding of the individual by articulating the link between our outward identity and our intimate self. This is a reflection of the massive subjective turn that Taylor talks about. Indeed, Taylor attributes Rousseau “as one of the points of origin of the modern discourse of authenticity” (p. 35). While not specifically using the language of recognition, for example, Rousseau calls for an end to the system of “preferences” derived from the “ancien regime” (p. 35). The esteem that derives from the honour of the preferences, according to Rousseau, should be replaced by an esteem claimed by the individual in touch with their essential nature in a society based on equality between citizens.

Taylor (1994) credits Herder for taking the next step in identifying the responsibility of the self in the pursuit of identity. What are enabled for the individual in modern times are both the ability and the responsibility for the creation of identity, both of which are necessary building blocks of the modern ideal of authenticity. Understood in this way, it is up to me “to discover my own original way of being” (p. 32). “It accords,” in Taylor’s words, “moral importance to a kind of contact with myself” (p. 30). For Taylor this inwardly generated identity, however, is neither sufficient nor a good reflection of all the necessary components of the modern sense of identity.

That missing component is the “dialogical character” (Taylor, 1994, p. 32) of human life. “We become full human agents,” Taylor argues, “capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression” (p. 32). Here Taylor refers to language in its broadest sense, meaning not just what we say, but all the means of expression related to language. In relation to identity he especially means the complex interaction that exists between an individual and others in the act of communicating with language. This, he argues, begins with our acquisition of language in relationship to what Mead (1934/1963) called “significant others” as we “define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the thing our significant others want to see in us” (Taylor, 1994, p. 33).

Thus my discovering of my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of an inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity depends on my dialogical relations with others. (p. 34)

This kind of connection between identity and recognition is something new and an important characteristic of the modern age. In previous ages, there existed a connection between identity and recognition, but recognition of the individual, and the identity of the person was determined by social position. So neither identity nor recognition was much considered by those who thought about those sorts of things. They were part of those taken-for-granted qualities of pre-modern life that I will consider in the next chapter on social imaginaries. Identity was largely defined from the outside of the person. In the modern era that recognition is no longer simply granted. Recognition must now be earned through exchange with others in a social environment. In addition, it is the responsibility of the individual to earn that recognition to define who they are. In these

circumstances, the individual can fail to earn recognition, and in failing, identity can become unformed or malformed. The individual has failed to achieve their authentic self. We see then, that recognition has become a high stakes issue for individuals in the modern era, where individuals strive for recognition so that they can discover and define their true identity. Taylor (1994) fittingly calls this culture, focused as it is around the quest for identity, the "culture of authenticity" (p.36). The presence of this "culture of authenticity," however, has led to a whole new set of problems for the individual and the society in which that individual is embedded. The most important of these is in the nature of the recognitive structures and normative attitudes of citizens with regard to the cultural diversity in a society. One would have to ask, in relation to my concerns, what recognitive political and social processes, and what quality to the spirit of toleration exists to recognize the cultural distinctiveness of First Nations cultures? I will need to return to this question later.

So, there are a number of sources to Taylor's thinking about recognition. From Rousseau we have the beginning of a discourse on individualism and the kind of society that enables each person to appropriate an identity from their social environment and their connection to their natures. From Herder we have a further development in the moral responsibility of the individual to look inward to find and develop an identity. From Mead we have the critical component of language and the role of others around us in the development of identity. But from Hegel (Hegel 1807/1994, pp. 53-65) we have the very beginnings of the discourse on recognition in its role in the formation of individual identity that has subsequently occupied the concern of philosophers for almost two centuries.

Although Taylor acknowledges earlier building blocks, he credits Hegel as the originator of that discourse (Taylor, 1994, p. 29).

We find this discourse on recognition on three levels: in the intimate sphere, where in a relationship of dialogical exchange with significant others we continually build upon our identity; in the public sphere, where the politics of recognition has occupied an ever larger space in recent years; and in the political processes of various levels of government and institutions. As I have in the previous section, it has been essential to explain Taylor's thinking about recognition in the intimate sphere to give an underpinning to my subsequent work in the public sphere and institutions which are of direct concern for me in these investigations of the relationship between First Nations and Euro-Canadian peoples. I would now like to focus on the public sphere.

### **Recognition in the Public Sphere**

It appears that while recognition in the intimate sphere has become an important feature of modern life for many decades, indeed for centuries, the politics of recognition in the public sphere has more recently become a dominant feature of political life. It has first of all meant an ever-increasing demand for the equal treatment of all citizens and for equal rights for all. It has also often meant, as we saw in Fraser's (2000) work, the demand for equal entitlement to wealth and resources. But it has also meant, and for Taylor this is an important distinction, the growth of a politics of difference. Of course, this is not surprising, as we see ever-increasing demands for the recognition of different identities within a society. In the not so distant past, assimilation to the dominant culture in Canadian society (and other Western societies as well) was the norm, as the historical

narrative of Canadian nationalism was played out (Furniss, 1997/98, p. 7). In this narrative, the distinctiveness of cultural groups, especially First Nations people, as we have seen, was either ignored or made invisible by government policy and legislation and by political and social norms. But according to Taylor (1994), "assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity" (p. 38). So, while it is not surprising that a politics of difference has arisen, it may be surprising that its growth was delayed for as long as it was.

Taylor (2002) accounts for some of this delay in his essay *Democratic Exclusion (and its remedies?)*, where he argues for shared identity space, but recognizes that exclusion is a by-product of the perceived need of self-governing societies to have a sense of common purpose (p. 1). However, there are other reasons for the delay. Foremost of these was the difficulty in reconciling the principle of equal respect for all where we are required to treat everyone in a difference-blind manner and at the same time respect people as individuals who are part of distinct (or different) groups. For if we believe, as Taylor does, that in the modern age we can only develop our full potential as an individual with an authentic identity by being appropriately recognized for our individual distinctiveness and for the character of the associative cultures in which we are embedded, (Chandhoke, 1999), then both requirements of recognition must be met. The reconciliation is made even more difficult by the existence of hegemonic cultures, where the majority culture (for instance, the settler society in Canada) is recognized for a distinctiveness, but where minority cultures (for instance, First Nations) are rendered invisible. In these cases, the minority cultures are the ones to suffer the most from non-recognition or misrecognition. Demands for recognition in a political environment such as

this require that the minority culture or cultures make effective and sufficient demands for recognition to require the majority culture to make accommodation for the recognition of difference. In regard to First Nations people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin this is reflected in resistance to domination in the face of a brutal colonial power from the very beginning of contact.

Taylor credits Fanon (1961/1963) for articulating the harmful impact on individuals from minority cultures when there is a refusal for due recognition of those cultures. As a result of Fanon's work, it is now understood, Taylor argues, that only when there is some degree of success in achieving recognition can people from a minority culture enjoy some equality of social, political, and economic opportunity as well as the opportunity to fully develop both group and individual identity. Taylor (1994) looks to Hegel to point out that there is no choice for associative groups but to engage in this struggle for recognition, for "we can flourish only to the extent that we are recognized" (p. 50). "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when," writes Hegel, "...it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel, 1807/1994, p. 111). "The struggle for recognition," taken a step further by Taylor (1994), "can find only one satisfactory solution, and that is the regime of reciprocal recognition among equals" (p. 50).

### **Solution to the Liberal Dilemma**

There are some difficulties with regard to the equal treatment of all so that each and every person has the same opportunity to realize their potential identity. Rousseau's solution to the dilemma was to refuse to recognize the differences among people.

Rousseau argued that a nation-state needed to create and foster a national will, in part to guarantee that all citizens be treated equally, but also to have an agreed upon idea about what rights would be shared in that equal treatment. Writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with recent memories of the divine right of kings and the “ancien regime,” it was not surprising that Rousseau was guarded about the political domination of society by a particular group or class. Rousseau was more concerned for the rights of the individual and for a political structure to guarantee those rights than the recognition of distinctive cultures within a society. Distinctive cultural groups, on this view, should be subsumed within and by the national will. Rousseau’s vision, however, while providing the theoretical basis for freedom and individualism, can take a frightening turn.

Rousseau argued that in a democratic society we must all be dependent on the general will so that we can all remain free from the domination of any one group in society. To prevent the ascendancy of any one group we must prevent the recognition or differentiation of any one group. Taylor (1994) describes the “homogenizing tyranny” (p. 51) of the Jacobins and the totalitarian states of the twentieth century as logical results of Rousseau’s views, and argues that even in the absence of a national will the margin for recognition is insufficient in Rousseau’s “aligning of equal freedom with the absence of differentiation” (p. 51) to provide a society in which the individual can in any authentic way fulfil the quest for identity.

This critique of the Rousseauian trinity is particularly helpful to Taylor’s argument. While there is no question of the danger of the powerful, all-encompassing, “national will” component of the trinity, Taylor argues for the need to separate the remaining two elements of “equal freedom” and the “absence of differentiation” as well.



Rousseau's brand of liberalism, represented in the present era by Rawls (1993) and Dworkin (1977), for example, argues for the equal treatment of all regardless of difference while providing for only the most superficial acknowledgement of those differences. On this view, individual rights must always come first and must not ever be subsumed under the collective rights of any group for any reason. Dworkin claims that it is up to the individual to make evaluations about what constitutes a good life, but that we are to deal with each other in a fair and equal way, no matter what we conceive that good life to be for ourselves. For this brand of liberalism, human dignity amounts to the autonomy of the individual to determine what that good life means to them. It is the role of the state, on this view, to remain detached from the determination of what constitutes the good life and instead focus on maintaining an environment of individual rights so that each person has the same opportunity to define and achieve the good life as they see it.

Taylor is particularly sensitive to this connection between "equal freedom" and the "absence of differentiation" so characteristic of classic American procedural liberalism. Living as he does in Quebec, Taylor is thoroughly aware of the different national aspirations of Quebeckers and Aboriginal people. And with the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights in 1982, those national aspirations within the larger Canadian confederation became even more problematic. In the national debate over the Meech Lake Accord, for instance, it became obvious that "English Canada" found great difficulty in agreeing to the acceptance of a schedule of rights that allowed for a world-view significantly different from the dominant world-view of the Canadian federation. The "national" focus of Quebec on public policy in support of the survival of Quebecois culture with commercial sign and language of instruction laws was just not acceptable to

“English Canada” for the restrictions it imposed on other members of the society. Similarly, the “national” focus of Aboriginal people on self-government, rights inherent to their historical status, the essential nature of the collective context to each individual, and other issues thought to be necessary by Aboriginal people for survival of their culture, has also been a challenge to a rights-based liberalism. The collective goals of both Quebec society and Aboriginal communities are both inconsistent with the neutral stance of this liberal view (Taylor, 1994, p. 53).

### **The Recognition of Diversity**

There is another liberal view, however; one that Taylor (1994) can support. “On this view” he writes, “a society can be organized around a definition of the good life (such as the specific collective goals of a Quebec or Aboriginal culture within a larger federation), without this being seen as a depreciation of those who do not personally share the definition” (p. 59). A society of this sort separates Rousseau’s “equal freedom” and “absence of differentiation,” and in doing so jealously guards the rights of all its members while respecting the associative diversity of those members. A society of this sort can respect a broad range of diverse communities, including those communities whose members do not share in the collective goals of the nation, provided basic fundamental rights are respected by all (p. 59). It is Taylor’s view that because the first type of liberalism cannot meet the needs for recognition of difference in our increasingly diverse societies, it will become an “impractical solution in tomorrow’s world” (p. 61).

For Taylor it is possible to construct a liberal state with a recognitive social environment that can provide the individual with access to their distinctive culture. In

fact, Taylor would argue that there is no authentic alternative. But difficult issues remain, including the critical question about the limits to liberal recognition of difference. Indeed, according to Taylor, there has to be a limit to liberal neutrality and tolerance. Liberal societies have each created a schedule of rights over time, rights that can be altered in a politically engaged process within the society, but not rights that can be ignored. This is a complex and controversial matter in our increasingly multicultural world with, as we shall see later, its multiple modern social imaginaries and differing elements of moral order. In Canada, for instance, there are increasing numbers of recent immigrant who live part of each year in Canada, but whose primary loyalty is outside the Canadian state. There are others whose world-view does not include the schedule of rights to which most Canadians are accustomed. Indeed, there are others whose world-view is in opposition to the schedule of rights in Canada. There are still others whose cultures have been marginalized and forever changed by the colonialism of the past centuries. The challenge in all these cases is, in Taylor's words, "to deal with their sense of marginalization without compromising our basic political principles" (Taylor, 1994, p. 63). Compromise is not possible in all cases, and challenges to rights will need to be evaluated for their validity, often in contentious and public forums.

### **The Nature of Liberalism**

There are a number of critiques of Taylor's views that I would like to consider. Some question the very premise of recognition, while others reflect concerns for the implications of recognition for individuals and society. They all enrich Taylor's thinking. Walzer (1994), Rockefeller (1994), Orwin (2001), Appiah (1994), Wolf (1994), Orlie (2004) and Habermas (1994) have waded into this debate from different perspectives,

each moving our understanding along while enriching our grasp of recognition, identity, culture, diversity, and the liberal character of modern western society.

It is useful to begin these critiques in a consideration of the very nature of liberalism. Michael Walzer (1994), while in general agreement with Taylor's analysis, offers some useful observations and clarifications to that examination. Walzer describes the two kinds of liberalism presented by Taylor:

'Liberalism 1' "is committed in the strongest possible way to individual rights and, almost as a deduction from this, to a rigorously neutral state, that is, a state without cultural or religious projects or, indeed, any sort of collective goals beyond the personal freedom and the physical security, welfare, and safety of its citizens. ... 'Liberalism 2' allows for a state committed to the survival and flourishing of a particular nation, culture, or religion... so long as the basic rights of citizens who have different commitments or no commitments at all are protected. (p. 99)

Arguing for the best of both worlds, Walzer argues that we can choose which liberalism to employ depending on the circumstances. On this view it is possible for the Quebec provincial government to operate on the principle of Liberalism 2 and adopt measures in support of the cultural practices of the majority culture of that particular society while respecting the rights of diverse minorities "to organize their members, express their cultural values, and reproduce their cultural values in civil society and in the family" (p. 100). At the same time, in a federal state such as Canada, the federal government can take a neutral stance consistent with Liberalism 1, towards the way in which the Quebec society has decided to define its goals and conception of what is good. Walzer observes that there are tensions and conflicts inherent to Liberalism 2 that are not evident in Liberalism 1, although it would be foolish to think that the complex relationships that exists within and between Quebec and Canadian society and their

institutions would not in itself generate disagreements. And of course, there are always the constant demands in a Liberal 1 state for better recognition of differences in the face of rejection of that difference. In clearly defining two types of liberalism, Walzer has enriched our appreciation of liberalism. What he has not done, however, is consider the recognition of diversity in anything other than national and ethnic groups or taken very seriously at all (in spite of a casual reference) the kind of deep understanding of the "other" that Taylor asks us to consider.

### **Feminist Views**

Susan Wolf (1994) takes a different stance. She wants to know why Taylor would have us so seriously consider the importance of recognition and ignore some of the different failures of recognition and the harms that are a consequence of these failures. For in looking at the failures in recognition, Wolf can identify different cultural categories, some of which, such as "women," confront Taylor's defining regime of national and ethnic groups. In Wolf's view, Taylor considers two failures in recognition: the failure to recognize that particular groups of people have distinctive cultures with complementary traditions, practices, epistemologies, and history, and the failure to recognize that this cultural identity has deep importance and value to those embedded in the culture (p. 75). Wolf is in agreement with these views on the importance of recognition in the modern world and the connection between recognition and identity, but argues that there are significant cognitive issues for women that do not conveniently fit into Taylor's scheme. Women, she argues, do not exist as a distinctive cultural group as do those of nation and ethnicity. And while the identity of women suffer from a failure of due recognition, Taylor does not consider the distinctive and problematic nature in defining women.

Indeed, Wolf is of the view that the identity of women is much considered in modern society, but that the failure of due recognition is in the exploitive and oppressive character of that recognition (p. 76).

This moving beyond national and ethnic groups has an additional advantage. It enables Wolf to view Taylor's original concern with identity and criticize his subsequent focus on learning about different cultures so as to allow that knowledge to inform and transform the culture of the learner. Wolf suggests that this is a perspective motivated by the world-view of white, male, and North American civilization. There is another and more basic process at work in recognition, she argues, and that has little to do with the person who is doing the recognizing. It has to do with the concern about the character and the authentic identity that is made possible by the recognition of difference in both the private and public sphere. Wolf's point is not that knowledge of another culture is not valuable to an outsider, but that the knowledgeable recognition of individuals from another culture is critical to an individual in the building of their identity. Wolf encourages Taylor to return to the focus on recognition and identity. "The politics of recognition," she argues, "urges us not just to make efforts to recognize the other more actively and accurately – to recognize those people and those cultures who occupy the world in addition to ourselves – it urges us also to take a closer, less selective look at who is sharing our cities, the libraries, the schools we call our own" (p. 85).

Melissa Orlie (2004) considers Taylor's thinking about recognition from an entirely different point of view. She argues that our preoccupation with the politics of recognition, including Taylor's work, has led us away from more important matters. Orlie argues that we have become preoccupied with identity and with struggles for recognition

of difference and are in danger of losing our concern for the good. In fact, she identifies with Taylor's ongoing concern with the goods to which individuals in their cultural context cleave (p. 17). In this context, the politics of the good has implications for recognition and identity, but is not the driving force or its primary motivation. Orlie characterizes the politics of recognition as closed and static as it is embedded in culture, whereas, the politics of the good has greater potential to be "open-minded and dynamic" as well as speculative. (p. 17) Feminism would benefit more from a politics of the good, according to Orlie, than from the present focus on the politics of recognition. Orlie makes a good point here about the relationship between identity and culture, but misses the possibilities that an examination of culture would present for her argument. Tully and Benhabib, as we shall see later, take up this challenge and argue for a much less static view of culture, one that reflects the porous boundaries of cultures in modern diverse societies.

### **The Legacy of Rousseau**

Steven Rockefeller (1994) makes another argument, one that ultimately supports Walzer's Liberalism 1, but attempts to acknowledge the recent demands for recognition by ethnic groups. Rockefeller focuses specifically on ethnic identity, and argues that while ethnicity needs to be appreciated, in North-American society it does not and cannot form the primary foundation of individual identity. To do so would, on Rockefeller's view, undermine the "universal" (p. 88) identity so critical to the foundations of liberalism and the liberal state. In fact, Rockefeller argues that to open up society to the processes of recognition to which Taylor believes we should aspire is "to open the door to intolerance" (p. 88). In response to the political environment of legal protections

for Quebecois culture in Quebec, Rockefeller worries about the erosion of fundamental human rights in the face of an assertive culture that elevates ethnic identity over human rights (p. 89). While Rockefeller acknowledges Taylor's caution that recognition must not be granted when fundamental rights are threatened in the granting, he is critical of Taylor's belief that any kind of a "fusion of horizons" can be achieved when a society is preoccupied with protecting and maintaining a particular culture at the expense of some specific rights for all citizens, without exception. As an alternative, Rockefeller asks that all cultures abandon any characteristics "that are inconsistent with the ideals of freedom, equality, and the ongoing cooperative experimental search for truth and well-being" (p. 92). So while Rockefeller acknowledges the powerful national and ethnic forces unleashed by the politics of recognition and difference, he cautions that we not lose sight of the threats to the schedule of rights we have all become accustomed to share. In this process of accommodation, designed to provide all the essential recognition required to each individual so that they may fulfil their quest for an authentic identity he argues that we also keep in mind the identity provided by the larger political body with its schedule of rights and freedoms and the identity provided by belonging to a "larger whole which is the universe" (p. 97). So, while there is much in Rockefeller's views that support Taylor's work, especially an appreciation of the critical elements to the creation of the modern individual identity, Rockefeller cannot accept Taylor's level of legal and normative recognition of difference.

### **The Cultural Interface**

Clifford Orwin (2001) is critical of Taylor's thinking from another perspective entirely, although in the end his critique reflects the Liberalism 1 view of Rockefeller.



Orwin relates the politics of recognition back to an earlier discourse on toleration where the liberalism of Locke and Washington, enshrined in the American constitution, “tolerated difference but did not celebrate it” (p. 234). On this view, respect for human rights remains primary, with toleration of difference included only to the extent that it does not impinge on the Western liberal schedule of rights. That older demand for toleration, argues Orwin, has recently become a demand for the affirmation and recognition of difference where identity supersedes a universal schedule of rights (p. 235). Orwin cannot accept this view, especially when the demands for recognition come not from ethnic or national groups (as Taylor employs in his analysis) but from other associative groups that Orwin describes as “domestic sub-cultures” (p. 236). “They demand recognition,” writes Orwin, “as women, as blacks, as gays.... They reject the liberal politics of universality for a post-liberal one of identity” (p. 235).

A second area of concern to Orwin is Taylor’s thinking about the boundary between cultures in the process of recognition. Orwin cannot accept Taylor’s view of the equal worth of all cultures: initially, because Taylor’s presumption of equal worth as a precursor to cultural evaluation gives credit to all the elements of a culture before the determinations of the evaluation, and secondly, because there are significant practical issues with evaluation across boundaries of misunderstanding and inequities in power. It is not likely, Orwin argues, that a previously unrecognized or misrecognized minority group would be open to engaging with a dominant culture so that the dominant culture can evaluate what is of value in the minority culture. This is a risky process for any minority culture that may have particular elements of their world-view discarded or intentionally ignored by the dominant culture. In the interface, the “fusion of horizons” of

which Taylor speaks, may become more a "locking of horns" (Orwin, 2001, p. 241). Orwin is suspicious of any fusion of horizons resulting from such a mismatched engagement over issues of importance to the society. "It is quite possible," he argues, "that this 'fusion of horizons' will prove both impossible and superfluous" (p. 238). Indeed, it is in this synthesis that Orwin is most critical. "It may well be," Orwin writes, "that in the course of time the fundamental human alternatives have already been articulated, and that what defines the human situation is not synthesis but only hard choices" (p. 239). It is here that Orwin questions the very nature of the demand for recognition as envisioned by Taylor. Those who claim recognition, Orwin argues, are not looking for the engagement over issues common to both that Taylor takes for granted. Those who want recognition, in Orwin's experience, today seek only validation. They seek not cultural understanding but a simple, uncritical affirmation of their world-view (p. 243).

Orwin offers another more basic critique that questions the very underpinnings of Taylor's thinking on recognition. It all comes down, according to Orwin, to Taylor's view that the politics of recognition has some effective purchase in making a substantive change to the cultural imperialism of Western society: a change that can provide for greater opportunity for all citizens to develop and express their individual identity while maintaining the basic rights of a liberal society. While Orwin agrees with Taylor that progress needs to be made in inclusion, he also believes that the politics of recognition is not helpful. While Taylor is concerned with developing a process of recognition in engagement over substantive issues, the reality of recognition, according to Orwin, is just not reflective of the real nature of the demands for recognition in the present era. He

argues that multiculturalism and recognition are Western concepts, and that they serve not to enhance the cultural diversity of Western societies, but to further integrate them. And while Orwin supports the need for some substantive change to Western society, the politics of recognition as a new orthodoxy of social justice does not meet his standard for the protection of individual rights as the primary underpinning of Western society.

This is a vigorous critique of Taylor's work that I will return to later, especially with regard to the language of the politics of recognition and the capacity of that language to define and adapt to demands for recognition while maintaining the present relationships of power. It may be possible, however, to account for some of the differences in their views in the context of their experience. While Taylor is primarily concerned with the issues of recognition in Quebec society with the demands that emanate from national cultures (First Nations and Quebecois), Orwin has been preoccupied with the demands made on the university by entirely different associative groups. He mentions women, gays, and blacks (and Chicanos as an after thought, throwing all Spanish speaking cultures into the same pot). They have also lived and worked in countries with quite different views about the recognition of diversity and the nature of liberalism: Orwin in the United States and Taylor in Canada. As with all diversity, it is essential to consider the nature of difference and the nature of the demands made for recognition. This point has been well established by Taylor and would be worthy of further consideration by Orwin.

## **An Evaluation of Culture**

I would like to return to the relationship between the concepts of identity and recognition with the response of Anthony Appiah (1994) to Taylor's *Politics of Recognition* (1994). It is with Appiah that we have the best examination of that relationship. He is also the most appreciative of the dialogical nature of the modern identity of the person wherein each individual must create (not just find or uncover) their own identity in ongoing relationships with others. The qualities of recognition in that social environment and the potential for the creation of an authentic personal identity in it are his direct concern. Authenticity, on this view, means that I can create my identity in relation to significant others in a social environment that responds to my demands for both individual and social recognition. This is an authenticity with a strong autonomous dimension. One must be careful here, however. Recognition in this sense does not mean the simple recognition of an unchanging culture. It means the recognition of culture as a living system, interacting and constantly changing in a wider social world. For Appiah, personally, it does not mean embracing a past African-American culture separate from the historically constructed culture we know today. It also does not mean the acceptance of elements of oppression in a culture, nor preclude the creation of new elements to a culture. And it does not mean that individuals must remain embedded in what they may believe are oppressive elements of a particular culture. In this way, Appiah's position reflects a greater suspicion of the characteristics of cultures than that taken by Taylor or, indeed, by Chandhoke (1999). It also has an autonomous element to it. It is Appiah's view that the individual may, in a dialogical process with others, choose to reject the dominant elements of the culture in which they are embedded, for it may

also be that an individual is not content with either non-recognition of culture or the "straight-jacket" of culture that may accompany recognition.

Nevertheless, Appiah is concerned primarily with examining this act of recognition for its potential for the authentic creation of individual identity. Appiah is favourable to Taylor's views, especially with regard to the critical relationship between recognition and identity. His analysis is informative about the qualities of recognition and the collective and personal elements of identity. But he is ever so careful to caution about the dangers of recognition, where the society makes any substantive efforts to collectively define the good, and in doing so, threatening the final autonomy of the individual. It is a boundary that he finds unacceptable, and in doing so cannot accept Taylor's communitarian thinking.

## **Conclusion**

What do we have here that is useful to my investigations? I have discussed the general context of the challenges presented by diversity in the world today and in our societies and outlined the various perspectives in the research on diversity. I have speculated that the concept of recognition has value to help us better understand the challenges posed by diversity. I have shown that Taylor's concern for the concept of recognition is grounded in his political and intellectual life experiences and outlined the sources to Taylor's thinking. I have discussed in detail a number of critiques of his work and in doing so I have fleshed out an intricate political and philosophical dialogue about the politics of recognition and its relation to identity in the modern Western world. I have looked at the nature of liberal societies as well as a discussion of the possibilities that

society presents for the realization of individual and group identity. I have also explained that in modern times there is no alternative to the quest for identity; that each individual must, in the context of their environment, construct their individual identity. Finally, I have presented Taylor's argument that the individual cannot authentically fulfill this quest without due recognition of the self and the culture in which that self is embedded.

So, there are persuasive arguments for the granting of recognition, but also a concern for the ultimate autonomy of individual citizens in the granting. The opportunities that are afforded for the development of an authentic identity by individuals when the culture in which they are embedded is duly recognized are too beneficial to ignore. Not that they could be ignored in any case, as demands for recognition are a visible and integral part of political processes and the political imaginary of the times. In regard to this study of First Nations cultures and circumstances, especially with regard to implications to public education, I have identified limitations both in and to that granting that need to be acknowledged. First, the granting of recognition is often a difficult and contentious political process. In the process, it is possible for certain groups to be duly recognized while others are not, creating different kinds of both visible and invisible harms. In this case, the work of Wolf (1999), Orlie (2004) and other feminist writers, is particularly sensitive to the invisibility of women, or the exploitive recognition of women, especially women embedded in minority religious, national, and ethnic cultures. In the recent past, this has been a particularly sensitive issue in First Nations communities across the nation. It is my experience in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, that First Nations women are over-represented in comparison to men in involvement in educational activities in support of First Nations children and youth. A majority of First Nations educators are

women and most of the band representative positions on the First Nations Education Council in the school district are also women. Indeed, bands rely on First Nations women in all areas of social affairs. In the Cariboo-Chilcotin, First Nations women are intimately involved with leadership activities in areas of social policy and governance. First Nations communities (whether on reserve or off) rely heavily on First Nations women in social, economic, and political matters. Their involvement in the education system and schools and in other institutions of modern Western liberal society, places First Nations women in a close relationship with the modern Western liberal social imaginary and its values. They contend with Euro-Canadian culture every day. There has been little study of the nature of their lives, however, as they mediate in the space between the two cultures in ways that impact on their identity and the identity of the significant others around them. There has been even less consideration of their identity and its constituent parts, as they experience different recognitive environments in each of the private and public spheres of their lives. I suspect there is much to be found in a study of this sort, for First Nations women who work in the educational system have significant life experiences with both cultures. They are required to mediate each and every day, with a variety of substantive issues, between First Nations culture as it is constituted after two centuries of interactions, and the dominant Euro-Canadian culture, constituted originally in European history, but including elements constituted in four centuries of colonialism and imperialism.

Second, a number of writers have expressed concern for the loss of a sense of the good as it becomes subsumed within the politics of recognition, where the recognition of difference becomes more important than political deliberation about the

good. There are a number of issues that might be considered here, including the earlier claims for social justice in the redistribution of wealth and access to resources. This is particularly important during the present neo-liberal ascendancy with the accompanying cutting of taxes and the decrease in support for social programs. Land claims, including the right to resources and the management of those resources, support for social programs, and development projects are all part of these claims to the good, as are claims to identity and the recognition of difference.

Third, in the boundaries between "I and thou" (Buber, 1958/1986) is a complex historical relationship, often permeated by differences in power that need to be acknowledged and considered in practical deliberations about issues. With regard to First Nations communities and culture this issue highlights Orwin's concern that in social and political processes that provide possibilities for due recognition there are obstacles in the power imbalance. In response to the power imbalance, First Nations people often make demands in ways that are not easily understood and definitely not appreciated in the Euro-Canadian society. While First Nations bands may choose to establish demands by way of direct action, the response of the political authorities of the Euro-Canadian society is always for negotiation between "appropriate" authorities. Recently, for instance, a First Nations band demanded a voice in the determination of hunting regulations by blocking roads into an area that is hunted by both First Nations and non-Aboriginal hunters and previously designated by the band as part of their formal land-claims. From the band's point of view, the roadblock served as a symbol for their ongoing struggles to establish the inherent right to both the resources of the land and the right to manage those resources. While successful negotiations were eventually



conducted, acknowledging inherent right to the land in an informal way to reflect what the Supreme Court has granted in a formal way on a number of occasions, the power imbalance and cultural differences caused more of a “locking of horns” than a “fusion of horizons.” A better understanding of the process and the recognitive elements in that process by both First Nations and government authorities might have been helpful. The conflict within the process illuminated the divergent cultural understandings and the level of discord that can originate in the differences between cultures. Recognitive processes contain within them ample opportunity for conflict as well as possibilities for a generous spirit toward the “thou.”

The nature of those power imbalances and the response to demands by First Nations communities for recognition of difference on substantive issues such as land claims brings up another point from the critiques. That is the ability of Western liberal society to adopt or appropriate demands for recognition for its own purposes in the further integration of First Nations people into the dominant Euro-Canadian society. Significant concessions and accommodations are possible within the Western liberal mantle. In the negotiations over hunting regulation important rights for title were confirmed, and First Nations authorities were granted consultative status for the future, but issues more critical to the Euro-Canadian perspective, such as arrangements over access to the timber supply, were avoided. Similarly, demands for recognition of difference in public schools are often granted for cultural rituals and language, but governance, pedagogy, and critical processes in the classroom are evaded or ignored. Contracts with employee unions, for instance, have been negotiated without First Nations involvement in the past, and have reflected a Euro-Canadian legal framework

that places obstacles in the way of processes of recognition. Hiring processes reflecting this structure are a critical point of conflict in many school districts. One way to determine the quality of a cognitive process might be to ask to what extent has the dominant society or an institution in that society been changed by the process of recognition. Indeed, have both cultures been changed in the granting? For in a truly cognitive moment, there is mediation between difference where both have had to contend with the "other" and in so doing been changed in the process. There has been, in Taylor's words, a "fusion of horizons." Finally, it might be asked to what extent does the granting of recognition facilitate the growth in cognitive processes and the building of a social environment where individuals may create more authentic identities? I will return to this issue in greater detail in the next chapter.

In addition, it is important to remember that in cognitive processes it is necessary to presume that all cultures have value for their members, as Taylor advises, it is also essential that the particular practices of each culture be evaluated for their contribution to the good of each of its members and the society as a whole. Appiah's (1994) caution is worth considering here for people from all cultures in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, for in conflicting social and political environments such as the one we have, there are many pressures to conform to the culture in which one is connected. And last, while we must not lose sight of questions about the good during this era of the politics of recognition, we must also not lose sight of issues about social justice that can only be resolved with a redistribution of wealth and resources, nor fail to appreciate the connections between recognition of difference and the redistribution of resources. The

land claims issue demonstrates this point in its demand for the recognition of rights and the redistribution of resources that would result from its granting.

In Taylor's work and in the subsequent critiques we see that demands for recognition need to be considered within the context of Western liberal society. Some of the underpinnings to that society are in the form of theories, which I have considered in this chapter, and will do so again later. Others are in the form of the social imaginary, which I consider next. Of course, these two kinds of understanding, one conscious, and the other taken for granted, are different, but as we shall soon see, both are influenced by each other. The theory is part of a moral order of things and has an impact, over time, on those unconscious meanings we have about our social world. The social world, framed by those unconscious meanings, forms the landscape upon which circumstance and ideas work their influence.

## CHAPTER 4:

### Modern Social Imaginaries

#### Introduction

The world-view of Euro-Canadian society is spread through every aspect of the everyday life of the people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. This dominant world-view expresses the values and identities of a historical tradition that openly and consciously celebrates that tradition (Furniss, 1997/98, p. 7). But the tradition has its underpinnings in a set of social meanings that are both unstated and unknown to those who hold them. These meanings make up the social imaginary of the people of the area. This chapter will consider the nature of that social imaginary and engage in a dialogue for what it can reveal about the relationship between people of First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures and about the alternatives for the future.

It is not a question of whether cultural diversity, especially of the First Nations people amongst us, should be recognized, but one of finding our way through the understandings we bring to these relationships so recognition may be realized. How is it then, that cultural differences can be recognized, what implications are there for this recognition, and what understandings, or in the words of James Tully (1995/2004), what “critical attitudes of *spirit*” (p. 1) will be required for recognition to be rendered? We can see the challenges to this kind of recognition in the historical development of the relationship between First Nations people and the dominant Euro-Canadian culture in

the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Fortunately, there has been an abundance of studies about the nature of cultural difference and the impact of cultural diversity on communities and the nation-state. This has been especially manifest in numerous studies of citizenship and democratic deliberation. This issue of how we might live together in a shared identity space while fully living out the individual and group cultures in which we are embedded is of special interest to a large group of theorists. While some of the perspectives they offer begin in political considerations, and others in philosophical concerns, the literature reaches into both disciplines.

### **The Social Imaginary**

Taylor's (2004) recent work with modern social imaginaries offers a number of assets to the dialogue. While it can illustrate a historical and philosophical approach to the investigation of Western modernity, for my purposes it can also provide a framework to define the significant differences and similarities in the world-views represented by First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures. Once I can demonstrate the depth of those significant features, and show how due recognition of the social imaginary (or world-view) of First Nations people is denied through non-recognition and misrecognition, I can examine the harm resulting from that denial. That harm can best be explored in Taylor's work with his examination of the identity of the self in the modern era and the need for recognitive processes between diverse cultures in a society. The work of Dussel (1996, 1999/2002) is useful here, not only as a critique of Taylor's 'Western' perspective, but also as a framework for understanding the impact of European contact on First Nations cultures. I would like to begin, then, with Taylor's conception of the modern social imaginary.

The modern social imaginary is an important concept for Taylor, for it enables him to continue his work on the modern identity that has been a critical thread in his work for decades. It is especially relevant to *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991), but also to his work on recognition in the *Politics of Recognition* (1992) and *Reconciling the Solitudes* (1993). His work in the *Modern Social Imaginary* (2004) is particularly useful for me for it provides a rich historical and philosophical understanding of the world-view with which First Nations people have had to contend. It will enable me to examine what First Nations people have been up against. And it will allow us to better understand the various ways in which First Nations people have resisted what must appear to them to be its overwhelmingly commanding assumptions about knowledge and meaning as well as its economic, social, and political power. It may also allow us to begin to build an appreciation of the nature of the First Nations modern social imaginaries, built as it is from the life experiences of history, both before and after contact, and the social imaginary they brought to that moment of contact. We need to begin in the social imaginary. For Taylor(2004), it "is not a set of ideas" (p. 2).

By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations. (p. 23)

It is also the way we all "imagine' our social landscape and is carried with us, not as ideas or theories that we think about, but as those meanings we unconsciously give to our ordinary lives. It is made up of those critical meanings we give to our lives and to how we get on in the social world. Taylor says that the social imaginary "is carried in

images, stories and legends," (p. 23) and it is shared by groups of people and even by whole societies. In this way, it forms the underpinning of those actions and practices that constitute our social behaviour. The social imaginary can best be expressed in the term ordinary, for it leads all of us to know "how things usually go" and "how they ought to go" (p. 24). The social imaginary provides us all with a "map of social space," (p. 25) one that makes interaction between people possible, predictable, and understandable.

There are several other qualities about the social imaginary that Taylor discusses and are important for my purposes. The first is the reciprocal nature of the relationship between practices and the meanings that we hold that give rise to the practices. For the practices themselves carry the meanings within them. The second is that because the social imaginary is not a theory and because it is held in the relationship between practice and meaning, we can consider its elements and discuss its content; but it is difficult, if not impossible, to define those limits. It therefore appears to us as both unlimited and indefinite (p. 25). There is even more to the social imaginary, for to understand its hold on people and to appreciate its powerful and dynamic nature it is necessary to understand what drives its creation in the history of humans. For Taylor, that is its relationship to moral order and how that order, in the form of moral ideas, infiltrates or penetrates (Taylor uses both terms) into and produces ongoing changes to the social imaginary. This, of course, is consistent with Taylor's dialectical historical process where at any point in time there are historical ideas at work, constantly changing the nature of the social imaginary, moving from more conscious practices in times of significant change, to less conscious, "taken-for-granted...too obvious to mention" (p. 29) meanings over time.

## **Moral Order**

There have been significant changes in the social imaginary in the history of all people. And, for Taylor (2004), the driving forces in these changes have been moral forces embedded in what he calls the moral order of things. Taylor cites Grotius as the originator of the Western sense of moral order; "it tells us something about how we ought to live together in society" (p. 3). It lays out the obligations we have to each other in society and reaches beyond the mere political to find its foundation in the ontological. The nature of that order he finds in the writing of Locke, for it was Locke who first justified revolution in the face of unlimited government power, and who posed individual rights above the power of government. According to Taylor, this view of popular sovereignty upon which Western societies are based, has become ever more dominant across the world and ever more a taken-for-granted element of the Western social imaginary. While it now exists as an unquestioned part of the way in which us moderns in the Western world go about our lives, it originated in the revolutionary ideas of Locke four centuries ago.

But this aspect of popular sovereignty is only one aspect of the modern moral order of things. There are other elements as well, and I will return to popular sovereignty and the self-ruling people later when I consider Taylor's third form of the modern social imaginary. I would like to examine here in some detail the features of the changing nature of the moral order as it applies to the individual and the relationship between the individual and society. These features are important for in their historical development over the time before and since contact, they constitute the foundation of the Western social imaginary with which First Nations people have had to contend. For Taylor this



moral order is found in the concept of popular sovereignty and the ascendancy of the individual. While this form has continued to develop over the past four centuries, it forms the basis of the modern Western social imaginary. As it forms that basis, it also stands in striking contrast to earlier conceptions of the individual in the social imaginary of First Nations people before contact.

### **The Axial Revolution**

Taylor's calls this new form of moral order, the Great Disembedding (p. 50). While I need not, for my purposes, go into the reasons for this disembedding of the individual, I will need to consider in detail the character of the individual both in modern Western times and in those times and places of earlier, smaller-scale societies (p. 50) such as the First Nations of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. And while we can only speculate about the nature of these pre-contact First Nations societies, anthropological work in the field is a useful source.

About four centuries ago a number of reform movements in Western Europe led to some significant changes in society and in the social imaginary of those people. Society became more ordered, more disciplined and purposeful, and according to Weber (1958), more industrious and stable. Taylor (2004) sees that this new society was founded on a unique conception of the individual and on a modern relationship between the individual and society. Gone were the

ambivalent complementarities of the older enchanted world: between worldly life and monastic renunciation, between proper order and its periodic suspension in Carnival, between the acknowledged power of spirits and forces and their relegation by divine power. The new order was coherent, uncompromising, all of a piece. (p. 50)

Gone also was the collective nature of community and the internal and unconscious connection between each person, the community, and the cosmos, a union expressed in collective ritual. In its place was an individual who was part of a community, but who had an individual relationship to the community as a whole and to personal devotion, and whose religion was separate from the developing secular world of the economy, public space, and the self-governing individual, the three forms of modern Western social imaginary that I will consider later. This is a new character to the moral order of society, a new sense of what it is to be a person, a new sense of identity and responsibility to oneself and others. It is Taylor's "Great Disembedding."

What might this form of moral order and its expression in the social imaginary look like to First Nations people in 1800 at the time of contact with Europeans? What might this form of the First Nations moral order and its expression in the social imaginary look like at the same time? Taylor (2004) makes some interesting speculations about the moral order of smaller-scale societies such as those of the pre-axial First Nations at the time of contact. First of all, spiritual life is inseparably linked with social life. This means that language, social relationships, and economic activities, and the understandings of spiritual dimensions and the rituals that express these dimensions are interwoven and at one with each other. So too is the individual interwoven into this fabric of life. But unlike the modern Western social imaginary of 1800, the magic and spiritual forces are integral to First Nations people. Taylor considers several of these, including the presence everywhere of spiritual forces that appear in some sense to be higher than the ordinary things and events of everyday life. The second, dependent upon the first, is the range of capacities that derives from these spiritual understandings and the ability to

appreciate different kinds of experiences that derive from the nature of that world-view (p. 51). These experiences and capacities, of course, are beyond the range of most of us moderns, including those Europeans of the first contact.

The second important difference has to do with the nature of the person. In early western religion as well as the religions of smaller-scale societies, religious experience was on a social level. "The primary agent," in Taylor's words, "was the social group as a whole, or some more specialized agency recognized as acting for the group" (p. 52). Indeed, it was understood that collective action was integral to the worth and power of the ritual (p. 53). So the individual depended upon the collective action of the community for all the activities of one's life and in a "taken-for-granted..., too obvious to mention" way conceived of themselves as integral to the community, and connected to its social matrix (p. 54).

There is a third feature of this form that is important to my consideration of First Nations people. With the integral connection between the spirit world and all other social activity and structures in societies of this sort, the nature of the social order takes on a sacred and untouchable quality. While we in the Western world can recall the era of the "divine right of kings" and the inherent connection between Louis XIV and "his" Christian deity, the same sort of relationship, although perhaps one of a more enlightened nature, exists for the social order in societies such as the First Nations societies of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Taylor describes the individual in such a society as one who cannot "imagine the self outside of a particular context extended to membership of that society in its essential order" (p. 55). I will consider this embeddedness of the individual in the social imaginary of the social order in later chapters when I consider the nature of identity in

relation to recognition. For now, it is enough to acknowledge that living in such a world of individual embeddedness, both in the social order and the cosmos, places significant restrictions upon what might be considered as possibilities for a self and thus places limits on the development of identity (p. 55). Identity is at one with community and cosmos and self is conferred within the matrix.

We have seen then, that there are some important features about this examination of an earlier moral order or a moral order from smaller-scale societies that is consistent with what we can imagine were the critical features of that world-view. While we cannot be certain about these features, what is critical is that we can identify that there were significant and powerful cultural understandings and forces that formed the bases of a social imaginary that provided horizons of meaning for the practices of the society (Taylor, 1994, p. 72). We can also be certain that these features were significantly different than those of the modern European society in which they came in contact.

What, then, were the forms of the moral order of that European society to which First Nations people were confronted? They were foremost, forms of the modern Western moral order influenced by what Taylor calls the axial age: an age where a variety of circumstances, from the development of state power to increased urbanization and the growth of hierarchical institutions, led to new possibilities for a more independent relationship between an individual and God, one less dependent upon community and social ritual and one more open to the development of individual identity. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the time of contact, that axial age was well established; having long-ago penetrated the Western social imaginary. That penetration

and the forces it unleashed have only strengthened the disembedded form of the individual in our time. By the time of contact there remained nothing of an 'enchanted' connection to the cosmos for Western people. The spiritual and temporal constituted entirely different 'solitudes.' Instrumental reason prevailed, along with hierarchical social institutions for health, education, and the maintenance of order (p. 62). The state, with its secular legal structure of laws and sanctions, ruled the land. And this entire social and political world was held firmly in place by a covenant of free individuals who imagined the unlimited possibilities of their own identities (p. 63). This then is the nature of the modern Western moral order as it has penetrated and changed forever the social imaginary of Western societies. It is also a significantly different moral order, as we have seen, than the one that forms the basis of the First Nations social imaginary.

### **The Modern Western Social Imaginary**

Taylor identifies three main features of the modern Western social imaginary that has been generated by the penetration of the moral order from the Great Disembedding. They are all relevant to my purposes, for they identify the features of the dominant culture to which First Nations people have had to contend. The first is the way in which economic life has become the primary concern of people. This attribute of modern life is based in both the independence of the individual, as we saw in the moral order, but also in the relationship of mutual benefit that underpins the modern economy. We have come to see our society, according to Taylor, "as an economy, an interlocking set of activities of production, exchange, and consumption, which form its own laws and its own dynamic" (p. 76). We see ourselves linked together in collaboration over economic concerns. In addition, with the economic as the primary focus of society has come the

structuring of occupations and the designation of hierarchies of skills and disciplines within these occupations (p. 73). And with commercial relationships at the centre of social life has come the objectification of those relationships and the need to depend upon science to make predictable and orderly decisions. For Taylor, the primacy of the economic has had other implications. Chief among these, along with those already mentioned, is the affirmation of ordinary life with its focus on family life and relationships and the importance of a sense of equality to social life.

How might the nature of this focus on the economic be different in First Nations societies? It would not be accurate to say that First Nations communities were not focused on the economic: for they were, as patterns of hunting and gathering were dependent on seasonal changes and the availability of food. Indeed, as with most First Nations societies, seasons of the year were defined by the economic activity with which it was associated. It would also not be accurate to say that social and political life were not dependent upon the economic activities of the community, because these activities were directly dependent upon economic requirements, and tied together through ritual. There was also some degree of a specialization of roles, defined by gender as well as by a variety of other criteria depending upon the particular First Nations society. It would also not be accurate to say that First Nations people would not recognize commercial transactions, for communications, the transportation of goods, and the trading of those goods was well established in the area that would become British Columbia. The Fraser River had been bridged in a number of locations many centuries before contact and there was an active commercial component to the economic life of all First Nations communities in the area. Of particular note, was the trade in eulachon oil between the

coast and the interior over the vast network of grease trails, and the long involvement of First Nations communities in the fur trade all across the continent. In First Nations societies there was not, however, the same focus on economic life as a separate entity from spiritual and social life as in the social imaginary of the West, with its concomitant commercial exploitation of human and natural resources. And in that difference must have been the first experience of the nature of the modern Western social imaginary for First Nations people and their communities.

The second main feature, according to Taylor (2004), is the advent of the public sphere, a common space in which people that may never meet exchange ideas and enter into a dialogue about subjects of interest to them. Within these public spaces, decisions can be made, consensus can be reached, and disagreements can be established. Publics, and the spaces they inhabit, according to Michael Warner (2002) "exist by virtue of their imagining" (p. 8).

[They] are queer creatures. You cannot point to them, count them, or look them in the eye. You also cannot easily avoid them. They have become an almost natural feature of the social landscape, like pavement. (p. 7)

They are part of those taken-for-granted forms of the modern Western social imaginary. In spite of this imprecise quality they have drawn the attention of political thinkers from Kant to Habermas (p. 46). And while I do not need to enter into a dialogue about the public sphere at this point, there are certain qualities that are germane. In the modern Western world the public sphere varies depending on the circumstances, the involvement of institutions, and the rhetoric involved. But the public sphere can and does exist in just about every conceivable social context (p. 9), and is, in Taylor's (2004) view, a fundamental and prevailing quality of modern society (p. 85). There is good reason for

the existence of the public sphere in modern societies. In fact, the nature of modern societies is dependent upon the existence of a public sphere of one sort or another. Although this will be clearer with my examination of the self-ruling "people" in the next section, modern society is based on a combination of the consent of the governed and a belief, as we saw in the previous section on the economy, that there is mutual benefit bestowed on everyone by each individual, acting in their own interest. For the government to achieve the consent of the governed and to maintain the consent and be able to act in terms of that consent having been granted is critical to the very nature of the modern western state. This "legitimation function of public opinion" (p. 87) is made possible by the existence of a public sphere. It is a space that is separate from the politics of government, but one in which government, to one extent or another, and in one context or another, must take note. It is often influenced by political power, but exists outside the powerful political process. It serves, in Taylor's words, to supervise and check political power by offering a space for a "society to come to a common mind, without the mediation of the political sphere, in a discourse outside power, which nevertheless is normative for power" (p. 91).

There are several features to this public sphere that are relevant to my work here with the contact of modern Western and First Nations cultures. The first is in the independent nature of the public sphere. It is interesting to consider First Nations communities before contact and what level of independence there might have been between the political structures and the members that made up that community. I suspect that consent was never an issue and there was neither a need, nor a role for a public sphere. While there would have been complaints and disagreements about



community decisions common to all human societies, and various consensus building processes and structures, consent for the very existence of those traditional structures was taken for granted. It is also important to imagine a society with a much different view of personal property and land, as well as the influence that regular travel for a wide range of purposes would have on conceptions of space, social harmony, consensus, and conflict (J. Gentles, personal communication, April 26, 2005). Physical space in itself must have had a social function. The second feature is more critical; and that is the secular nature of the public sphere. In smaller scale societies, such as those of the First Nations of the interior plateau, the social and political order was, as we saw earlier in the discussion of the moral order of societies, at one with the divine or spiritual. There existed an unquestioned path from the divine to the temporal so that the social order itself appeared to exist within the spiritual (p. 93). Now I may have overstated the political and social differences in this discussion of the public sphere in relation to First Nations cultures. It is my intention to simply make the point here, which I will return to later, that it must have been difficult, if not impossible, for members of either culture on contact to appreciate the depth of the differences between them.

There is a third element to the modern Western social imaginary that I have alluded to in its relation to the modern Western moral order and the nature of the modern Western social imaginary. Taylor describes this feature as popular sovereignty or the self-ruling "people" (p. 76) and in his consideration of the nature of that popular sovereignty he identifies a number of Western historical paths and forms of that sovereignty. While he considers in detail two such paths in the American and French experiences over the past several centuries, my concern is with the nature of the drive

for popular sovereignty, and not the various forms it has taken. For my interest is in what popular sovereignty might have looked like to First Nations people and how they might have contended with its implications for themselves.

In the American, and indeed, the Canadian and British experience, there has been a long tradition of various forms of self-rule and representative government. While some of this may be related to origins in earlier Anglo-Saxon traditions, they form, in Taylor's words, a repertory of practices based in the social imaginary of these earlier societies. There is history to the development of new understandings about political circumstances and events that allows for different practices to emerge, eventually into the taken-for-granted social imaginary of a people. It has happened that new forms of legitimate government have emerged and become part of the social imaginary of societies in the Western world. These have taken the form of an active public sphere, as we have seen, regular elections, and various structures of consultative government at all levels.

## **Contact**

There were difficulties and complicating circumstances for First Nations people in contending with Euro-Canadian culture from the start. On a political level, the colonial authorities almost from the beginning appointed chiefs, disrupting the leadership practices within communities and establishing a new set of relationships based in different ideas about consensus and decisions, both largely unknown to communities. Euro-Canadians relied on written communication that was incomprehensible to First Nations people for quite some time. We can imagine that First Nations people learned

about regular formal elections and other political structures of the modern Western state as their understanding of the language of the Euro-Canadian society improved over the years. First Nations people must have been quite taken aback by the concept of elections. The public sphere, invisible as it is to even non-Aboriginal people, must have remained unknown and little understood for many years. They, in all probability, learned about these structures slowly over many years as they contended with the various impacts of the new culture and its powerful forces on their lives. For even as they became aware of these structures and the moral order that formed the underpinning of that imaginary, they would not have understood the implicit concern Western people have with consent to be governed, let alone what some of those forms of consent might look like. I suspect here that First Nations people, had they been able to share a common language with the Euro-Canadians they encountered, might have wondered what the problem was with the drive for self-rule. But, of course, they did not share a common language with the dominant culture. The complex processes of government consultation and decision-making must have mystified them. But indeed, they did not share a language and even when the language of the dominant society was learned, the dissimilar cultural meanings and the unspoken nature of those meanings must have existed as an unbridgeable chasm much of the time. Contending with the cultural processes and artifacts of the new Euro-Canadian culture must have been bewildering at times. People of the Euro-Canadian society, however, dominant as it was, had no such difficulty, for First Nations culture could be ignored or oppressed.

It is Taylor's view, then, that the social imaginary is a critical component of historical events for it determines the ways in which people act in the world and forms

the social circumstances upon which that action takes place. It is also an unconscious filter to the understandings we have about the social circumstances around us. As we have seen in the past section, the people of the First Nations and Euro-Canadian societies, had they had desire to, must have had significant difficulties in understanding the actions and cultures of each other. Taylor's thinking about social imaginaries has helped us generate some useful speculations about that contact, and added some important understandings for the remainder of this work.

### **Sources of the Modern Social Imaginary**

I would like to now step back from Taylor's work on the social imaginary and consider a critique of the process I have just completed with regard to looking at the differences between the principal elements of Euro-Canadian and First Nations social imaginaries from before contact to the present day. I will engage the work of Enrique Dussel (1996, 1999/2002) to consider Taylor's earlier investigations into the self and identity. For some of the understandings I have just presented above there are, in Dussel's view, at least two major interrelated problems. The first is in method. In *Sources of the Self* (1989), Taylor is concerned with the constituent parts of the modern identity and retrieves those from an "intra-philosophical exploration" (Dussel, 1996, p. 130) of the sources of Western philosophic thought. This is not sufficient for Dussel, who argues that Taylor gives scarce attention to economic, social, and political circumstances in the development of his thinking about identity in this early work. Taylor, as we have seen, expands those considerations in the *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), including in his retrieval a variety of factors, including both philosophy, as well as the history of economic, social, and political developments. These investigations by

Taylor remain insufficient for Dussel, however, as long as they exclude colonialism and imperialism, forces that have been the concern of indigenous people around the world for centuries (p. 130). While Taylor's thinking is a creative source of useful ideas, in Dussel's view, one must be mindful of the subjective and speculative nature of knowledge derived from the sources Taylor cites.

While Taylor's foundation in Plato causes a second difficulty for Dussel, of greater concern for me is Taylor's view that the source of identity and the modern Western social imaginary can be found exclusively in Europe. By ignoring the impact of colonialism and imperialism, and the powerful impact of the periphery on the European home, a full picture of the modern Western identity and the modern Western social imaginary is not possible. And while this perspective may not be a serious concern for some Western audiences, they are for this investigation of the relationship between First Nations people and the Euro-Canadian culture, originating as it has in European civilization. Dussel (1996) goes so far as to claim that the periphery is a source of the constitutive elements of the modern self (p. 131). Indeed, it could be claimed here that the modern Western social imaginary rests on a moral order that has included and continues to include the exploitation of indigenous people around the globe, and surely of First Nations people in the Americas. Furniss (1997/98) makes a similar claim in her work on the landscape of public history in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. She cites Bruce Trigger's (1985) study that suggests "Canadian historical studies as a whole have suffered from a chronic failure of historians and anthropologists to regard native people as an integral part of Canadian society" (p. 4). First Nations cultures are viewed as static entities, lacking any history before contact. After contact, Euro-Canadian and First

Nations cultures are perceived as separate entities with little communication between the two. First Nations culture, on this view, is a passive and bankrupt culture with little or no impact on the dominant Euro-Canadian society and its culture. "Such portrayals,' according to Furniss (1997/98), "have affirmed the colonial assumption of Natives' inferiority and legitimated European expansion and domination" (p. 15). They also affirm Dussel's view that a Eurocentric view of culture is interwoven with colonial attitudes toward the periphery.

Ironically, Dussel's (1996) critique is retrieved with a similar historical method to that of Taylor. But by including an examination of the "invasion" of the Americas by the European powers beginning in 1492, Dussel is able to focus on the source of the material wealth of European civilization, originating as it has in the exploitation of indigenous people, and show how the development of scientific knowledge and culture was irrevocably tied to the success of this exploitation. Dussel argues that it is the nature of this period of expansion and the benefits that accrued from it that provided Europe with the means and the aspiration that would result in a European dominated world, including one dominated by the modern Western social imaginary and its distinct moral order. It is my view that to exclude this argument from Taylor's considerations of the modern moral order and its ongoing impact on the modern Western social imaginary is to exclude an important constituent element of that imaginary. Dussel (1999/2002) goes even further. Instead of retrieving the rational and emancipatory elements of European modernity, as does Taylor and other western philosophers, he finds exploitation and violence as additional critical elements in that modernity (p. 12). There are some implications here in the work of Dussel that are useful for my purposes, for in spite of my

work in this section on social imaginaries at the time of contact, it is important to retrieve the memory of the unequal and brutal nature of that contact.

The colonization of the indigenous person's daily life...illustrated how the European process of modernization or civilization really subsumed (or alienated) the Other under the Same. [The European] subjugated the Other through an erotic, pedagogical, cultural, structurized, and colonized the manner in which those conquered lived and reproduced their lives. (p. 45)

In religion for instance, this amounted to a coercive religious domination, where doctrine and ritual were inculcated into the daily habits of First Nations people. The spiritual time cycle of First Nations communities, existing as an integral part of the entire social and economic life of a community, was disrupted with the imposition of a Christian liturgical cycle with rituals in entirely different and unknown sacred spaces (p. 54). In the Cariboo-Chilcotin, any practice of traditional rituals by First Nations people resulted in punishment and sanctions by the priests (J. Gentles, personal communication, April 26). In the economic life of the community, traditional hunting, gathering, and trading was disrupted by loss of the land for traditional uses and by disruptions in communication and the transportation of goods.

And in education this amounted to, as we saw in the previous chapter, the complete removal of children from First Nations communities and the destruction of First Nations modes of raising children and community education. In its place was imposed, in partnership between the federal government and various denominations a "highly rationalized, tightly centralized hierarchy" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 121) of residential schools that was analogous to the bureaucratic forms of European societies. These included features such as "uniform textbooks, standardized diplomas..., regulated

gradation of age-groups, classes and instructional materials, [all designed] to create a self-contained, coherent universe of experience" (p. 121). There were other, more visible, limits to the education of First Nations children, including the exclusion of First Nations youth from any educational opportunities once they reached sixteen years of age (J. Gentles, personal communication, April 26, 2005).

### **Identity and the Self**

In considering issues of indigenous peoples around the world and First Nations people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin in particular, there is another problem with Taylor's retrieval of the modern identity. This difficulty reflects Dussel's critique but is more basic than questions about the constituent parts of the self: indeed, it questions the very existence of a self, as envisioned by Taylor. To build this critique Charles Lemert (1994) begins by separating the concept of self from the idea of identity. He argues that philosophic writing in the Western tradition, represented by Taylor, view the self as a natural thing that can be thought about and is worth considering. He further argues that this is part of a cultural habit of Western thinking that reflects the views of men in relatively affluent circumstances. It is not the view of everyone, however, especially not of many women and people whose ancestors are not European. For these people the idea of a universal or ideal self is not as relevant to their experience as an identity that is grounded in that experience. This critique goes beyond Taylor's view of the self as one with a strong communally rooted identity to a rejection of the self as an entity worthy of consideration. The complex and fractured experiences of people such as the First Nations of the area must be deeply suspicious of any consideration of a universal self, derived from European and colonial experiences (p. 102). While there may be some



conscious elements to this suspicion, I believe it may also be part of the taken for granted differences in the social imaginaries, for, as Lemert argues, “‘self’ and ‘identity’ have less in common than is normally assumed because they belong to two different series of historical events” (p. 103).

The self of the first group and the identity of the second group have different characteristics. On one hand, the self is theoretical and abstract and rests upon a universal and rhetorical “we” “of a man who trusts that his intuitions are reliably in tune with certain universal human essences” (Lemert, 1994, p. 104). Identity, on the other hand,

is concrete. It refers to occasional, but deeply understood, groupings of individuals sharing similar or same historical experiences, usually below, or marginally outside, the world to which the first group’s “we” refers.... [The first group] is strong because it enforces the illusion that humanity itself constitutes the final and sufficient identifying group. Conversely, the [second group] position locates practically meaningful sense of oneself in concrete historical relations with local groups. (p. 104)

The essential question for the second group is whether engagement in a dialogue about the universal self of the first group has any value or even whether it is a safe dialogue in which to be engaged. It is my experience that First Nations people are wary of a universal discourse of this nature, as they are suspicious of the colonial paradigm that may underpin its very existence. Can First Nations people enter into a discourse of this sort without a loss of their sense of history and culture and ultimately of identity? The very question defines its importance to First Nations people.

There are issues of recognition here. The first is in the recognition of the historical and cultural complexity of the life circumstances of all peoples and the depth of

difference that different social imaginaries may represent. This is often referred to as the need for the “deep” or “thick” recognition that acknowledges such obstacles as language and social power, but also with Lemert’s thinking, the significant differences between self and identity. This difference represents an even deeper core of differences that challenge any recognitive process, where one view rests upon a historical universal self and the other rests upon a historical concrete identity. The burden to cross and bridge this divide has often been shouldered solely by First Nations people. A truly recognitive environment will require the efforts of both. The second issue with regard to recognition follows from this reciprocal responsibility in publicly recognizing the concrete and experiential identity of First Nations people. The value of Taylor’s work is in his attempt to find in the history and philosophy of the modern self an ethical thread, one that allows for the development of the authentic self. So, he begins in the world as it is, and looks to the possibilities for what it ought to be. And while there will always remain a deeply human purpose to any project of this sort, Taylor’s work, according to Lemert, fails to appreciate the nature of the miserable existence of much of humanity and the philosophical distance there is in the world of individual experience for many to the appropriation of an authentic universal self, embedded however it may be in historical circumstance and condition. On this view, the projects of liberal thinking, such as Taylor’s, are blind to and silent about the real conditions of much of humanity.

### **Conclusions and Further Study**

There is further work to be done here by investigating what all of the constitutive elements of both social imaginaries might be, for these elements have implications for the continuing interaction between cultures and the development of that ongoing

relationship. In this work it will be important to acknowledge the influence of power imbalances in the cultural relationships, the differences in values, and the impact of social power on knowledge. In addition, within the context of an examination of colonialism that would have to be included in any further study, there is a need to investigate the impact of two centuries of resistance on the moral order and social imaginary of First Nations people.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to recognize Taylor's contribution to understanding the modern identity and the nature of justice. Taylor's examinations of the social imaginary has allowed me to begin to explore the nature of the First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures before and after contact and begin to look at the relationship between the two. But there is more to Taylor's approach that needs to be recognized. Indeed, Dussel and Lemert, in spite of their substantial critique of Taylor, are quick to acknowledge Taylor's philosophic project, for important parts of it are consistent with their own philosophy of liberation. Taylor's work is founded in ethical motivations, according to Dussel (1996), and is focused on "a reclaiming of the positivity of a life-world oriented towards the good" (p. 148). For Taylor that good is found in the social circumstances that allow for and make possible the development of an authentic self. This can only occur in a recognitive environment, one for which Taylor's work facilitates a deeper understanding and allows for a due appreciation for the diversity around us.

The demands for recognition also need to be considered within the context of the constitutional arrangements that derive from the theoretical and social imaginary that underpin such a society. As my investigations have led me to consider the nature of those underpinnings and the constitutional arrangements that derive from them, I would

now like to move on to consider more about the nature of the modern identity and the society in which that self is surrounded. It may be too obvious to mention here, but it is important to acknowledge that it is not possible to escape the modern age. In terms of my investigations, that is as true for non-Aboriginal as well as First Nations people. It is possible to make choices; indeed, in the modern age we are all faced with the necessity of making choices about a whole range of issues related to our identity. It is also possible to consider the elements of autonomy and authenticity in one's life and make choices for oneself in the context of one's community.

## CHAPTER 5:

### A Common Ground

#### Introduction

In the previous chapters I looked at the social imaginary, recognition, and identity, as well as the connection between the two and the context of the nature of our liberal understandings in which recognition does or does not take place. I considered some of the issues raised by others to Taylor's work on recognition and identity, and explored how these issues enrich our understanding of both. In this chapter, I would like to explore the dialogue between liberal and communitarian views about society and the implications that debate has for recognition and identity. I would also like to consider a relational view about diversity for what it has to offer. This debate is particularly helpful in exploring values about individual identity and the nature of society and the education of the public that is so critical to the character of the individual. How a society views this dialogue, whether the focus is on the individual or the community in which the individual is found, says much about the moral order forming the underpinning of the social imaginary that gives a society its meanings.

I would like to begin with the individual, but end the chapter with a consideration of both the normative social meanings we give to living together with 'others,' and the constitutional arrangements that reflect those meanings. For in the debate about those arrangements are conflicting views about the nature of the individual, differences that

are only made more contentious by the impact of increasing diversity on society, and how we as individuals and cultures need to contend with the significant differences between us. I will relate this directly to my concern for the relationship between people of various cultures in our society, specifically in regard to First Nations people. I will begin, then, with the nature of the self.

### **The Communitarian Challenge to Liberalism**

Our views about the nature of the individual are complex and controversial issues in the modern Western world. So too are the implications to the identity of the individual and to the society. Questions about our access to culture are critical here. At stake in the debate are different understandings about what it means to be human, what role society plays in the life of the individual, and what relationship and responsibilities each individual has for the community as a whole and to the individuals in the community. At one end of the continuum is the view that "at the heart of liberalism is the freedom of individuals to live lives of their own" (Callan & White, 2003, p. 96). To do so requires that each individual be an autonomous person. Education in a liberal society such as this has a special responsibility to provide young people with the skills and attitudes that not only provide them with a wide range of vocational options, but other life options as well. In addition, to become autonomous young people need an awareness of the options they have to live their lives in a way they so choose. They also require education into qualities of character that encourage them to make good use of the freedom to choose among the options available to them. Within a liberal education of this kind, the emphasis is on the autonomous individual, and on that individual's right and responsibility to choose. And in that choosing is the modern quest for identity. Schools have had to consider what

kinds of curriculum and school organization and governance best suit these liberal purposes.

But a liberalism focused solely on the autonomy of the individual poses significant difficulties. This is especially true in as pluralistic a society as Canada has become where communities and the national fabric are so much more fragmented than they were in the past. Indeed, it is seemingly so much easier for all of us to operate as autonomous individuals in this environment (Taylor, 1989, p. 10). If autonomy is given absolute priority, "what is there to stop a liberal society becoming a mass of self-seeking self-creators, a society in which...each brags of his individuality and no one understands his fellows?" (Callan & White 2003, p. 101) The ultimate question, of course, is whether this kind of society will maintain structures of civil society and the democratic ethos necessary to support the autonomy of its citizens. This argument is the essential basis of a different view of the individual from the other end of the continuum, of the communitarian challenges to liberal thought, a useful dialogue for my purposes. The critique is all the more relevant in Canada with the increasingly pluralistic nature of its population, the ever-increasing demands for recognition, and the ever increasing impact of the rights revolution with its accompanying sense of insecurity and concern for the survivability of the nation.

Can liberalism contend with or embrace this critique? Can liberalism with its commitment to individual autonomy exist within a society that is committed to other core values as well? For Callan and White (2003), this concern can be answered within the liberal tradition itself through toleration. They argue that what autonomy does for the

individual, toleration does for the community and society in support of autonomy. As core concepts, they argue, liberalism and toleration cannot exist without the other:

If autonomy is an ideal for every citizen, then it would make best sense to bring children up with some interest in promoting other people's self-directedness as well as their own. This would mean cultivating in them the public virtues associated with negative liberty, of tolerantly leaving people free to lead their own lives.... But it would also point to something more positive than this, to helping to provide other necessary conditions of autonomous well-being like good health, education, material resources. (p. 101)

Callan and White ultimately argue that there would be few liberals who would not see the moral values in a commitment to others. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that John Dewey (1916/1944) struggled with such issues. For all of his emphasis on the individual, and the growth of the individual in education, Dewey recognized the inevitable context of community:

but they are also interested and chiefly interested upon the whole, in entering into the activities of others and taking part in conjoint and cooperative doings. Otherwise, no such thing as community would be possible. (p. 24)

For Dewey, it is essential that a society have an educational system "which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships..." (p. 99). Nonetheless, for Dewey, the default position is in his focus on the individual. In looking to educational philosophy from the past, Dewey finds fault with Plato for mistaking a class rather than the individual as the primary social unit. And from Rousseau he found support in the belief that social progress was tied to the progress of the individual (p. 99).

The extent of this liberal focus on the individual, however, is not a sufficient recognition of community for communitarians. While they recognize that liberals, like



Dworkin (1977), Rawls (1993), and Dewey (1916/1944) have always, to some more or lesser degree, recognized the value of community, they believe liberalism cannot give “community its due” (Callan & White, 2003, p. 101). Community requires, on the communitarian view, both a different political and educational philosophy, one that recognizes the powerful values associated with family, culture, and creed (p. 102). For communitarians, there are goods found in community and associations with others that enrich the lives of individuals. But unlike the liberal point of view, these social goods are strengthened by community and made weaker and less important by the liberal emphasis on the individual.

Communitarians find ontological difficulties with liberalism as well. Callan and White (2003) describe the inability of liberalism to accurately define the individual and also account for the “social practices” that provide a “constitutive role” in forming the self (p.102). Modern liberalism has developed conceptions of the self, according to Taylor, where the individual can, at their own choosing, separate themselves from their personal community (Taylor, 1989, p. 36). Taylor believes this is simply not possible, that if one steps outside the social constitutive framework that is integral to the person, the self suffers a loss of personhood. “A self is a self”, writes Taylor, “only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it” (p. 35). Taylor identifies the role of language in this relationship between the self and the social framework integral to the self. He states, “what I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me” (p.34). And the way things have significance for me, my “moral framework”, my “qualitative horizon” is worked out in communication with others in a social environment. A shared language is critical in this

communication, as is community, for “a language only exists and is maintained within a language community” (p. 35).

There is more to Taylor’s analysis of the individual in modern times if we are to understand the depth of the communitarian critique of liberalism. In *Sources of the Self* (1989), Taylor traces various elements of the “modern notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self” (p. 3). This is a modern self, as we saw earlier, that is specific to the modern age. Unlike previous ages, in modern times “what makes human life worth living or what confers meaning on ... individual lives” (p. 10) is, in Taylor’s view, not readily known. This modern self continues to struggle for answers. This is what it means to be human in the modern age. It is the freedom and responsibility that comes with autonomy, with selfhood. There is, for Taylor, however, a combination of great potential and grave danger in the possibilities for humanness in the modern age. One potential is in the freedom we have achieved in coming to terms with some of the prejudices and misunderstandings of the past. A second is in the possibilities of new ways of knowing that go beyond instrumental reason to the development of an epistemology with a more human understanding of the self, others, and the world around us (p. 10). The danger, of course, is that we will not recognize the moral nature of human purpose and identity and slip more deeply into an epistemology devoid of moral content and an entirely liberal conception of procedural individualism, such as the one represented by Rawls and Dworkin.

For Taylor (1989), selfhood and morality are “inextricably intertwined themes” (p. 3). Taylor is concerned that our lack of appreciation for the moral qualities embedded in the modern human identity restrict our understanding of the moral nature of being

human and in doing so either constrain or prevent us from acting in ethical ways with and towards others. He argues that to truly understand the moral nature of what it is to be human in the modern world we need to go back into history to retrieve a richer understanding of what it has meant to be human in the past. This retrieval permits us to both understand and search for the moral sources in the modern quest for identity as well as to identify the value and role of social relationships in this quest. For Taylor, a deep appreciation of community is critical to the identity of the individual in every age. As we saw in Chapter Three, this is especially true for the modern age.

### **The Authentic Self**

This discussion of liberalism and communitarianism has featured two critical threads. The first thread is the liberal concept of autonomy, the free self-determination of the individual to make choices and in so doing, defining their identity. The second is authenticity, a concept more acceptable to communitarians that allows for individuality and a sense of originality, but provides the individual with the personal and social context to bring the moral horizon of relationships with others into that identity. This is Taylor's conception of authenticity, a view that recognizes the autonomy of the individual in modern times, but also the ties that bind the individual to community. "Being true to myself means being true to my own originality," writes Taylor (1991), "and that is something only I can articulate and discover" (p. 29). But for Taylor, there are two dimensions to this quest. The first is to recognize that individuality involves operating actively in the world: creating, constructing, and discovering. The second is more passive, but equally important to modern identity: being open to "horizons of significance" and being involved in an ongoing dialogue with others in the community as

part of the process of understanding and developing moral horizons. On Taylor's communitarian view, authenticity is a critical component of living in the modern world.

The communitarian critique is an acknowledgement of the dominance of procedural liberalism in Western societies. It is also a response to the alienation and loss of meaning resulting from this dominance. Taylor's communitarian critique is intended to give community and the constitutive process of identity formation within community its proper due, acknowledging the integral role of recognition within and between cultures to that authentic formation of identity.

Tim Schouls (2003) offers another perspective with human subjectivity as its core. He argues that individualist or liberal views about pluralism place the individual in an unrealistically stable and essential position from which the individual is able to make autonomous choices about their life and identity. Communitarian pluralists, in contrast, focus not on the individual at all, placing their emphasis on the cultural structures and processes that surround the individual and provide the individual with the context in which they live their lives. Schouls offers a third view, that of relational pluralism that recognizes both the individual and the context in which they are embedded, but which focuses on the developmental and dynamic nature of both.

Relational pluralists deliberately sidestep the individual agency/social structure dichotomy by arguing that what is key to human subjectivity is the fact that 'structures are constantly being made by individuals and individuals are constantly being made by structures,... (p. 31)

There is value in this view for its recognition of the instability and change so characteristic of modern social life. And in regard to the history of First Nations people after contact, it acknowledges the potential depth to that change, while also recognizing

that individual and group identities are constantly being “made and then remade in the never-ending process of interactions with other individuals and groups” (p. 31). The individual, on this view, is not the originator of identity, but the subject of the structures and processes of the social relations in which the individual is found. From a relational perspective, in a society as diverse as Canada, the individual and the group or groups in which that individual is nested, is constantly in flux in response to the social relations with others and other groups. The individual and the group are not the focus of analysis, as they are with both liberals and communitarians. Instead, relational pluralists focus on the relationships between individuals, between individuals and groups, and between different groups. Their concern with the nature of these relations, including questions about power, the qualities of public space, and the rights granted to groups for the self-determination of identity within the relational context, is useful to my examination of cultural relationships in the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

Of primary interest here are the nature of the boundaries and interactions between groups, for it is the goal of relational pluralism to both include groups, and at the same time allow groups to determine the nature of that inclusion. Groups, then, have the right to define their identity and the boundaries around that identity, but always in relation to the other groups that make up the society. The degree of separation, on this view, is a product of deliberations about substantive issues of concern, where engagement across cultural boundaries need not threaten the distinct nature of a specific group. This view is of particular importance with regard to First Nations people who are guarded, for good reason, about the dominant cultural system. “Relational pluralism,” according to Schouls (2003), “...establishes guidelines for relationships

between individuals and communities that uphold the right of groups to be self-defining with respect to one another while also maintaining the capacity for individual self-development within the group" (p. 37). The core right here is not that certain cultural artifacts, or inherent rights be respected, although it may mean that, but that First Nations people themselves, in relation to others, define both their identity and the core features of that identity (p. 38).

This dialogue about liberal, communitarian, and relational views has provided an examination of key issues of concern to identity in modern society, with implications for groups such as First Nations and for the education of the public. The discourse can also throw some light on some of the circumstances and dilemmas of First Nations people and their culture. While there is little doubt, as we saw in Chapter Four on social imaginaries, that the individual in First Nations societies before contact was inextricably embedded in culture, there is also little doubt that that relationship was changed forever by the experiences of contact and resistance and the increased engagement of First Nations people in the Euro-Canadian culture. This amounts to an engagement in at least two cultural experiences, the living of multiple social imaginaries, and the need to mediate between the two. It also means, as it would for any people caught in conflicting life circumstances such as these, confusion over quite a range of conscious social understandings and an inability, at times, to make sense of one's predicament. We see a range among First Nations people, from those who have seemingly embraced elements of the Western social imaginary, for example, to those who are directly involved in the Euro-Canadian society, but who are deeply connected to the renewed spiritual and cultural life of First Nations communities. Within this mediation between cultures, one

made more complicated by ongoing cultural change in both, First Nations people are obligated by circumstances to live out the modern liberal condition and its conflicting visions of the individual in community. For First Nations people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin live, as we all do here, in the modern Western world.

The nature of the embeddedness of the individual First Nations person and the nature of the culture and community in which that person is embedded is inextricably interwoven into the identity of the person. And while that may be true for everyone, First Nations people bring, as we have seen, quite a different social memory to that relationship. This includes a memory of a time with a significant loss of cultural rituals and artifacts, and of both non-recognition and misrecognition of cultural difference from the dominant culture, both of which have contributed to a loss of "horizons of significance." The process of recovery for First Nations people in recent years has been, in many ways, a communitarian project for its search within culture for "horizons of significance," for ways of understanding the modern world in the context of something deeply in need of retrieval. Understanding the significance of this project is critical in the education of the public, both in classrooms and schools and in policy and governance.

Understanding the nature of this project is often confronted by an unwillingness or inability within the Euro-Canadian culture to appreciate the circumstances and moral dilemmas of First Nations people. But even in a society with strong liberal views of autonomy there is moral content to those views with implications for all. In a society where all its members may practice autonomy, the society must by some process guarantee that the same exercise of autonomy may be practiced by all of its members (Taylor, 1989, p. 12). This requires respect for the autonomy of others, and in this

respect there is moral content. For with the respect comes some sense of toleration within the larger dominant culture. This toleration is a condition for both the individual quest of each person and the community that provides the environment for such a quest. This is the most essential of the balances between individual and group rights. They must both exist, on this argument, for the individual to strive for some sense of authenticity, and for the society to support those individual projects of its members. Liberalism, on this view, is not indifferent to community, and for many liberals, tolerance must trump autonomy (Callan & White 2003, p. 100). The issue here on the ground in the Cariboo-Chilcotin is in the nature of tolerance and the degree to which it builds reciprocity in community, and the quality of the tolerance in contending with significant, indeed, sometimes-impenetrable cultural differences of a national or ethnic nature. Surely it must sometimes seem this way for both First Nations and non-Aboriginal people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

### **Community Solidarity Through Toleration**

There is much written about toleration in the context of liberalism. While liberal theory has historically focused on the relationship between the individual and the state, there has been little concern for the vast array of constantly changing intermediary structures that make up our civil society. The reconciliation of liberal theory to group rights is not an easy step, and not one always supported by liberal thought (Shapiro & Kymlicka, 1997, p. 7). But liberalism is also characterized, as we saw earlier, by a belief in toleration. In fact, it is argued by Kymlicka, among others, that toleration lies at the core of liberalism (p. 7). For our purpose here it is enough to pose that in a pluralistic society such as Canada, composed, as we have seen, by a variety of significantly



diverse elements, including national cultures such as those of First Nations, toleration, and the acceptance of multiplicity are required if there is to be a strong sense of a wider community or any national solidarity. The issue here is the nature of this tolerance and the solidarity that it engenders and the role of education in its creation and nurturing. Adeno Addis (1997) has written extensively about this need for the building of reciprocity: a process “that will affirm multiplicity while cultivating solidarity” (p. 8). His concern is directly relevant to education when he argues “that a genuine sense of pluralistic solidarity will develop only through a process where majorities and minorities are linked in institutional dialogue, rather than when they merely tolerate each other as the strange and alien Other” (p. 8). The strictly liberal, “thin” toleration model of “live and let live,” is, on his argument, insufficient to both deal with diversity and at the same time build solidarity. “What we need,” he argues, “is to explore institutional structures and processes that would simultaneously allow us to affirm and respect plurality while also cultivating some notion of solidarity” (p. 142). While I will return to the question of institutional structures in the form of constitutional arrangements later, the nature of toleration is essential.

Jürgen Habermas, among others, is also critical of the value of “live or let live” toleration. For Habermas it is important to take toleration beyond its thin veneer and paternalistic attitudes, and develop structures of civil society that engage the pluralistic entities in our society in rational discourse over substantive issues. That these issues pose significant difficulties involving the thorny task of determining the balancing of individual and group rights, there can be little doubt. That there will be differences and conflicts, again, there will be little doubt. That the liberal alternative of thin toleration will

ultimately create distrust and weaken any real sense of community solidarity there is also little doubt. For both Habermas and Addis (1997) the alternative to thin toleration is a focus on dialogue that begins in reasoned public discourse, and ends with the ongoing building of "pluralistic solidarity" (p. 142). For Habermas, claims to justice in this environment can be made known and deliberated about only "through argumentative discourse leading to rationally motivated consensus" (McCarthy, 1978, p. 325).

As we have seen, this is both a particularly challenging and critical issue to Canada. As with Taylor earlier, for Habermas and Addis, there are issues about the relationship between the individual and society. The substantive dialogue that they believe is critical to pluralistic solidarity cannot be viewed in strictly individual terms. Individual and group rights need to be recognized, communication and engagement needs to be at both the individual and group level. Collectivities, such as national, cultural, and ethnic groups, need to be publicly recognized in dialogue and political engagement (Addis, 1997, p. 133).

What implications does the increasingly diverse nature of Canada, intersecting with the rights revolution and ever increasing demands for recognition have for our modern society and the composition of its civil society, for Canada as a nation state, and for education? It means that the building and maintenance of community is a particular challenge in Canada due to its multicultural and multinational nature. This environment is made significantly more complex by the demand for individual and group rights, and the demand for recognition. In this building of community, as we have seen from Habermas and Addis, toleration is critical. But, to be effective in community building, it needs to be

a special kind of toleration: one that engages community members in deliberative communication over issues common to the community.

The deliberative process needs to embrace ethical differences grounded in diversity and allow for the co-constructed mediation of individual and group rights as well as the substantive issues at stake. The deliberative structures, whether they are somewhat permanent or ad hoc (depending on the issue at hand), need to be well understood by the participants, as they constitute important vehicles for community deliberation and the formation of an effective and democratic civil society. Of critical issue here is the nature of these associational structures of civil society, and the environment they provide for people to define themselves as individuals in the context of community. On this view, the recognition of community and structures of civil society are critical to identity.

### **Accommodation of Community to Liberalism**

In this analysis we have seen a number of challenges to liberal views. They all amount to whether liberalism can describe a new and acceptable definition of community and at the same time retain the important liberal conceptions of the individual that are such a draw on the imagination of us moderns. The same can be asked of communitarians: can communitarian theory describe a new and acceptable definition of community that respects the individual liberal values that most of us hold, if often unconsciously, sacred. In recent and historical memory there has been too much oppression in the name of community for us moderns to let go of our liberal values. "For liberals," according to Callan and White (2003), "the critical issue is whether the

community is in keeping with the worth and fulfilment of the freely choosing individual. The characteristic communitarian objection to all this is that by taking autonomy too seriously liberals fail to take community seriously enough" (p. 107). For liberalism, the challenge is to look carefully at the formation of the individual identity in the context of the associative ties of family, community, and culture, and to consider the ways in which the individual and groups within the community engage with each other to create an ongoing process that forms the community context in which the individual creates their identity.

I have made the point that toleration is not enough, that there are significant community values in the communitarian critique that require a serious consideration of social engagement such as those of Habermas (1981/1984, 1981/1987) and his ethical discourse communities view. In my view, this does not require abandonment of all liberal values or even of liberal theory, but instead a need to refocus that theory. In Canada, it means the acceptance of group rights and the development of structures of civil society that recognize group rights. In the Cariboo-Chilcotin, it requires a "thicker" tolerance of diversity, the recognition of the significant cultural and historical differences of the people of the distinct First Nations cultures among us, and the co-construction of structures of community governance that reflect this recognition. It is also my view that there are no alternatives to these changes in attitude and structure. Demands for recognition of difference and cultural identity, as we have seen with First Nations cultures, will ultimately expect nothing less. The very survival of the nation-state of Canada will require such recognition.

## **Beyond the Liberal Dilemma**

We can now return to the original dilemma. We saw in Chapter Three that in Taylor's thinking our identities are formed by recognition in both the private and public spheres and that without recognition of our cultural differences we are harmed as individuals, that we are prevented from developing our individual identity in an authentic way. The nature of that authenticity takes place within culture and within the capacity of a society to tolerate individual and cultural differences. That tolerance is expressed in both "spirit," which I will consider in the thinking of James Tully (1995/2004) in the next section, and in deliberative structures of recognition. Earlier, I made the argument that authentic development of individual identity requires due recognition for all cultures in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, including First Nations cultures as well as the other cultures in the dominant Euro-Canadian society. Indeed, due recognition for the dominant culture needs to include an awareness of the exploitation of First Nations people (especially with regard to the pre-empted possession of land and resources) as a constitutive element in their cultural make-up. The demand for recognition derives from many sources, some within what constitutes culture, others from the very nature of modernity itself, all claiming due recognition for the distinctiveness of the individual and of culture. This includes national cultures, as in the case of First Nations people, as well as ethnic cultures, but also a wide range of associative cultures (for example, those based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, ableness) whose life experiences place them, for one reason or another, in a world-view different from the present dominant culture. And, of course, there are many who identify with more than one culture; whose distinctiveness

places them in more than one associative group. We will explore the complexity of this multiculturalism later in the chapter.

How is it that we should recognize each of these cultures, each of these associative groups? Should we simply grant recognition to every group that demands recognition? These are difficult issues that, as we see every day in media reports, are contentious as well. The recent public debate over same-sex marriage resulting from the demand for the recognition of the life experiences of gay and lesbian citizens is an excellent example. For Taylor (1994), the act of granting recognition is critical to the purpose of recognition in the first place. In this context, recognition needs to be granted not simply on demand, but after careful examination of each case on its merits. When recognition is granted on demand, Taylor argues it is an act of patronizing condescension and of no value in the building of an authentic identity. If it is granted on the basis of the ethical standards and schedule of rights of Euro-Canadian civilization, it is again of no value as such judgment would be an attempt to have everyone the same. There is for Taylor, an authentic alternative, one that searches for an authentic act of respect and recognition that requires that we all:

...learn to move in a broader horizon, within which what we have formerly taken for granted as the background to valuation can be situated as one possibility alongside the different background of the formerly unfamiliar culture. The 'fusion of horizons' operates through our developing new vocabularies of comparison, by means of which we can articulate these contrasts. (p. 67)

For Taylor the process can lead to an authentic act of recognition, where "real judgments of worth" (p. 70) are made that have real value for both those being

recognized and those making the recognition. The recognition goes beyond the familiar for both, resulting in changes in understanding about each other for both.

Taylor (1994) leaves us with a good sense of our present dilemma. In each society, and across the world as a whole, we are faced with the need to live together in ever increasingly multicultural environments. How ought we to approach others in these circumstances? Should we presume that all associative groups and cultures are of equal value? Taylor would argue that we should not. He argues instead that we must presume that for each culture that provides "horizons of meaning" for others there is something of value in these cultures and that each deserves our attention to its substantive claims of the good. In this act of recognition we acknowledge the limited role of our own culture in the entire human story and indicate "a willingness to be open to a comparative cultural study of the kind that must displace our horizons in the resulting fusion." (p. 73)

Taylor has given us a sense of what recognition is about and what is at stake in both the granting and withholding of recognition in both the private and public sphere. We have also seen one kind of liberalism expropriated from Rousseau, espoused by Dworkin and others, that does not support the granting of recognition so critical to Taylor's view. Liberalism in this form is tempting as a creed, and supported by many in Western society. It is at best suspicious of differentiation and contrary to the granting of any substantial recognition of difference. It is a liberalism that values the autonomy of the individual above all else. "The demand for recognition may be satisfied on this scheme," according to Gutmann (1994), "but only after it has been socially and politically disciplined so that people pride themselves on being little more than equal citizens" (p.

6). Indeed, there is not enough recognition on this view for Gutmann. She argues that people are “unique, self-creating, and creative individuals...who are ‘culture bearing...” (p. 6). Chandhoke (1999) echoes this view when she finds much of that uniqueness buried within culture. Some of the understandings we have “may be so unguarded and reflexive, so unthinking and imperceptible,” she writes, “that we may not realize that we are seeing the world through the lens provided by these evaluative systems” (p. 6). Reflecting the work of Fanon, that harm results from non-recognition or misrecognition, Chandhoke argues that we must have access to the full resources of our culture, for without that access “we are rendered defenceless” (p. 6). This is a contrary view to the liberalism of Rawls and Dworkin, one that situates the individual in culture and environment and values the quest for an authentic identity of the self over the autonomous view.

### **Struggles for Recognition in the Liberal State**

While taking a somewhat different approach than Taylor, Habermas (1994) builds a similar case for recognition and identity and contributes to the discourse. His thinking provides some additional possibilities for the creation of a robust recognitive environment in the Western liberal democracies. Habermas asks if Taylor’s framework of the dichotomous nature of individual and group rights is a good reflection of the issue at hand. The former is “respect for the unique individual identities of each individual, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity,” (Gutmann 1994, p. 8) and is the basis of the accepted schedule of rights in western society. The latter is respect for the “social imaginaries” (Taylor 2004) that are essential to the identities of various associative



groups. Habermas (1994) asks if the second kind of respect flows naturally from the first, and whether the two kinds of respect are in conflict with each other.

Because the second claim requires consideration of precisely those particularities from which the first claim seems to abstract, the principle of equal rights has to be put into effect in two kinds of politics that run counter to one another – the politics of consideration of culture on the one hand and a politics of universalization of individual rights on the other. (p. 111)

This view is somewhat different than Taylor's argument that individual and group rights are separate and that the politics of recognition requires that both be granted. While they agree on the granting, Habermas cannot accept the structure of this dichotomous argument, arguing instead that the liberal schedule of rights does not in itself preclude the recognition of cultural difference. According to Habermas the schedule of rights is based on the recognition of cultural difference: each and every individual is also a citizen whose identity is defined by the social context in which his or her identity is formed. "A correctly understood theory of rights," writes Habermas (1994), "requires a politics of recognition that protects the integrity of the individual in the life contexts in which his or her identity is formed" (p. 113). The question for Habermas is not if we can have both, or whether we have both, but how each is obtained by the citizenry. We all have come to accept that our individual rights are enshrined in constitutional arrangements of one sort or another and protected by the legal structure of the state in Western societies. Recognition of associative groups is realized only in social and political struggles for recognition and social justice, again in processes guaranteed by constitutional arrangements. And in these struggles and the deliberative qualities of public discourse is the underpinning of Habermas' political and philosophical thinking about recognition of culture.

Habermas offers a number of other useful developments to Taylor's work on recognition. The first is in his examination of the related interests of associative groups. While it is not necessary here to define the characteristics of groups, suffice it to say that various groups, whether feminist, nationalist, or some other cultural entity, need to be considered for their actual demands for recognition and their relationship to the political environment in which they find themselves. The second is Habermas' analysis of the legal structure of the Western constitutional state and the need to understand the legal landscape under which struggles for recognition and social justice occur. Related to both (the nature of the associative group and the legal and political landscape) is his view that recognition rights are actualized in political processes, including questions as basic to a society as a shared conception of the good. On this view, Habermas would have no difficulty in accepting the sign and language laws of Quebec for their definition of a shared sense of the good. What is critical for Habermas is the nature of the political process and the realization of those involved of the ethical nature of their deliberations. For in these deliberations, guided by legal guarantees of individual rights by the constitutional state, are the possibilities for engaging in contentious and ethical dialogue about substantive issues essential to the associative nature of individuals embedded in culture. In the process, both individuals and groups are recognized for difference and for different conceptions of the good.

What are the ties that bind citizens together in a political state such as the one Habermas envisions? It is not just the loyalty to a constitutional guarantee of individual rights (a loyalty to procedures) argued for by Dworkin, Rockefeller, or Orwin. It is also not the loyalty to an associative cultural entity within a larger political entity argued for by

Taylor. It is, for Habermas (1994), a loyalty to a “common political culture,” (p. 134) one that is historically rooted and reflected in constitutional processes that provide for individual rights and group recognition. Ideally, this is a culture sensitive to both individual rights and the recognition of difference, one founded upon citizenship, not ethnicity or national origin. It is founded upon equally important constitutional guarantees of individual rights and deliberative processes. These processes both permit and assure that demands for social justice, whether for social, political, or economic recognition, will be successfully made.

### **Demands for Recognition**

I would now like to consider what arrangements could be devised to facilitate a more recognitive landscape, one that can allow for the recognition of cultural difference and advance the development of a more authentic self. This amounts, after building an understanding of recognition, identity and the nature of liberal society, to finally providing a response to the questions that have guided this work. As we saw in the Introduction in Chapter One, these issues have been of concern to James Tully (1995/2004), whose ideas are particularly helpful here. Tully grounds his work in the nature of the present political environment, as we have seen, where cultural diversity has become an ever more problematic condition for all levels of government and institutions. This condition is characterized by an ever-increasing demand for recognition of a wide variety of complex issues and an ever-increasing demand for a deeper understanding of diverse identities. In her introduction to Taylor’s essay, *The Politics of Recognition*, Amy Gutmann (1994) identifies public schools especially for their failure to recognize the needs of various elements of their communities. As these demands can no longer be ignored, they need

to be better understood (p. 4). They are not, however, a phenomenon limited to the local area of my practice, the province, or the country.

It is worthwhile examining the six forms Tully (1995/2004) identifies in the demands for cultural recognition, for they underscore the range and depth of the politics of recognition and demonstrate its relevance to educational practice across the world. The first, represented in Canada by the demands by Quebeckers, is on the national level where groups who view themselves as national entities have made demands for independence or special constitutional arrangements with a state. The second goes beyond the national level to consider the demands for recognition from larger supra-national communities on the nation-state, including such organizations as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement. A third set of demands for recognition on the state and its institutions comes from long-standing communities of ethnic and linguistic origin. A fourth comes from the many immigrants, exiles, and refugees of recent years as they settle into their new country with demands that their many languages and cultures be supported by the new state. A fifth originated in the feminist movement, but now includes a wide range of other associative cultures, including those based on religion and sexual orientation.

While I have little doubt that this wide range of demands for recognition impact on educational practice, the sixth set of demands for recognition can be found in those that are of greatest interest to me in my practice. Demands for recognition of inherent rights, aboriginal title to the land, and for recognition of the distinctiveness of culture, are not new to Canada. But in recent decades, Aboriginal and Indigenous people from around the world have been making ever more visible and effective demands for

recognition of cultural distinctiveness and inherent rights. Included in this are demands for recognition under international and national laws and redress of losses suffered under centuries of colonialism and imperialism. Of critical importance to my practice are the demands for recognition of the distinctive nature of First Nations communities and the accommodation of cultural difference in public schools. These demands by First Nations people are made in ways that are not always easily understood by those who work in public institutions, for they are demands for a hearing often in a place and in a manner that reflect a First Nations world-view, one that appears foreign to the dominant culture (Tully, 1995/2004, p. 3).

There is, then, a wide range to the politics of recognition. There are several qualities to that range that need to be acknowledged before we move on. The first is that demands for recognition are not always appreciated for the depth of their meaning to those making the demands. They are often simply characterized as political or social conflicts within communities and not understood as cognitive struggles. In schools, with regard to individual students, they are often in the form of expressions of anger, frustration, or unwillingness to be engaged in educational activities. Second, the demands for recognition are presented in different forms depending on the nature of the group making the demand and the political environment in which the demand is made. In fact, as individuals often voice demands for recognition, these demands are not always recognized for their group character or their reflection of the social imaginary of a particular culture. Third, and this is especially important in regard to First Nations communities, the way in which demands for recognition have been and are made, are ever changing and in recent years have become ever more strategic and cognizant of

the political culture in which they are made. With regard to First Nations people, earlier, more individual forms of resistance to domination have been supplemented with political bodies with more strategically designed claims for recognition. That is not to say that individual forms of resistance and demands have not evolved. Fourth, the content of the demands for recognition are dependent upon the nature of the group and the legal and constitutional relationship the group has to the community and state in which it is embedded.

In addition to these characteristics there are some important similarities in the demands for recognition. Tully (1995/2004) identifies three that are critical for my purposes as they reflect the historical examination in Chapter Two. The first is for some real sense of self-rule. And while demands from some cultural groups may be simply to be more fully included in the political processes already in place, for First Nations people it means culturally appropriate forms of self-government as separate entities from the structures of the state. It is important here to recognize the range and variety of demands for and forms of self-rule across the world today and to acknowledge that demands for self-rule are, in Tully's words, "the oldest political good in the world" (p. 5). The second similarity is derived from the nature of the array of forms of knowledge and interpretation that are embedded in the cultures of the world. It is the nature of modern Western constitutional states that the very structure of laws and interpretation of those laws preclude the full development of self-rule of non-dominant cultures, and in the case of First Nations people, self-government. This refers to the colonial and imperialistic nature of Western forms of government and to the need for demands for recognition to contend with their nature. The third similarity that Tully identifies refers to the complex

interface between cultures that characterizes modern political processes. He argues that a constitution can recognize a diversity of cultures, “but it cannot eliminate, overcome, or transcend this cultural dimension of politics” (p. 6). But at the same time, to the extent that the diverse cultural ways of citizens are excluded, assimilated, unrecognized, or misrecognized, they are to that extent unjust. (p. 6) And also to that extent there will be conflicts and demands for recognition of that injustice. If we relate this back to the earlier discussion of identity in the modern world, we can add an additional harm to non-recognition or misrecognition in the restraints placed on the individual in attaining their full potential in the development of the self. And in spite of recent critiques of Fanon’s work with identity (Bhabha 1999), we can include the emotional depth of that harm that is reflected in the language of outrage in Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961/1963). In considering the repression and exploitation of the individual in colonial societies, Fanon argues that demands for an end to oppression by Indigenous people are really “man recreating himself” (Fanon, p. 21). Decolonization “brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men” (p. 36). We can add Fanon’s sense of injustice as it relates to the oppression of identity to Tully’s catalogue of harms.

### **Constitutional Arrangements**

Tully’s (1995/2004) thinking about diversity and struggles for recognition are a rich source of ideas about the claims for justice by the diversity in our midst. He has also considered the dilemmas posed by diversity and the possibilities in the political landscape for their resolution. The constitutional arrangements that define that

landscape provide the framework for his exploration of possible solutions. The critical question for Tully is to find a constitutional arrangement that can provide “due recognition to the legitimate demands of the members of diverse cultures in a manner that renders everyone their due” (p. 7). This cannot be the traditional liberal and nationalist arrangement where one culture dominates all others, or where there are legal sanctions against the recognition of any culture. Both of these alternatives are legacies of the colonial era. On the contrary, Tully argues that justice can be served only with the due recognition of all the diverse cultures of citizens. Twentieth century forms of the nation-state, in his view, simply do not meet the needs of the increasingly diverse societies of the future (p. 8).

What do we see when we look at diverse cultures? For many years cultures were viewed as separate entities making up nation states. When more than one culture existed side by side in the same nation state, each culture was often characterized as a “solitude,” existing separately from the other culture or cultures in the same state. For centuries the Balkans have represented much that is dangerous and unjust about this manner of understanding of being with others in the world. Countless Balkan wars in the name of either the unity of the nation or the non-recognition of a particular culture has failed to resolve the willingness of different cultures to occupy the same physical space. These issues are not irrelevant to the Cariboo-Chilcotin, where the First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures are often viewed as two ‘solitudes,’ where there are strict boundaries around each and an unwillingness to engage with each other over issues of importance to both. There are implications, however, to this view of the relationship.



This is not the position taken by Elizabeth Furniss (1999), in her ethnographic study of the cultural make-up of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Furniss introduces the approach for her research as,

...one that envisions Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people not as isolated cultural enclaves but as members of the same broader community, however ill-functioning; that sees Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as being encompassed by the same dominant cultural system; and that requires the study of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations to proceed through ethnographic research with both groups. (p. ix)

This approach is reflected in the field of anthropology which has had some important and new things to say about the nature and interactions between cultures, for the multicultural composition of the Balkans is increasingly the reality of most nation states, including Canada. This view is further reflected, according to Tully (1995/2004), in anthropologist Michael Carrither's work that views the interaction of cultures as "overlapping, interactive, and internally negotiated" (p. 10). In Tully's words,

Cultures overlap geographically and come in a variety of types. Cultures are also densely interdependent in their formation and identity. They exist in complex historical processes of interaction with other cultures. The modern age is intercultural rather than multicultural. The interaction and entanglement of cultures has been further heightened by the massive migrations of this century. Cultural diversity is not a phenomenon of exotic and incommensurable others in distant lands.... It is here and now in every society. Finally, cultures are not homogeneous. They are continuously contested, imagined and reimagined, transformed and negotiated, by their members and through their interaction with others. (p.11)

Seyla Benhabib (2002) has a similar view of culture. She argues that cultures are often viewed as static entities with strict boundaries so that either a particular culture or cultural relationship can be studied or so that it might be better preserved. "Participants in the culture, by contrast," she argues, "experience their traditions, stories, rituals, and

symbols, tools, and material living conditions through shared, albeit contested and contestable, narrative accounts" (p. 5). According to Benhabib, "we should view human cultures as constant creations, re-creations, and negotiations of imaginary boundaries between 'we' and the 'others'" (p. 8). This is a view of culture and cultural interaction that reflects the complex network of intertwined cultural experiences that are part of everyday life in most nations of the world today. As citizens we are neither a part of a fixed and independent cultural enclave, nor party to an unchanging world-view emanating from that culture. This view, reflected in the work of Tully and Benhabib, contributes a better understanding of culture to Taylor's work on recognition, complicating, but not reducing the importance of the relationship between recognition and identity. All three can agree that culture provides a foundation upon which one's evaluation of the world is founded. I would not go as far as Benhabib in labelling Taylor's view of culture as preservationist (p. xi), and instead focus on the relationship between culture and identity. Tully (1995/2004) manages this by taking an 'aspectival view,' one that is dependent upon one's own identity and one's own cultural experiences of overlap with multiple cultures, interaction within and between cultures, and one's experiences of negotiating and mediating between different 'others' (p. 13). This perspective is not so much contrary to Taylor's view, but enriches our understanding of the ever changing and complex nature of intercultural relationships.

For Tully (1995/2004), this experience of overlap, interaction and negotiation is undertaken in a middle or 'common' ground. But what is brought to this 'common' ground is one's experience of identity founded not in something static and easily defined, but something that is ever changing and ever changed by the ongoing negotiation and

intercultural experiences with others, something akin to Taylor's "fusion of horizons," but moving beyond. The ground is 'common' because all citizens have access, to one extent or another, to the dynamic experiences in the interaction. These encounters, of course, are often problematic for their inequality, imbalances of power, refusal of recognition, resistant behaviours, and injustice. But they also contain the possibilities for mutual recognition and progress in social justice; they are sites of negotiation and mediation. For all the difficulties in finding solutions to these pressing problems, one thing is clear: with the ending of the colonial period and the advent of globalization and massive immigration around the world, the challenges of diversity and the potential for conflict are immense. "The question of whether a constitution can recognize and accommodate cultural diversity will be," according to Tully, "...a political centre of gravity of the age, held firmly and irrepressibly in place by the conflicting struggles for recognition that lie around it." (p. 15) Tully's work has been to investigate and find ways that modern constitutions can be changed to accommodate a new world of increasing diversity, one that will enable due recognition of all cultures and put a final end to centuries of colonialism and imperialism. Echoing Tully, in Taylor's view there is no alternative to this sharing of identity space, a sharing that goes beyond competing political demands in traditional political means, to processes that provide the opportunity for each to look into the depth of difference represented by each other's case. This means confronting the differences that exist between people and grounding solutions over substantive issues, not in preconceived notions about each other, but in actual historical experience (Taylor, 2002, p. 30). We need to be mindful of Benhabib's (2002) approach, however, for it is important not to fall into either a social project for the simple preservation of a culture, or a belief that culture is something that can be simply retrieved from the historical

understandings of those internal to the culture, or an understanding of culture that fails to recognize its contingent nature (p. 11).

There are, however, other significant obstacles to this project, including the powerful influence of understandings that are located in the colonial language of constitutional thinking. Tully (1995/2004) is particularly helpful here in identifying the liberal, national, and communitarian traditions that provide authority to constitutional discourse. In doing so, he argues, they elbow aside other more useful concepts that might provide new and better ways of thinking about these arrangements; ones that have the potential to provide a due recognitive environment for diverse cultures (p. 36). While I will not look at the colonial language and thinking in detail here, it is important to note that there are some qualities to it that throw up difficult obstacles in demands for recognition. The first, of course, is in the language itself.

When, for example, Aboriginal peoples strive for recognition, they are constrained to make their demands in the normative vocabulary available to them. That is, they seek recognition as 'peoples' and 'nations', with 'sovereignty' or a 'right of self determination', even though these terms may distort or misdescribe the claim they would wish to make if it were expressed in their own language. (p. 39)

The second is in the adaptable nature of Western constitutional language. Colonial thinking of even twenty years ago would neither recognize present day language nor appreciate the understanding of key concepts in the relationships of today. And yet, relationships of power in the post-colonial societies have not much changed. For some of the apparent recognition of difference, the conceptual framework of exclusion and assimilation remain at the core of constitutional thinking in all three traditions. Indeed,

demands for recognition have played a key role in maintaining traditional constitutional thinking (p. 40).

What are the alternative approaches that are elbowed aside? Predictably, they are perspectives that are derived not from the paternalistic, male-dominated society of the past, but within diversity and demands for decolonization, and include post-modern, feminist, and intercultural approaches. Tully's (1995/2004) view is that the intercultural approach is particularly useful as it originated in demands for recognition by a wide range of associative groups, especially First Nations people. "From their perspective," writes Tully, "...the cultural imperialism of modern constitutionalism is obvious and glaring" (p. 53). They are sceptical of the ability of even the most progressive traditional constitutional arrangements to meet their demands for self-rule and cultural ways of knowing. The perspective originates in the experience of cultural diversity, of living in more than one culture, and acknowledges that in these circumstances, cultures overlap and interact, and in doing so they are continually negotiated and reimagined by individuals embedded as they are in the intercultural experience. (p. 54) In this paradigm, the vocabulary has moved beyond the traditional one of government, bureaucracy, policy, regulations, and governance, to one of cultural "voice, narrative, recovery and struggle" (p. 54). On this view, cultural voices reflecting the intercultural experiences of citizens are an integral part of political and social life.

Schouls (2003) makes a similar argument. It is his view that First Nations people and the Canadian state and its institutions are "locked in an adversarial and acrimonious relationship," (p. 49) one that rests more in the differences over historical injustice and the claims that derive from those injustices, than in the present forms of useful

engagement that occur every day. Schouls describes the significant "broadening and deepening" (p. 48) of the relationship between First Nations people and the Canadian state, and argues for a less antagonistic approach to issues of a political nature. He recognizes, with Tully, that identities have become more "complex, layered, and overlapping" (p. 49) and that progress can be made with a deeper recognition of positive features to the relationship. The alternative, for Schouls, is to continue with the colonial shape to the relationship, one in which it is perceived that First Nations people remain buried and trapped within traditional cultural forms.

## **Conclusion**

How then are First Nations to make demands for recognition, and how are these demands to be received? First Nations people can either make demands in the public sphere generally or from government and institutions that are all part of the nexus of meanings and structures of the dominant culture that has been responsible for centuries of exploitation and oppression, or they can entirely refuse to be involved in the dominant culture and its institutions. If they choose to become involved in making claims for justice, as they have, they are met with rejection from some, agreement from others, and a range in between the conservative and progressive positions. Demands are rejected for their incompatibility with constitutional arrangements as they are and accepted by making adjustments to those arrangements. The work of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Habermas are all, in the view of Tully, a reflection of the latter perspective. They are looking, in Tully's words, for "a meta-language of recognition and adjudication" (p. 57). But for Tully, the way forward is not to be found there, but rather in the many languages of diversity, where what is being said must be considered in terms of the way in which it

is said. It is up to all of us, on this view, to discover a new dialogue that includes the ever-changing diverse cultural forms in our communities (p. 57). What that process of discovery amounts to in my practice and in the considerations I set out in the beginning of the dissertation are the subject of Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **Communicative Ethics**

#### **Introduction**

The issue of the nature of the universal and the particular has come up a number of times in this dissertation, at first with regard to the significant differences between the universal self of Euro-Canadians and the particular identity of First Nations people. It will come up again in this chapter with regard to different conceptions of justice and certainty (Woolford, 2004), as well as with respect and reciprocity, as they reflect on different understandings of time, place, and social meaning. The differences between the universal and the particular saturate deeply held cultural understandings and present significant difficulties to engagements across cultures. There are, nevertheless, as I discussed earlier, useful engagements between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people every day. These take place in public and private institutions, in political processes, in the public sphere, and in personal relationships. In this chapter I would like to look more closely at those interactions and the context in which they occur. For they can contribute to a restorative process, one that is not so much focused on the inclusion of First Nations people and communities as one that explores the meaning of engagements between equals, and as I will shortly argue, one that transforms both communities in the process. In this chapter, I will consider the work of Andrew Woolford (2004), Nancy Fraser (1997, 2000, 2001), Jürgen Habermas (1976, 1981/1984, 1981/1987), and Seyla



Benhabib (2002) and bring the dissertation back to the consideration of the Community Healing Circle and explore and evaluate how Circles might be considered in the context of restorative processes. I anticipate that an exploration of this sort will generate new ideas about the communicative environment of the Circle. The exploration in itself, then, has transformative possibilities.

### **Restoration**

Sociologist Andrew Woolford (2004) has considered the nature of restorative processes, such as the Circle, and has recently written about those processes in relation to the treaty process in British Columbia. He argues that restorative processes have recently been viewed as a useful means to resolve many complex and long-standing conflicts. He cites the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a good example of what can be accomplished through restorative processes, where positional arguments are replaced with a focus on interests. The focus for Woolford is in the nature of the communication between those involved in conflicts or problematic relationships of this sort. He asks, for instance, to what extent do “the prevailing economic and political rationalities of those in possession of various forms of social power often permeate reparative discussions” (p. 112). This is reflected in the treaty process in British Columbia in the goals as well as the economic and political imperatives that impinge on the quality of the restorative process. There has been a dialogue about the goals of the process at the treaty table, according to Woolford, but some significant differences between the parties from the very beginning: for First Nations the primary goal of treaty talks amount to *justice* for the harms suffered by First Nations people, while from provincial and federal governments the focus is on the realization of economic and

political *certainty* that can be achieved by settlement agreements. Woolford argues that while there has been substantial dialogue about the goals of the process and some understanding of the different perspectives, there remain significant differences between the parties at the table with regard to conceptions of justice and certainty, and unless these differences are somehow better understood and reconciled, the treaty process will produce neither justice nor certainty. Instead of “transformative” justice and a co-constructed certainty, he believes it is more likely that a flawed “affirmative” (Fraser 1997) repair may be the best both sides in the negotiation can expect (Woolford, 2004, p. 112).

### **Affirmative and Transformative Approaches**

It is here that Nancy Fraser’s (1997, 2000, 2001) thinking about redistribution and recognition is useful in exploring the conflicting views of the parties to the treaty process and illuminating the nature of communicative processes in Community Healing Circles. First Nations people have suffered injustice from both points of view: they have received neither an equitable share of resources nor due recognition of culture and identity over the past two hundred years. For justice to occur First Nations must receive both. Yet, Fraser argues that viewed together, redistribution and recognition are at odds with each other. For there to be a more equitable distribution of resources it requires that groups, such as First Nations, be included in a more equitable and less differentiated way in the larger society. At the same time, for there to be due recognition it requires that groups heretofore unrecognized (or misrecognized) be differentiated and acknowledged for the nature of the differences they represent (Fraser, 1997, p. 16).

Fraser clarifies the dilemma by looking at the nature of redistribution and recognition and identifying an affirmative and transformative strategy for both. In regard to redistribution, an affirmative approach would assign increased resources to First Nations people and communities, while a transformative approach would challenge the very social and economic relations that led to the unequal distribution in the first place. In regard to recognition, an affirmative approach would support the recognition of unrecognized and misrecognized groups, such as First Nations, and make visible the differences they represent from the dominant culture. A transformative approach to recognition, in Fraser's words, needs to reconsider the very nature of difference, "aimed at deep restructuring of the relations of recognition" (p. 27). This requires the reconsideration of relationships of recognition as we know them, and in the process causing the transformation of those relationships as well as the transformation of the actual identity of the distinctive cultures of the society. Transformation in this sense, does not amount to a simple process of inclusion, but rather, a transformation in the identity of all cultures and their relationships with one another.

There are significant difficulties with the affirmative approach. Because resources are redirected with this approach to a particular group that has demanded a greater share of resources, even if they have heretofore received a less than equal share, the larger society can come to view the group as receiving special treatment with resources and benefits not available to the majority. In regard to recognition, an affirmative approach asks that a particular group be recognized for its distinctiveness and identity separate from all others. In both cases, resentment is fed by the perception of special treatment (Woolford, 2004, p. 116). We can recognize the welfare state and multicultural

philosophy of the Canadian state in the affirmative approach. There are difficulties, however, with the transformative approach as well. While there may be possibilities in some of the recent strategies for a common stewardship of the land to facilitate redistribution, Fraser's transformative approach to recognition has been criticized for its willingness, in the reconsideration of cultures, to create interactive processes that would eventually lead to an end to any cultural distinctiveness (p. 117). Fraser counters this critique in arguing for a new view of culture and difference with a focus not on the enhancing of cultural identity, but on the quality of social interaction between all groups in society. On this dialogical view, no culture "has the right to be understood solely in its own terms" (Fraser, 2000, p. 5). No group should be exempt, she argues, from challenges in the public sphere or in public processes. At the same time, however, claims for recognition need to focus not on distinct identities in themselves, but on overcoming the subordinate position in the public sphere that a group such as First Nations has suffered. Claims for recognition and justice, on this view, "seek to establish the subordinated party as a full partner in social life, able to interact with others as a peer" (p. 6). Due recognition is achieved when groups are included as full partners and participatory parity is established as a normative standard (p. 9). In relation to First Nations people and communities, on this view, claims for recognition "can aspire toward an acknowledgement of a First Nation as a dynamic yet persistent entity that exists in relationship with and as an important counterweight to the logic of Western cultures" (Woolford, 2004, p. 118). Here, transformation amounts to the personal and social change that accompany the recognition of not only cultural artifacts and history, but the very underpinnings of meanings and practices that constitute the social imaginary.

There is, then, some advantage in looking at Fraser's thinking about affirmative and transformative approaches to change. Her thinking highlights the difficulties posed for the dominant culture and its institutions in having to treat one group or another somehow differently so that the distinctive features of the group are recognized. How, then, is injustice to be corrected: by treating everyone the same and providing the same benefits to all (as in the affirmative approach) or by recognizing difference where it exists and responding to the specific needs of those groups who are different from mainstream culture (as in the transformative approach)? These are useful concepts for they define the possibilities as well as the limits to various approaches.

Woolford (2004) brings up another useful and interrelated distinction in the differences between the universal and particular theories of justice. This is also related to my earlier examination of the universal self of Western society represented by Taylor (1994) and the particular identity of people embedded in small-scale societies described by Dussel (1996). On the view that justice is a universal concept, it is believed that justice exists as a separate entity from the differences between people and the realities of their life experiences. Justice, on this view, exists outside experience, is idealized to be related to but above social interactions, and is governed by some greater degree of certainty. On the particularistic view, justice is closely related to circumstance, relies on context for its determination, and is neither fixed nor impartial. Woolford argues that the differences in understanding that is defined by sameness and difference and by universal and particular are significant fissures between the parties to the treaty process. What do these dilemmas in the treaty process have to add to our understanding of the Circle process?

With regard to the sameness and difference dilemma, the Circle amounts to the beginning of a social structure that recognizes that there are processes that allow for a particular First Nation to reflect, in relation to schooling, its understandings of community and responsibility with regard to its young people. The protocols of the Circle recognize the distinctiveness of each First Nation. The role a school plays in acknowledging the processes and decisions of the Circle amount to a recognition of difference and in doing so transforms the normative understandings and structures of governance of the school. Indeed, the district's acceptance of the Circle process has allowed for the establishment of more informal, holistic, and family oriented support for all students experiencing significant difficulties. This has been, in my experience, a transformational process for the district and schools. Similarly, with regard to universal and particular views of justice, the Circle demonstrates a willingness to set usual institutional imperatives aside and work towards just solutions to difficult issues that are specific to context, that is, one that includes differences of understanding and practice. The expectation from the First Nation is that there be just treatment for First Nations students, that they enjoy as much success as non-Aboriginal students in schools, but that equality contain recognition of the distinctive cultural identity of First Nations children and youth as well as community views about what constitutes a successful educational experience. Before the development of the Circle process, students who were indefinitely suspended from the school for acts of violence or drug use, for example, were subject to a formal appeal process reflecting the adversarial principles of Canadian law. The student and parents were asked to appear before a review hearing of district and school administrators who decided on the disposition for each student. The decision was made after the hearing and parents were subsequently notified. In the Circle process, the student, parents,

school, and community are involved in a consensus decision regarding the actions of a student. The outcome is determined by the entire community in the context of the school in its community. With the Circle, the decision is no longer determined by what must appear to First Nations people to be some application of foreign universal principles that are applied by members of the Euro-Canadian school system. The rationality of the school system is replaced in the Circle by a vision of justice that is dependent upon the circumstances of the action and its context to a range of intersecting communities, including the school, the extended family, and the band. The dialogue that takes place in the Circle, then, amounts to both an affirmation of pluralistic notions of justice, but also a recognition of particularistic, context driven, non-Western ways of knowing, that have potential for the transformation of the student and the members of the Circle, including those who represent the public school system (Woolford, 2004, p. 129). Without structures such as the Circles, where there is both affirmative and transformative communication, it is unlikely that there will be much improvement for First Nations students in the public school system or much resolution of the sense of injustice felt by First Nations people. What is needed, according to Woolford, is a "form of recognition that acknowledges the historical existence and values the cultural complexity of First Nations societies" (p. 137). So while Woolford calls for the opening up of the treaty process to a transformative approach to justice, this dissertation calls for the same transformative processes for the public institution of education.

### **Communication in the Circle**

Woolford's (2004) analysis of the treaty process is equally applicable to the Circle, for the character of the process in both cases determines the possibilities for

justice and the appropriate sharing of identity space. With regard to the treaty process, the nature of the communications between the parties was determined before any substantive negotiations about land-claims or governance. Both First Nations and non-aboriginal governmental representatives were involved in creating a list of nineteen principles to guide what was to be non-coercive and equitable communication around the table. According to Woolford, it would be reasonable to view these principles as co-constructed. From the very beginning of negotiations, however, issues derived from different cultural and historical understandings and from different levels of social and economic power have stood in the way of progress. The provincial and federal governmental representatives, for instance, have a more instrumental view of certainty than the representatives from First Nations bands. First Nations representatives have argued for flexible treaties that would allow First Nations people and communities to react to future changes in the natural and social environment. Government representatives have argued for treaties with greater finality and the ultimate extinguishment of further claims to land and resources. Additionally, First Nations representatives have asked to begin with a full appreciation of the injustice suffered by First Nations people after contact. Government representatives have argued that any discussion of past injustice is outside the mandate of the treaty process (p. 115).

There have been similar discussions and agreements about the Circle. As I explained in Chapter One, there is agreement that the personnel of the school district, the school, and the band determine the membership of each Circle. There is often considerable consultation and communication between the institutional parties to be confident that those appropriate to attend are able and willing to join in a Circle. The



membership of each Circle is somewhat different and is co-constructed by band, school, and district members on a case-by-case basis. The communicative protocols of the Circle have developed informally over a period of years and been adjusted whenever necessary depending upon the circumstance of the Circle and its membership. The chief of the band, however, has always been present to facilitate the Circle, and membership and communicative protocols have remained constant to the co-constructed principle. As everyone gathers for the Circle there is an opportunity for social conversation and other business that the members have between each other. The gathering period can last quite long, as last minute arrangements for the attendance of all those invited and protocols are discussed. Members of the Circle are cautious to avoid any mention of the concerns that will be discussed in the Circle until the Circle is convened. Once everyone has gathered, and the chief has welcomed everyone to the Circle, a traditional prayer is offered. The prayer is conducted partly in the First Nations language of the band and the remainder in English. The prayer ends by asking The Creator to join with those in the Circle to share the concerns of the community. As a reflection of the role the Catholic Church has played in First Nations communities in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, many First Nations members cross themselves at the conclusion of the prayer. The chief then introduces himself and asks all members of the Circle to do the same. The actual focus on the issue at hand flows from the introductions as members of the Circle, in introducing themselves and describing their interest in the student, begin to express their views on the issue that has brought people together. The student introduces himself or herself in turn, as do parents and extended family members. As a representative of the district I would typically introduce myself in turn and describe the position I held in the district and what responsibilities I had for schools. In the case of a violent incident by a

student or a complaint against a teacher,<sup>5</sup> I would describe my responsibilities to the school and district as well as to the student or teacher in question. I would also outline any specific requirements of a particular Circle. In the case of a violent incident by a student I might include the need to be confident that the decision of the Circle would assure me that other students would be safe should the Circle return the student to school. In the case of a complaint against a teacher I would explain that the Circle was an alternative to the usual district protocols regarding complaints, that the teacher's presence was voluntary, that the decision of the Circle would be final, and that there would be a no further recourse to other institutions or protocols. In the case of a complaint against a teacher, I would also explain the presence and role of a teacher union representative, who is always present in such cases. The communicative protocol is somewhat formal from this point onwards, as each person is expected to speak in her or his relation to the issue at hand. Although questions can be asked of each other, it is not usual for members to speak out of turn. I quickly discovered that in spite of my initial belief that the Circle was cumbersome and time-consuming, I needed to patiently allow the Circle process to generate a just resolution. I also needed to learn that my position as superintendent of schools did not privilege me to speak out of turn or control the process. However, there is much more to the communicative environment of the Circle.

<sup>5</sup> Allegations about sexual or physical abuse by school district employees have not been considered in Community Healing Circles.

## **Communicative Action**

Jürgen Habermas (1976, 1981/1984, 1981/1987) has some significant things to say about the qualities of communication in the social environment. In considering these qualities he has developed a number of useful ideas that can illuminate the workings of the Circle process that is my concern. Indeed, the qualities of communication in the social environment, including institutions such as public education, have formed the basis of much of Habermas' work. He begins that work in an analysis of rational thought. On the one hand, he argues, we in the Western world have developed a view of rationality that has allowed us some degree of control over the natural and social world. This is the Western view of scientific or instrumental rationality or reason. It separates us from the objects of a physical or social construct in our world and provides what appears to be a successful way to gain control over these objects. It is the rationality that gives, in part, a heightened sense of agency to us humans in the modern Western world. Although Habermas has contributed some useful thinking to the discourse on instrumental rationality, he was not the first to consider the nature of instrumental rationality and its role in the life of the social world. In 1905, Max Weber (1905/1958), for instance, referred to this kind of rational thought as an "iron cage" of rationality. (p. 181) Weber argued that while it provided the Western world with a view of the natural and social world that were unique in history, it also brought with it a view of the world that caused "alienation, meaninglessness, a sense of impending social dissolution," (Taylor, 2004, p. 1) modern conditions to which Habermas, Taylor, and so many others have devoted their attention.

On the other hand, for Habermas there is another constituent part to rationality, one that he refers to as communicative rationality. This one is concerned less with control and more with understanding (Eriksen & Weigård, 2003, p. 4). Communicative rationality rests in a different view of the individual and society, where the individual is embedded in a social world and acts within the context of a relationship with others. Where instrumental rationality places the individual in a subject–object relationship, communicative rationality places the individual in a subject-subject relationship. Where the former enables the individual to control the object outside oneself, the latter enables one to better understand oneself and the social and physical context of one's life. These are not just preferences about the kind of reason an individual can choose to employ in their work or professional life. They are taken for granted, too obvious to mention, the way we think about the world around us. Habermas argues that communicative rationality is critical to the maintenance of the social fabric of a society, a rationality that allows a society to consider issues critical to people and groups, as well as to institutions and the meanings people give to the social world they inhabit. According to Habermas (1981/1984), "a communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis: it cannot be imposed by another party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing decisions of opponents" (p. 287). The test for its rational basis is found in the speech act: in communicative rationality the listener can either accept or reject the validity of a claim, while in strategic communication the listener cannot, for one reason or another, decide whether to accept or reject the claim of a speech act. In the former there exists the possibility of agreement and consensus, while in the latter the best that can be expected is compliance. The former allows the possibility of concerted action based on understanding and commitment to resolve social

issues, while the latter has the usual limits to action, based as they are on enforced compliance. Communicative rationality, on this view, is regenerative and emancipatory by definition, simply because it is embedded in language (Rasmussen, 1990, p. 28). Without communicative rationality, instrumental reason can dominate a society or culture, as it has increasingly in the West, leaving people cut off from socially constructed meaning and allowing a drift into the malaise of modernity so well described by Taylor (1989, 1991). Habermas argues for an increased role and proper place for communicative rationality in the modern world.

Communicative rationality is Habermas' attempt to articulate an alternative to instrumental reason (Sitton, 2003, p. 37). According to Habermas, deliberative processes in combination with communicative rationality are critical to the construction of meaning in modern Western societies, not to necessarily guarantee that the right decisions will be made, but that there will exist in processes and protocols, in both the public sphere and in institutions, valid deliberations about what is right or good. In these deliberations, Habermas argues, is the possibility that the best argument, the most rational solution, will gain value and adherence (Eriksen & Weigård, 2003, p. 4). With communicative rationality, social consensus is possible on issues such as those that concern us here. Indeed, communicative rationality is necessary if we are to resolve the issues that arise from diversity, for we can only act as a society when there are common understandings about how to proceed, understandings derived in rational deliberations about the difficulties. In contrast, strategic action is limited to making changes in social arrangements through influence or power. Communicative action has no such limits, based as it is in socially derived consent. For when we share assumptions based on

deliberatively determined consensus, our actions are motivated by convictions: “understanding cannot be compelled;” according to Sitton (2003), “it can only be intersubjectively achieved” (p. 63). In this way, individual and group action is made possible in the social environment and agency is enhanced.

So we can now see the essential relationship between rationality, agency, and the social fabric of society in Habermas’ work. And we can also see his critical focus on “speech acts,” (Habermas, 1976) for the quality of the deliberation in the public sphere and in public institutions is indicative of the capacity of a society or culture in its ability to contend with change and injustice in the social environment in a just manner. Human action or agency, on this view, is rooted within the context of understandings derived from interactions with others and the creation of understandings within the context of these others. The way in which the individuals who make up a society think, the kind of rationality, is critical to the building of the kind of consensus that permits social action and the ability of a society to make sense of pressures and changes and react in a purposeful way. Communicative rationality is therefore critical to the just society. According to Habermas, however, in Western societies, purposive rationality, or what I earlier called instrumental rationality, has carved out or elbowed aside, the communicative rationality so critical to the on-going development of social life. In Habermas’ words, purposive rationality has colonized communicative rationality, and in doing so, has restricted the ability of society to adapt to new environments. There are a number of forces behind this colonization. The first is in the need for the democratic welfare-state to ever increasingly expand economically, indeed, its very success is dependent upon this expansion. Over time this has led to the importance of ever

increasing global forces and greater social complexity in the economic system (Cook, 1997, p. 139). The purposive rationality that forms the rational underpinning to the economic sphere has, in turn, taken a larger role in social life, and with its administrative sub-systems taken over the role previously played by processes of communicative rationality. At the same time the demands for social adaptations within society, including such adaptations as the accommodation of cultural diversity, have increased to the point that communicative processes are overloaded (p. 135). The accommodation of diversity in schools through transformative processes, for instance, is a time-consuming and contentious project. From this foundational perspective, Habermas has identified how modern societies have adapted to the difficulties in building social understanding and consensus through condensed processes of reaching agreement and through bypassing agreement at all with the strategic application of money and power, what he refers to as "steering media" (Habermas, 1981/1987, p. 390).

What is essential in this analysis for my purposes is that there are serious implications to this colonization. In the words of Eriksen and Weigård (2003),

...the consequence is that relations that should be based on personal commitment, common understanding and involvement, are instead regulated on an impersonal basis, with alienation, disintegration of social responsibility and decline of legitimacy as results. (p. 6)

These issues about rationality and democratic deliberation form the basis of Habermas' work and demonstrate his critique of modernity. In uncovering and exploring the differences between instrumental and communicative reason Habermas has opened up the possibility that rationality can be devoted to more than control of the social and

natural world to a rationality that allows and facilitates a reflection on history and meanings, encouraging ethical action and the building of moral and legal norms (p. 6).

Although Habermas bases his work in an examination of *rationality* and *agency*, indeed, he uses the term, 'communicative action' to reflect their joining together, he takes full advantage of what that analysis can provide. He does this by considering the nature of the public sphere and political processes and the communicative quality of speech acts. That evaluation requires both an examination of the speech act in itself, but also the context in which the speech act is made. This has obligated Habermas to consider the purpose of a speech act, what character of that act would constitute communicative rationality, and what contexts would permit or impinge on the possibilities for communicative rationality. These are all questions of central concern to the Circle. According to McCarthy (1978/1985), on the first question, Habermas believes that

...language cannot be comprehended apart from the understanding that is achieved in it. To put it roughly, understanding is the immanent telos or function of speech. This does not, of course, mean that every actual instance of speech is oriented to reaching understanding. But Habermas regards 'strategic' forms of communication (such as lying, misleading, deceiving, manipulating, and the like) as derivative; since they involve the suspension of validity claims. (p. 287)

I will return to strategic forms of communication shortly, but for now it is important to note the way speech acts are integral to understanding. On the second question, and if the purpose of language is understanding, it is critical that language have validity: (1) that the speaker's language be comprehensible to the hearer; (2) that the speakers intentions are to communicate something that is true; (3) that what is spoken is intended to be true so that the speaker may be trusted; and (4) that the speaker has chosen utterances that are within the normative understanding of the hearer so that both the



speaker and hearer can come to agreement on what has been spoken (p. 288). These claims to validity – comprehensibility, truth, veracity, and legitimacy (Habermas 1976, p. 160) are essential ideas about what would constitute an act of communicative rationality, for they identify the essential characteristics of an ideal speech act, one in which the possibility for understanding and consensus between the speaker and hearer is made most likely. Whenever one or more of the criteria has broken down or has “suffered disturbances,” (McCarthy, 1978/1985, p. 288) understanding will not be met until the disturbance is resolved.

Habermas’ identifies two significant strategic forms of communication that amount to such disturbances. In the first he distinguishes between communicative action and “*concealed* strategic action” (Baxter, 1987, p. 41). On Habermas’ view, communication and action are not the same act, but are tied together by speech acts designed to reach understanding and build consensus. From that consensus, coordinated action can take place, based in that interpretive accomplishment (p. 81). Strategic action, in contrast, has an entirely different structure. On one hand, if a speaker is genuinely trying to communicate to others and can make explicit their intentions without jeopardizing the success of the intention of the speech act, then the act is communicative. While on the other hand, if by making explicit their intentions, the speaker will jeopardize the very intention of the speech act, then the act is intended not to communicate, but to serve some strategic purpose. In this case, if that strategic purpose is to be accomplished, then the intention must be concealed. If a speech act is not avowable, that is, it cannot be honestly declared, then it is not one that is intended to genuinely communicate, and cannot form the basis of consensus. The second kind of

disturbance is in “*open strategic action*” (p. 45). In this disturbance to communicative action, the hearer of the speech act cannot, due to some imperative such as the application of power, law, or regulation, contest the validity of the statement. “Not all illocutionary acts are constitutive for communicative action,” according to Habermas (1981/1984), “but only those with which speakers connect criticizable validity claims” (p. 305). Consequently, in neither concealed nor open strategic action is there an intention to make a claim for validity with agreement that the claim is open to acceptance or rejection. There is no intention in either case to achieve mutual understanding and build consensus among the communicative partners.

The third question has to do with the context of communication. This is a critical question for my purposes in that as much as some people may wish to engage in dialogues of understanding that meet the criteria for communicative rationality, the nature of the forums and the normative understandings about communication in these forums are a significant background. This is especially true in democratic societies because the nature of democracy, its political processes, and the normative understandings that underpin its legitimacy, are all hotly debated and contentious issues. Although Eriksen and Weigård (2003) provide a detailed discussion of the issues and the various positions taken by contemporary theorists, they identify two useful positions for my purposes. The first is in the ‘*realpolitik*,’ so well expressed by Machiavelli (1950) five centuries ago, where politics is viewed as an endless struggle for power to further one’s own interests. The legitimacy of the state and its institutions, on this view, is determined by legal status and adherence to constitutional and regulatory regimes. Ultimately, power and not ethical action forms the basis of this legitimacy. A contending

view places ethical considerations at the centre of legitimacy, where the purpose of politics is to make decisions for the good of all. On this view, the content of a discourse and the decision that is arrived at as a result of that discourse is the basis of legitimacy. The substance of an issue, and not the power relationships made evident by the issue, are critical to this view. Habermas takes a third view, one that is procedural enough to recognize the presence of power, but also to have processes that can, in the content of dialogue and decision-making, provide legitimacy to the political process. In effect,

...as far as possible, procedures, must ensure that the content of the chosen solutions are rational. This is where [Habermas'] communicative basis plays in, for as there is no a priori blueprint for the best solutions, the issue has to be decided through a deliberative process, where all the involved parties have the same fundamental right to have their voices heard. It is the institutionalization of such *argumentative procedures* which ensures the legitimacy of democracy. (Eriksen & Weigård, 2003, p. 7)

Habermas argues that we need both a healthy public sphere and political and institutional structures where substantive issues can be discussed, where decisions can be made based on a rationally determined consensus, and actions can be taken based on what has been decided. There needs to be rules, however, that govern the dialogue. Habermas offers three principles that form the basis of his procedural ethic: "the right of making claims and criticizing others, the principle of inclusion, and the limitation of norms to the sphere of common interest" (Rasmussen, 1990, p. 61). That is, no one should be excluded from a discourse where there is a reasonable likelihood that a decision made might affect them. All parties to a discourse should have the right to make whatever claims they deem to be relevant to the issue as well as the right to criticize the claims of others. Lastly, the norms that govern the discourse are to be determined by the discourse community in the interests of that community. Unencumbered by disturbances

rooted in power relations and strategic interests, this amounts to Habermas' ideal for communicative action.

### **Discourse Ethics**

Seyla Benhabib (2002) has also considered questions about dialogue. I have referred to her understanding of culture earlier and I would like to return to that description, for it forms the basis of her views about communicative or discourse ethics. Her work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of culture, diversity, and justice. Her description of globalization and the diversity in our midst, the nature of culture and its relationship to identity, and the description of discourse ethics, advance the work of Taylor, Tully, Habermas, and Fraser significantly. Indeed, her work has contributed appreciably to my understandings about the communicative environment, the social and political landscape, and the implications of the Circle to school governance.

Benhabib begins in the present era, acknowledging the influence of powerful forces of globalization on nation-states and institutions and the expanded influence of diversity in the political landscape. She has also considered the nature of culture and its relationship to identity and the nature of justice in the social context of diversity within a larger international system of global civilizations. According to Benhabib (2002), the issues that concern us the most at this historical juncture are those rooted in "real confrontations between cultural horizons" (p. 35). These confrontations, she argues, take place in a social, political, and economic landscape of interdependence, producing both a community of interdependence and a community of conversation (p. 35). Within this

context, the politics of identity and the demands for the recognition of that identity, for Benhabib, is not a question of the simple recognition of diverse cultures. Indeed, she is critical of political theory with its “all-too-quick reification of given group identities, [and] a failure to interrogate the meaning of cultural identity” (p. viii). As we saw earlier, her view is particularly critical of Taylor for what she calls his “cultural preservationist premises,” (p. xi) that fail to acknowledge the ambiguities and conflicts that permeate cultural relations and understandings (p. 65). Her position is more consistent with that of Tully (1995), who views culture not as a discrete entity, but one created over time and circumstance in the “overlap, interaction, and negotiation of cultures” (p. 13). For Benhabib (2002), cultures are

...complex human practices of signification and representation, of organization and attribution, which are internally riven by conflicting narratives. Cultures are formed through complex dialogues with other cultures. In most cultures that have attained some degree of internal differentiation, the dialogue with the other(s) is internal rather than extrinsic to the culture itself. (p. ix)

On this view of culture, Benhabib argues for democratic deliberation that permits, and indeed encourages, the contestation of cultures in the public sphere, public institutions, and in associations of civil society. “If we accept the internal complexity and essential contestability of cultures,” she argues, “then struggles for recognition that expand democratic dialogue by denouncing the exclusivity and hierarchy of existing cultural arrangements deserve our support” (p. ix). What is the nature of justice on this view? It is not one that recognizes cultural groups as separate and fixed entities. It is also not one that allows for the recognition of cultural boundaries that protect a particular internal view of the nature of a culture. On the contrary, it is one that expects that cultures will have to contend with others, but in a deliberative environment that is characterized by

principles of equality. This does not mean having to choose, on Benhabib's view, between the recognition of cultural distinctiveness on one hand, or democratic inclusion and equality on the other. She argues we can have both in a deliberative democratic society that provides for "maximum cultural self-ascription and collective intergroup justice" (p. x), where cultures as "contested creations of meaning" (p. xi) are complemented by a political landscape of deliberative democracy.

The social and political environment for recognition, on this view, presents a contentious landscape with significant risks to all those involved. In the present era, with the global impact of interdependence and diversity, the risks only increase, for claims to culture can only be made in dialogue with different 'others' with whom we must be engaged. In this contentious environment of diversity, the dialogue in itself has potential for "estrangement and contestation as well as comprehension and mutual learning" (Benhabib, 2002, p. xiv). This dialogue rests in a complex relationships between culture and the identity of the individual. While cultures are dynamic social creations, ever-changing in contention with others both within and outside the culture, they are still integral to the identity of those who ascribe to the culture, providing the social imaginary upon which practices are based. Indeed, Benhabib, as with Taylor earlier, looks to Herder (Barnard, 1969) to provide an appreciation of the role of culture in identity. Reflecting Herder's view, Benhabib (2002) writes, "an individual's acquisition of culture involves a soul's immersion and shaping through education in the values of the collective" (p. 2). And in agreement with Taylor, she writes, "human identities can be formed only through webs of interlocution, that we become who we are not solely but in a crucial sense through our immersion in various communities of language and

socialization" (p. 56).<sup>6</sup> But this is where her view of culture as a dynamic force is critical. For those who view culture as a static entity, the identity of the individual is simply determined by the cultural meanings in which one is surrounded or embedded. In contrast, her view assigns greater agency to the individual, where choices and allegiances are made in a life-story as the individual contends with conflicting meanings and the dynamic of culture as it continually changes in the social environment. It is no wonder that dialogue between cultures and demands for recognition within the dialogue pose significant risk for the individual and the culture, for while engagement with 'others' and the demand for recognition has become an imperative, the dialogue stems from and is integral to the ongoing creation of the very identity of the self.

It is not surprising then, that dialogue is critical to Benhabib as it was with Habermas and Taylor. Unlike Taylor (2002), however, who has identified the issue of recognition and some of its implications, and gone on to discuss the challenges to sharing identity space, Benhabib (2002) has approached the issues of diversity beginning with a focus on democratic equality and the creation of "impartial institutions in the public sphere and civil society where this struggle for the recognition of cultural differences and the contestation for cultural narratives can take place without domination" (p. 8). While Taylor has stated the problem and suggested possible solutions, Benhabib has developed a discourse on culture, diversity, and justice in the context of global forces and diversity and described the nature of ethical communication

<sup>6</sup> In *Habermas and Contemporary Society* (2003), John Sitton notes that Habermas goes even further and argues that personal identity is created and stabilized through communicative action with others. Indeed, he argues that personal identity, as well as social relations and cultural integrity, cannot be reproduced by instrumental action.

in this environment. In this way she has made a significant contribution to the discourse on recognition.

The nature of practical discourse and the meanings of the normative understandings about such a discourse are complex, especially across cultural differences. Benhabib argues that for discourse to be valid it must be consistent with the norms of “universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity” (Benhabib, 2002, p. 11), in a forum where all those affected by a decision are involved. I introduced this chapter with a discussion of the difference between the universal and the particular. With regard to both universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity, I suspect there is a significant difference between how a non-Aboriginal and a First Nations person might define respect and reciprocity, the former unaware of possibilities beyond the universal nature of both, the latter grounding respect and reciprocity in the particular. In a practical discourse, a dialogue about the differences might provide access to a better understanding of cultural difference. A dialogue of this sort might also provide an opportunity to look at other possible differences, including different conceptions of justice, forms of what constitutes right actions or the good, and practical considerations regarding substantive issues. For Benhabib, then, practical discourses across cultural difference require negotiation about meanings so that different cultural meanings and circumstance can be better understood. (p. 12) It is important here to recall the dynamic and contingent nature of culture and to remember that in practical discourses such as the Circle, the continually changing nature of culture is reflected in the narratives and dialogue about practice that form around the substantive issues under consideration.



The nature of dialogue, as we saw earlier with Habermas, is critical to the development of these understandings. On the one hand, dialogue can be characterized in Benhabib's (2002) view as "cajoling, propaganda, brainwashing, [or] bargaining" (p. 36), or be "based on power and violence, tradition and custom, ruses of egotistic self-interest as well as moral indifference" (p. 37). It can be focused on the strategic interests of one or both of the partners. On the other hand, dialogue can be characterized for its quality of communicative rationality in the building of social consensus about a substantive issue. As with Habermas earlier, Benhabib argues that dialogue of the second sort can be distinguished by normative rules. These rules

...entail that we recognize the right to equal participation between conversation partners, whom I define provisionally as 'all whose interests are actually or potentially affected by the course of action and decisions which may ensue from such conversations.' Furthermore, all participants share an equal right to suggest topics of conversation, to introduce new points of view, questions, and criticism into the conversation insofar as these seem to exclude the voice of some and privilege that of others. These norms can be summed up as 'universal respect' and 'egalitarian reciprocity.' (p. 37)

These norms of universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity are especially challenged in dialogue between cultures, as they similarly are between communicative partners from different technological and economic circumstances (p. 37). The difficulties posed by dialogue of this sort between cultures simply require that the nature of social meanings about the norms themselves be explored and reconciled, however complex and contentious that reconciliation may be.

This is a critical point for Benhabib, and one that illustrates the ethical nature of the Circle process. The communicative ethics of the Circle can be contrasted with the usual structures of school governance. In these latter structures, which predominate in

the school system, formal procedures and protocols are determined beforehand by educational authorities of a district or school based on legal and contractual principles of due process and universal justice. It is expected that all students, parents, and educators will be provided due process and justice in the same manner, irrespective of situational factors and cultural understandings. Circumstance is important, in this model, only to the extent that it informs those involved as to the legal principle or protocol to be applied. In contrast, the practical discourse envisioned by Benhabib, and as I described earlier, by Habermas as well, one with a different ethical underpinning, requires a dialogue about social meanings, including the role, as we have seen, of the individual and the community, as well as justice and circumstance. On this view, personal narratives about real-life dilemmas and ways of acting upon these dilemmas need to be explored for the social meanings they express. "We encounter each other," according to Benhabib (2002), "and ourselves as others through such processes of doing and saying." Only in this way can we become aware of the "otherness of others" (p. 14). In that conversation is the possibility to build trust between and respect for conversation partners, to construct a setting where there is an equal right to speak, with the possibility that consensus can be arrived at that is rational and freely determined (p. 38).

I would also like to consider Benhabib's (2002) views on culture as they define a number of concerns about the politics of recognition and underpin the communicative environment of the Circle. She asks, "can there be a politics of recognition that accepts the fluidity, porousness, and essential contestability of cultures?" (p. 68). On one hand, if culture is defined as a static entity with firm boundaries, a politics of recognition can drift into a politics of identity, one that affirms a cultural entity as those within the culture

define it. On the other hand, if culture is defined, as Fraser and Benhabib have, as a dynamic social entity, with meanings and practices, as well as boundaries that are continually recreated in contention with a wider social environment, a politics of recognition can provide due acknowledgement of difference. Where the former politics of identity can lead to economic, political, and cultural isolation, and ever increasing conflicts in an era of interdependence, the latter politics of recognition can lead to a critical dialogue about and appreciation of the nature of cultural difference over substantive issues. Where the former encourages separation, balkanization, and “cultural enclavism” (p. 71), the latter allows democratic deliberation and dissent. Indeed, while the former may be characterized as acquiescence by the dominant culture to demands for recognition of identity, the latter is characterized by engagement in ethical dialogue in appropriate forums. There are important roles to be played in the Circle so that the process is characteristic of a politics of recognition, and not a politics of identity. While it is critical that cultural understandings be explored for differences, it is also critical that representatives of both First Nations communities and the school district take seriously their respective representation of particular interests and cultural meanings.

## **Conclusion**

The exploration of thinking about communication in the social environment in this chapter has much to contribute to my concern with the educational governance relationship between First Nations and school districts in British Columbia. Woolford’s (2002) investigations into the treaty process, where he has identified the need to reconcile cultural differences between First Nations and the Euro-Canadian society represented by provincial and federal government representatives is particularly helpful.

His analysis of the respective meanings of justice and certainty held by each group has allowed us to explore the differences between a transformative and affirmative process, distinctions that have implications in all that I have considered in the chapter, and in much of the dissertation. I have, of course, argued that only through a transformative process can justice be reached for First Nations people. Claims for justice can only be resolved, on this view, through an acknowledgement that First Nations constitute “a dynamic yet persistent entity” (p. 118).

But what forms does this recognition take, and in what forums is it possible? In regard to public education, I have argued that the Circle provides such a forum in that it provides a structure of governance that reflects a more just relationship. I have brought in the work of Fraser, Habermas and Benhabib, among others, to consider the communicative environment of school governance. With regard to the administration of the public school system, and the leadership practices of administration, it needs to be asked to what extent purposive-rational action and power-related strategic interests have elbowed aside interactions of communicative rationality. Or to what extent, structures and processes of governance have been designed to make use of communication as a strategy of power and coercion and not primarily of understanding and consensus. In the case of structures of governance regarding relationships in public schools, it needs to be asked to what extent the protocols and regulations of such structures are designed to give everyone an equal voice. And, of course it needs to be asked to what extent those who are affected by decisions are involved in dialogue about communicative protocols in structures of governance. These questions get to the core of the inability of the relationship, as it is presently constituted, to resolve issues about the lack of success of

First Nations students in the public school system. It is my view that structures of governance will need to reflect a transformative process such as the one I have described. Indeed, the Circle has already provided lessons about its value to students and to First Nations and school communities. The form and process of the Circle presents the possibility that different cultural and institutional communities may come together to consider problematic educational circumstances, contend with each other with regard to the substantive issue, as well as the differences between each other, and develop an agreed upon way of working together to resolve an issue. Indeed, Habermas would argue that this is the way progress can be made in the social environment, for coordinated action is dependent upon understandings determined with others. Benhabib would go even further, and argue that the interdependence and diversity of the present era and the critical relationship between recognition and identity presents a social and political environment that gives us no other alternative but to contend with each other in such a way.

## **CHAPTER 7:**

### **Beyond Inclusion**

#### **Introduction**

It is not well known by the general public, or by educators in the public schools of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, that the attendance of First Nations students in the schools of the district is a recent occurrence. Although I began teaching in a secondary school in Williams Lake in the mid-1970s, and First Nations students had been moved from the St. Joseph's Mission residential school less than a decade before, I was not aware of the short history of their involvement in public schools. I was aware, however, of how First Nations students and parents were excluded from programs and educational experiences available to non-Aboriginal parents and students. First Nations students were over-represented in alternate and special education programs and did not normally register in academic programs. They were typically not involved in extra-curricular programs. In the 1970s and 1980s, parents of First Nations students rarely appeared in the schools. Support for First Nations students in schools was largely nonexistent. Not surprisingly, First Nations students were forced out or dropped out of school in large numbers. Few graduated, and those that did found that they were poorly prepared for further education.

So while First Nations students were nominally included in the public education system, their full inclusion in educational experiences, still to be realized, has been a

long struggle. It has been a struggle waged by bands and their education authorities, First Nations parents and students, as well as First Nations and non-Aboriginal educators. The struggle has taken many forms, including forms of personal resistance such as simple refusal and demands for hearings from students and parents, to more complex and negative forms such as violence and the abuse of drugs by students, and from demands that schools consider the specific cultural needs of First Nations students generally, to the placement of a student in a particular course. In one form or another, these claims for inclusion and recognition are located, as we have seen, in demands for recognition of historical circumstance and cultural distinctiveness. The claims cannot be separated from the context of demands for self-rule, Aboriginal title, the acknowledgement of the destructive influence of residential schools, and the absolutely critical role of education in further community development. The claims cannot also be separated from the need for non-Aboriginal people and the Euro-Canadian society to become aware of pluralistic approaches to ways of knowing and to adopt attitudes of acceptance of different cultural practices. They also cannot be separated from an awareness of the cultural circumstances of First Nations people and communities, and the nature of the overlap, interaction, and continuing negotiation of cultural meanings that include us all, but have special meaning in the circumstances of First Nations people, their communities, their children and youth.

I began the dissertation in the circumstances and meanings, both professionally and personally, of my own life. I described how those circumstances and meanings have led me to wonder about the relationship between First Nations and the dominant culture of the British Columbia public school system in my professional and personal

community. The investigations conducted in the dissertation are the results, of the questions I began with and developed as the study progressed. As well as considering the many possibilities within the study itself, questions about circumstance and meaning, I have also had to consider a personal structure to my work, one that places me as an individual and social being in the context of the study; for the work in itself has been transformative for me and for those who I have included in discussions about schools and the relationship between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people. That embedding of the individual in a social world, and the questions that arise from that association, resides profitably in the work of Paul Ricoeur (1992, 2000).

It is not my intention here to distract from the work of the study, but it is important to recall the perspective and the hope with which it began and which inspire its intention. Ricoeur (1992) defines the ethical intentions of a person's life with the phrase, "*aiming at the 'good life' with and for others in just institutions*" (p. 172). On this view, one with which I agree, "justice and obligation are integral to the hope and aim for living well with others" (Dauenhauer, 1998, p. 143). For Ricoeur, they are more than right actions in that they constitute goods in themselves and form the essential part of an ethical life. In turn, as obligations to others they constitute the purposes and actions of politics and in doing so make politics the location of just intentions. Institutions are integral to Ricoeur's thinking because they serve the political purposes of a society and reflect the social context and the interactions of people in that social context. The concern for justice and the obligation for its attainment in institutions constitute the intentions of an ethical life. And so it is with my purposes in the dissertation as I have tried to understand the nature of the relationship between First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures as that relationship



is reflected in the structures of governance in schools. It has been my intention to establish a better understanding of that relationship, so as to identify possibilities for moving beyond the equitable inclusion of First Nations people in the dominant system, which still amounts to assimilation, to a transformation of the relationships and schooling.

The historical investigations of Chapter Two and the philosophical explorations of the last four chapters of the dissertation bring together the main ideas I have wanted to explore. I have been searching through some thinking about the modern social world, especially as it applies to my practice, in the context of my place and time in the world. I anticipated that by bringing together these ideas, they would generate new thoughts and interpretations about the relationship that is of interest to the study. I began with Taylor and the politics of recognition because his explanations about that politics identified a number of concepts and a discourse about identity, modernity, democracy, diversity, and culture. Indeed, my realization that the nature of culture formed the core to this politics led me to the other primary theorists of the work: Tully, Habermas, Fraser, and Benhabib. The search through the many ideas originated, then, within the hermeneutical tradition, one that views human circumstances and actions within a historical world that is constituted by language, social context, and meaning (Madoc-Jones, 1999, p. 255), the life-blood of culture. Specifically, I have been trying to discover within the historical circumstances of the relationship between First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures something about the dilemmas of the present time with a view to considering what might be done to improve the life circumstances of all, but especially First Nations people. The study has considered the historical circumstances of the relationship and of First Nations

people in particular, placed those circumstances in terms of the wider national and international context, interpreted that historical background by weaving it together with some essential philosophical concepts, and speculated about the implications of that intersection of history and interpretation for what it has to say about the nature of living here now and what the possibilities are for the future. Throughout, I have considered the ethical implications my investigations have for the potential of the individual to fully embrace the possibilities for her or his life. And additionally, I have kept the implications for educational leadership as an underlying theme throughout.

While I introduced the dissertation in the hermeneutical tradition of situating my life circumstances and myself as the source of interpretation, I have had to consider the wider world that surrounds me, both in time and place. So while my concerns are rooted in professional practice and personal experience, the investigation has taken the form of looking carefully at events and circumstances as sources for reflection and understanding. Sites of struggle in the relationship were identified in Chapter One, including educational institutions and the public sphere, as well as language and the frame it provides to the struggle. Chapter Two examined the historical context of the relationship between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people. Included in this were the initial stages of an examination of resistance and demands for recognition, forces that would occupy my attention through the later chapters. The critical importance of culture was introduced to the investigation for the first time, an underpinning that would form the basis of the subsequent examination of the politics of recognition in Chapter Three, the modern social imaginary in Chapter Four, the relationship between cultures and the nature of culture in diverse societies in Chapter Five, and the communicative

environment in the sites of struggle and discourse in Chapter Six. Indeed, Arlene Stairs (1994) argues that our understanding of the “essentially cultural nature of education,” (p. 121) a thread that occupied my attention throughout the dissertation, is something we have learned from the encounter between First Nations and schooling. According to Stairs, and as I have reflected in my work here, this is a cultural site and moment that is situated both historically and philosophically, and another reminder of the ongoing contention between the universal and the particular as cultures contend with each other.

Leaning on the hermeneutical tradition of bringing together history and philosophy, these four chapters examined some significant philosophical ideas to build quite a different version of meanings than those commonly given to the historical circumstances that are my concern. In all four of these more philosophical chapters we looked closely at the nature of liberal society and its dominant culture. For in that society there are deeply held understandings, however unconscious they may be, about the character of that society and even in the debate about what constitutes the self, or what the role of community ought to be, the dominant language of discourse continues to frame that character. In that discourse, liberal society promotes, above all else, the autonomy of each individual. Indeed, the purpose behind the education of the public rests on this belief in autonomy. I explored some of the limits to this autonomy, beginning by placing the individual in the context of the community or society and asking what commitments would an autonomous person have to make towards others so that each person’s autonomy would be guaranteed. Onto that consideration I added another layer of the social environment with an examination of the responsibility that everyone has in the modern world to create her or his own identity. This identity cannot be fully

achieved, as we have seen, without concern for the cultural meanings in which each individual is embedded. This, as we have also seen, is a reciprocal process where the individual, in interaction with culture (as well as with significant others), pursues the development of his or her own identity. It is also a complex process in societies with diverse cultures, where the reciprocal process of interaction between self and culture is complicated by the dynamic nature of culture and social interaction described by Tully and Benhabib. This is a process of recognition, nevertheless, where each person is able, in crucial ways, to develop their identity to the extent that others acknowledge them for that identity. This pursuit can be problematic, though, without due recognition of the self by significant others, including those who can provide cultural meaning, however contentious, tentative, and fleeting that meaning might be at times of such diversity and cultural interaction. In spite of these considerations, there remains, in my view, an essential link between recognition, culture, and identity to the extent that in exploitive and oppressive societies, where one culture dominates another culture or cultures in the same society, significant obstacles are placed that restrict the development of the identity of the self. While there are other harms, significant harms to individual identity are critical. We know that this social environment has existed for centuries in colonial societies such as Canada.

### **The Social Landscape**

Another layer to the context is in the recent sea change in the social landscape. While there was always diversity in Canadian society, it went largely unnoticed, made invisible by a normative colonial paradigm defined in a legal structure of land ownership, criminal law, and colonial edict, in combination with the inability of minority cultures to

gain access to the public sphere or political processes due to differences in language and culture. Two forces, massive immigration in the context of globalization and increasing demands for recognition of different cultures over more than a century, have come together to confront the colonial past of Canadian society. There are now many 'others,' all vying for recognition in the social and political landscape, and, as we saw with Tully, all overlapping, interacting, and mediating between each other and being changed in the process.

This is a new and often perplexing environment for many, although perhaps less so for the young who, having no experience in a different environment, find the diversity in the present one to be invisible to them. Nevertheless, we do not have a clear idea about how we can all live together in a country when we are so different and so demanding that our differences be recognized. We explored a variety of visions, including proposals to make some adjustments in the liberal understandings of the individual and community and the arrangements of government. While there are useful ideas for my purposes in those visions, there are others, that propose another path if we are to govern ourselves in the midst of this diversity. I have examined that path for it has implications for the state and its institutions. It also has implications for the education of the public and for the way in which we work together in schools.

Above all else, I have discovered in my investigations that powerful forces of modernity have collided with prevailing forces of social change. We cannot, in my view, return to a society where diversity is buried in the dominant culture. Demands for recognition are simply too powerful and too much now a part of the imaginary of all. We have no choice but to discover new ways to share identity space. In my practice,

educational institutions are similarly required to contend with demands for recognition, the construction of a duly recognitive environment, and the sharing of identity space within the institution of school. This challenge of diversity is the critical issue for educational leadership in the present era.

These challenges are especially contentious with regard to indigenous peoples, such as the First Nations of British Columbia. Unlike many other cultures, the cultures of First Nations are exceptional, as we have seen, as they are rooted in and attached to particular areas and the natural resources of those areas. These resources include those related to traditional uses of the land for hunting, fishing, and gathering, as well as for their use in the modern interdependent global economic system. In this context, First Nations people claim both recognition of cultural identity, including language, customs, knowledge, and beliefs, as well as control of the land and resources so integral to their ways of life. At the same time, they claim redistribution of access to social and natural resources so that First Nations people can be full engaged in the interdependent relationships of the modern world, its institutions and public processes. In the claims are demands for the recognition of cultural integrity as well as claims for equitable access to the modern world (Benhabib, 2002, p. 185). So, First Nations present a particular character to this challenge of diversity, one interrelated with the wider challenges of diversity across the society, and one particular to the nature of the claims themselves.

### **The Education of the Public**

The nature of this challenge to leadership in public education is one of both depth and breadth. For all the complexity and discord caused by the intersection of diversity

and demands for recognition of rights, the critical questions for education, without a doubt, will need to contend with Dewey (1916/1944) because his liberal philosophy still forms the underpinning of education at all levels. Dewey believed that the education of the public “should aspire to be a microcosm of democratic community at its best” (Callan & White, 2003, p. 104). Public education, throughout his writings, plays a central role in both democratic community and in the formation of the identity of the individual. But Dewey could not predict the increasingly diverse nature of societies and had no idea of how deeply the demand for recognition of difference would penetrate into the beliefs and meanings of citizens. Or indeed, how deeply these demands would impinge upon and increasingly shape pedagogy, curriculum, and governance.

In my experience, there has not been a good understanding of the nature of these pressures. There are significant implications for leadership in the issues presented here. I would like to return to the earlier description of Canada as an ethno-culturally diverse country, with deeply embedded liberal assumptions underpinning much of the social, cultural, and political landscape, combined with an ever increasing culture of individual and group rights (including those of gender, sexual orientation, and religion, as well), all occupied with the context of the ongoing national questions posed by the existence of the distinct national entities of the First Nations and Quebec. With this complex nature, the continuing existence of Canada as a country and the stability of institutions are remarkable. It is no wonder that we have developed a sophisticated discourse about our difficulties and some useful thinking about how we might best proceed. What we have not done as well as we might is to develop institutional structures that facilitate dialogue that provides due recognition to associative groups and

builds pluralistic solidarity. For these are issues of considerable controversy in the public space and in political processes.

The education of the public is a critical institution within this controversy, not simply for the demands for recognition made in schools and school systems, or the often uncomprehending or negative reactions to those demands, but for how education is going to be involved in the process of coming to terms with the diverse society that is emerging. There remain strong forces for the maintenance of procedural liberalism and for colonial relationships in Canadian society. These include deeply held beliefs as well as political forces that believe they have much to lose in what due recognition of diverse cultures could mean and, as we have seen, a language of colonialism that perpetuates the present understandings about how we ought to live together, even in diversity. Across the society, the building of a democratic society with deliberative structures that make possible a kind of dialogue that builds community solidarity at all levels while at the same time duly recognizing the pluralistic nature of our society is the challenge. In education, this requires the same deliberative processes that recognize the cultural differences among us so that children and youth can reach their full potential. There can be no doubt that education is at a crossroads and that this is an ongoing project with an uncertain future.

### **Recognition in Schools**

Taylor's *Politics of Recognition* (1994) was written more than a decade ago and continues to generate controversy and a constantly expanding literature. For all the contending positions, what I have argued for in this dissertation is that recognition can



profitably form an integral underpinning of education. The critical issue is what form should this recognition take. Bingham (2001) has shown that if we are to respect the dignity of each student, recognition must become a concept that is consciously employed to inform relationships in all classrooms. I believe the same is true for policy and governance, and in relation to my own practice, especially true for structures of governance that reflect due recognition of First Nations people and their communities.

What does the discourse presented in this dissertation have to contribute to our understandings about structures of governance in public institutions, the governance of public education, and specifically to how that governance impacts on First Nations communities and children and youth? What social practices and political and institutional structures constitute recognition? What are the practical implications for how governance can be approached and structured to facilitate recognition for all children and youth, parents and cultures, in our communities? How might governance have to be redefined to reflect different cultural ways of looking at the institutional arrangements we ought to have so that there is a due sharing of identity space? These are questions generated in these investigations: they reflect new interpretations of conflicts within and demands made on schools in recent years. Indeed, as I explained in Chapter One, structures of governance have already been developed to be more inclusive of First Nations people in public education. In British Columbia, these include Local Education and Enhancement Agreements at the provincial level, and restorative processes at the school and band level. The nature of these structures and the extent to which they meet the recognitive needs of a community or people are questions that can be valuably considered in the context of this work on recognition.

## **Beyond Inclusion:**

### **Transforming the Governance Relationship**

I would like to return to the cultural perspective offered in the Introduction. I wrote that Arlene Stairs (1994) observed correctly, in my view, that issues about the education of First Nations children and youth were issues about culture. I also agreed with her view that because of the depth and breadth of the engagement between First Nations and the dominant culture, and the critical role of education in that engagement, First Nations control of education outside the public system was not a good reflection of the larger intercultural environment, and therefore, not a viable alternative. Nor was the continued dominance of the Euro-Canadian culture inside the system. The dissertation has been an investigation into that intercultural setting. The Community Healing Circle has represented a governance relationship and a focus for the study. I have described how First Nations communities and educational authorities in the Cariboo-Chilcotin have come to view the Circle process as an opportunity to engage with the dominant culture of the public school system, providing a structure of governance that enables First Nations people and communities to join as partners in the co-construction of educational experiences for First Nations students. The Circle, then, can form the basis of a duly recognitive environment for First Nations students and parents in schools, and facilitate, as Taylor (1994) has shown and Fanon (1961/1963) has argued, the creation of the circumstances that can make possible an authentic identity, created in a recognitive space, however uncertain, fluid, and contested (Benhabib, 2002, p. 186) that space may be. This is not a space for inclusion of First Nations cultures in the present dominant Euro-Canadian cultural system, but rather, a space for the co-construction of cultural

entities, accompanied in the present era by an acknowledgement of First Nations as distinct cultural creations, formed and reformed over time both before and after contact. It is a recognitive space of mediation and negotiation with the potential to generate, in Stairs (1994) words, as many “ways to go to school” as there are cultures (p. 122).

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## Appendix A. Map:

### First Nations Peoples of Southern British Columbia



Source. Retrieved May 13 2005, from the Government of BC, Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education website, <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>.

The original of this map, which contains the entire area of British Columbia, was obtained from the Aboriginal Education Branch of the Ministry of Education of British Columbia. The following description was obtained from the Branch and should rightly accompany the map as an explanation of its origin and use. The map is available from the address on the website.

This map is designed to illustrate the rich diversity of the First Nations Peoples of British Columbia. Like all maps, it is a rendition - a best attempt at reflecting a current reality, recognizing that "the map is not the territory". A variety of sources have been used as

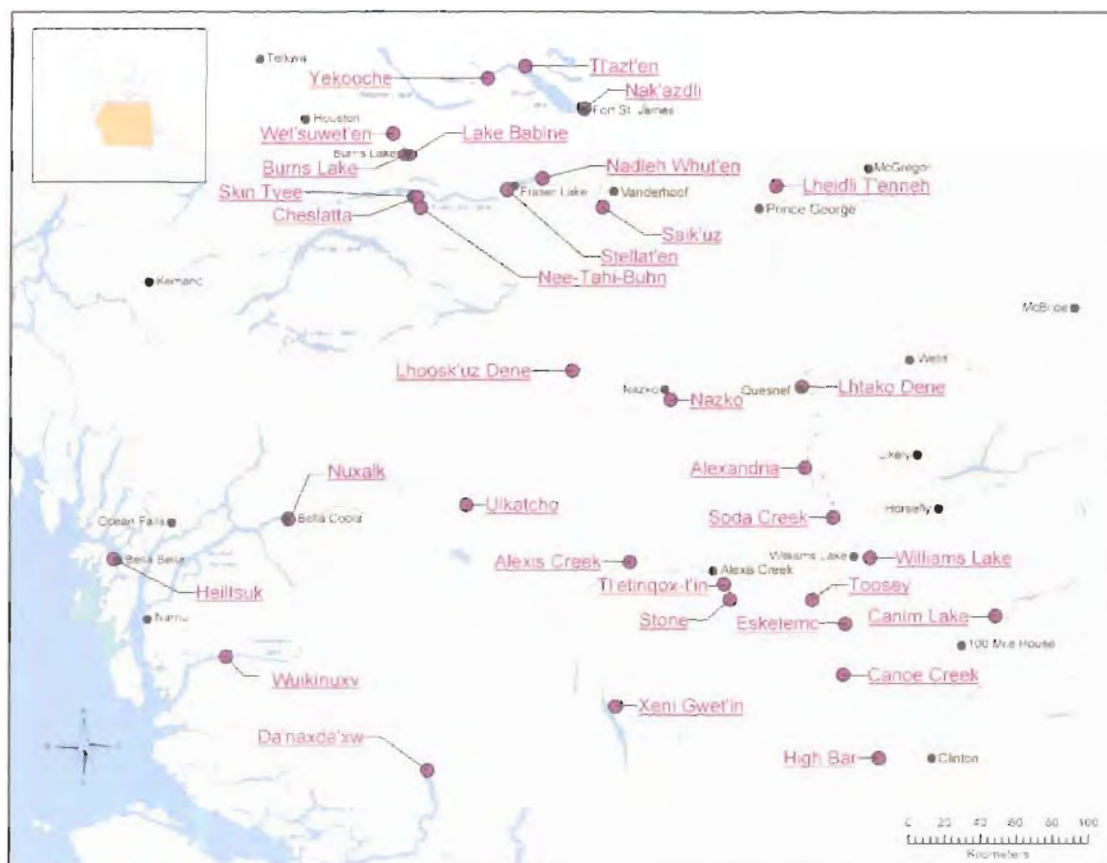
guides, including the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs June 1993 map entitled "Sovereign Indigenous Nations Territorial Boundaries", and the map entitled "Traditional Territories of British Columbia First Nations as set out by Statements of Intent accepted by the B.C. Treaty Commission". The boundaries between territories are deliberately shown as blending into one another, in recognition of the complex territorial relationships involved. Many boundary overlaps are currently being negotiated by the First Nations as part of the B.C. Treaty Process. Names and pronunciations used on this map are as close as possible to those currently used by the First Nations (please note the explanation for Coast Salish<sup>7</sup>).

This map is intended to be an educational tool. Educators and First Nations people are encouraged to work together in interpreting the map, and incorporating new information into it.

<sup>7</sup> Although Coast Salish is not the traditional First Nations name for the people occupying this region, this term is used to encompass a number of First Nations Peoples, including Klahoose, Homalco, Sliammon, Sechelth, Squamish, Halq'emeylem, OStiq'emeylem, Hul'qumi'num, Pentlatch, Straits.

## Appendix B. Map:

### First Nations Bands in School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)



Source. Retrieved May 13 2005, from the Government of BC, Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education website [http://www.gov.bc.ca/tno/img/maps/map\\_4.htm](http://www.gov.bc.ca/tno/img/maps/map_4.htm).

Although the School District encompasses eleven First Nations bands, students from bands from outside the area (Canoe Creek, for instance) attend Districts schools. In fact, the Canoe Creek Band is in two locations, and the Dog Creek portion of the two is included in the District. There are also First Nations students from other parts of British Columbia and Canada, as well as Métis students. The map is from the Treaty Negotiation Office of the Government of British Columbia.

The eleven bands are: Alexis Creek, Canim Lake, Dog Creek, Esketemc, Soda Creek, Stone, Tl'etinqox-t'in, Toosey, Williams Lake, Ulkatcho, and Xeni Gwet'in First Nation.