

**Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition"** (sections I and II)

- I. (section I) Multiculturalism (social and educational) as response to cultural diversity
  - A. Social and individual importance of cultural identities.
  - B. Multiculturalism and "recognition": the harm of misrecognition through internalization
  - C. Recognition as a human need
  
- II. "Recognition" and "identity"
  - A. Recognition: a brief history
    1. Honor and traditional social hierarchies (26-27)
    2. Collapse of traditional hierarchies and the rise of democracy (26-27)
    3. Democracy, dignity, and equal recognition (27)
    4. Universal need for recognition (34-35); was always there but pre-modern society conferred it so the need was not noticed
  
  - B. Identity: a brief history
    1. Authenticity
    2. Being in touch with individual uniqueness
    3. 30: Herder's contribution (cf. DuBois)
      - a. Individual level
      - b. 31: cultural group level
    4. 32: Individual identity as "dialogical", not "monological"
      - a. Fantasy of pure personal independence (33-34)
      - b. My own identity depends on dialogical relations with others
    5. 36: Importance of recognition in forming identity
      - a. intimate level
      - b. social level
    6. Damage of withheld recognition: 2 forms [Taylor does not distinguish these]
      - a. Not seen (cf. Alcoff)
      - b. Devalued (cf. DuBois & Alcoff)
  
- III. (section II) The politics of equal recognition in the public sphere
 

(2 directions from "equal dignity")

  - A. 37: "politics of equality/equal dignity": Universal rights and entitlements based on shared human characteristics (e.g. Kant [41]: equal rationality)
    1. Dispute whether to include economic rights along with political ones, in relation to not creating 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizenship
  
  - B. 38: Recognition of distinctness/"politics of difference" [Cf. Parekh]
    1. E.g. giving special and distinct rights to aboriginal groups (called "bands" in Canada) to protect against forces that would undermine cultural survival, integrity, or autonomy
      - a. Taylor's critique of Kymlicka (p. 40-41, note 16)
    2. Distinctness recognition sometimes uses universalist language, thus confusing the politics of equality with the politics of difference (38-39)

C. 40: Affirmative action as “level playing field” (hence an equality value) vs. cultural distinctness preservation, a difference value

D. 42: Equal potentiality principle, and its application to culture: Bellow’s remark about Zulus

E. 43: The complaints of the politics of equality and the politics of difference against each other: discrimination v. homogenization

I. Recent history of Canadian liberalism [NOTE: "liberalism" here means democracy, rule of law, majoritarian institutions, protections of minority and individual rights. Both conservatives and liberals in the American *political* sense are "liberals" in this *philosophical* sense Taylor means.]

A. 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights

1. List of individual rights (freedom of speech, etc.)
2. General principle of equal treatment/non-discrimination

B. Quebec province's attempt to protect its distinctive French-speaking culture through legislation based on idea of Quebec as "distinct society" within Canada, requiring special recognition.

Examples: French-speaking parents and immigrants must send children to French Schools; businesses must be conducted in French; commercial signs must be only in French. (Canadian Supreme Court ruled against Quebec on last item—said could compel signs to be in French but not forbid them from being in other languages also)

II. Two forms of liberalism

A. 56-58: "American" model: (1) Uniform rights to individuals, not groups.

(2) General principle of equal treatment/non-discrimination.

Social and political order should try to remain neutral between different "conceptions of the good," not favoring any over others (based on Kantian emphasis on individual autonomy)

B. 58-59: "Canadian" model (sensitive to Quebec's concerns)

1. Certain collective goals on the part of subgroups of the nation, especially cultural survival ("survance"), are legitimate and are legally enforced [[compare Parekh]]

2. To support such goals, certain laws must not be uniform but must apply differently in different contexts, especially to those whose group survival is at stake

3. Draw distinction between *fundamental* individual liberties which can not be abridged and must apply equally to everyone (e.g. right to free speech, freedom of religion, fair trial) and other *non-fundamental* individual liberties and privileges (e.g. which language your business sign must be in) which may be abridged, but only to foster the legitimate collective goals, such as (present and future) cultural survival

a. The fundamental liberties apply according to the "American" model (takes precedence over other considerations, including survance)

4. 58: implications of survance as a political principle

5. 60-61: American liberalism insists on absolutely uniform application of rules, no sensitivity or accommodation to group differences; and is also hostile to official collective goods/goals

III. The limits of liberal neutrality [of both American and Canadian kinds, Taylor implies]

A. 62: If a culture violates fundamental rights (e.g. Satanic Verses case), it is not protected by this form of liberalism

B. 63: Yet this may seem disturbing, since it raises the issue of Western

Imposition of its culture on others, which was the very complaint behind multiculturalism in the first place. (Since Western societies are now multicultural, can't just say "This is how we do things here.")

#### IV. Recognition and multiculturalism (again)

A. 64: From cultural survival (in Quebec situation) to recognition. Recognition as an unacknowledged factor in Quebec and other situations

B. 65: Fanon and the struggle for a changed self-image

C. Education as a site for struggles for recognition and self-image

1. 65: Giving all students an understanding of different cultures and genders

2. 65: Correcting internalized demeaning picture of group

(Taylor seems to see 2 as a "recognitional" concern, and 1 as something else, perhaps expanding the student's mind, and as less significant.)

D. Premise of equal respect to all cultures: the "**presumption**" (66: "human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings.")

1. 66-67: the **presumption** as a starting hypothesis with which to approach study of any culture

2. validity of the presumption in relation to any specific culture must be demonstrated in actual study of that culture

3. 67: seeing value of very different culture requires "**fusion of horizons**"

4. 68: the presumption seems required by norm of equal respect

5. 68: a stronger demand is sometimes made: that we give equal respect to cultures independent of, and before, knowing anything about them

6. 68-69: makes sense to demand the presumption but not the actual positive judgment

7. 70: Neo-Nietzschean theories that undermine any possibility of valid or objective judgment of value across different cultures, yet demand affirmation of another culture

8. Such a judgment on demand cannot be an act of genuine respect. It actually involves contempt for the intelligence of the person or group to which the judgment of worth is being made, though pretending to be respectful.

9. this demand is "homogenizing" because it assumes our Eurocentric standards are the appropriate lens for assessing non-Western cultures. A respectful judgment must issue from a fusion of horizons.

10. Critique of "Bellow" (remember, we do not know that he said this)

(a) assumes that to be valuable, a culture has to take a form that we can recognize as valuable from within our own standards.

(b) assumes the Zulus have not yet made any worthy contributions

11. We need something in between the inauthentic demand for = worth, and ethnocentrism

12. 72: basis of the presumption: "It is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time—that have, in other words,

articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable—are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject.”