

Recognition and Multiculturalism in Education

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Charles Taylor's 'Politics of Recognition' has given philosophical substance to the idea of 'recognition' and has solidified a link between recognition and multiculturalism. I argue that Taylor oversimplifies the valuational basis of recognition; fails to appreciate the difference between recognition of individuals and of groups; fails to articulate the value of individuality; fails to appreciate the difference between race and ethnoculture as dimensions of identity; and fails to appreciate equality as a recognitional value. The value of recognition in education goes beyond multiculturalism, and the reasons for multiculturalism go far beyond recognitional concerns.

Charles Taylor's influential essay 'The Politics of Recognition' has given philosophical shape and substance to the idea of recognition, and has also solidified a link between recognition and multiculturalism. Taylor recognises that, empirically, that link already exists; groups whose aims are gathered under the banner of 'multiculturalism' — national minorities, feminists, ethnocultural groups — have come, he claims, to frame their demands under the rubric of 'recognition' (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). But Taylor also explicitly defends this link, giving an account of the value of recognition that ties it intimately to ethnocultural identity.

I will argue that Taylor's powerful argument nevertheless oversimplifies the forms and valuational bases of recognition; fails, in particular, to articulate *individuality* as an important subject of recognition, especially in educational contexts; fails to appreciate the significance of the difference between recognition of *individuals* and of *groups*; and fails to appreciate the significance of *race* as an identity distinct from ethnocultural identity.¹ I want to argue, in addition, for a loosening of the connection between recognition and multiculturalism. Recognition, as a value in education, has a significance that transcends ethnocultural identities and multiculturalism; and multicultural concerns in education transcend those of recognition.

TAYLOR'S ARGUMENT: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

Taylor's argument, in brief, is this: the liberal tradition, rooted in the fundamental idea of equal dignity of all human beings, gives rise (both logically and historically) to two contrasting strands of thought, one that emphasises *commonality* and *universalism*, and the other *difference*. As social philosophies, the first involves identical rights for all human beings (or all citizens of a given polity); the second recognises that individuals differ from one another regarding salient, group-based identities, and that these groups (ethnic, cultural, religious, national and so on) deserve public acknowledgement in their distinctness from one another. Thus, the difference-based strand has two related but distinct sub-strands — one focused on differences among individuals, the other on differences among groups.

The difference-recognising strand provides a liberal basis for multiculturalism, that is, for public acknowledgement of a national minority or ethnocultural group's claims to distinct treatment required for it to survive or flourish. (Taylor defends Quebec province's constraints on the teaching and public usage of English as a means of preserving the Francophone Québécois culture.)

Along the way, Taylor introduces the idea of 'recognition' as a seemingly trans-historical and trans-cultural human need to be recognised by others in one's personhood and distinct identities. Initially, Taylor distinguishes two strands of recognition, corresponding to the two strands in liberalism — a commonality-based form of recognition of others as fellow human beings or equal citizens of a polity, and a difference-based strand that recognises persons and groups in their distinctness from one another. However, as the essay progresses, the connection between commonality and recognition recedes, and the idea of recognition becomes attached almost entirely to the idea of difference or distinctness. The 'politics of recognition' of the essay's title refers not to both sameness recognition and difference recognition, but only to the latter. The sameness strand of liberalism is retained in the essay, but becomes largely confined to a set of political principles and institutions that are universal, blind to difference and proceduralist. Lost is the idea (introduced early in the essay) that a liberal, democratic society requires not only political institutions that treat its subjects in a certain way, but a democratic culture in which fellow citizens recognise one another as equals (both as citizens and as human beings). I will touch on this jettisoning of 'recognitional equality' at the end of the paper.

Valuing the recognition of ethnocultural difference provides an obvious underpinning for educational multiculturalism. Educational institutions should recognise the ethno-cultural (and ethno-racial) identities of their students. This recognition can take curricular form, as when the historical experiences and contributions of ethno-cultural groups are studied. But recognition can take other forms as well — for example, school assemblies for cultural presentation, or teachers' informal acknowledgement inside and outside of class of their students' ethno-cultural identities.

Taylor mentions curricular multiculturalism and implies that he sees it as an important form of ethno-cultural recognition. But, interestingly, he does not justify it as a way to confer recognition on students. That line of thought is, instead, pursued by Susan Wolf, in her brief comment on Taylor's essay (Wolf, 1994). Focusing on the United States, Wolf argues that African-Americans and Native Americans (for example), who are members of a certain educational community (such as a university), should be recognised in their ethno-cultural identity. Curricular attention is one form of such recognition (*ibid.*, p. 83).

By contrast, Taylor bases his argument for curricular attention to a particular ethno-culture on the supposition that any given ethno-culture has produced, or manifests, something of objective value to humanity — something of importance from which members of other ethno-cultures can learn. (Indeed, although he is not consistent on this point, Taylor goes even further and suggests that every culture should be presumed to be of *equal* value.)² Without denying that an important reason for studying the cultural forms and products of a given group is their aesthetic, moral or other educational merits, Wolf rightly notes that this direction moves Taylor away from a recognition-based argument centred on according recognition to particular persons. Thus Wolf utilises the distinction that Terence McLaughlin draws between recognition of the *existence* or *presence* of something and recognising its *value* (McLaughlin, *nd*) to suggest that Taylor's argument for curricular multiculturalism has come down too exclusively on the latter at the expense of the former.

A HAITIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT AND THREE FORMS OF MISRECOGNITION

I will begin my examination of Taylor's views with an example of a student in a course I recently taught at my local public high school in Cambridge, Massachusetts; although drawn from an American context, the example is quite pertinent to the British one. My student, Mohamara, was a second generation Haitian-American. She was strongly identified with the Haitian-American community in Cambridge. Mohamara confessed in class once that she had occasionally tried and succeeded in 'passing' as an African-American, in contexts where her Haitian identity was devalued by African-Americans. However, by and large she was proud of her Haitian-American identity.

The incident I want to focus on is that in a previous school that Mohamara attended, with few black students, a white teacher asked her to give 'the black point of view' on some subject, presumably one with some racial content. Mohamara was offended by this invitation.

What is wrong with the teacher's question to Mohamara? It seems to me that there are several distinct, recognition-related issues involved. First, the teacher failed to recognise Haitian-Americans as a distinct ethnic group within the larger 'black' racial (or pan-ethnic) group. (When I pressed Mohamara on the incident, she acknowledged that this

was part of what bothered her.) The failure of recognition here appears to have both a group and an individual dimension. The teacher failed to recognise an ethno-cultural identity that was important to Mohamara; and his behaviour at least implies a failure to recognise Haitian-Americans as a distinct ethnic group.³ (An analogue in the British context would perhaps be to fail to recognise the difference between — second generation, to make the analogy more exact — Africans and Afro-Caribbeans.) The latter failure is the one articulated by Wolf; the teacher should recognise Haitian-Americans just because they are part of his community.⁴

Mohamara wants to be seen in her cultural distinctness — a kind of pure Taylorian case of recognition. Yet there seem at least two other elements that are not so purely Taylorian in spirit. One is the fact that the distinctness Mohamara wishes recognised takes place against a particular backdrop, namely one in which her identity has been, as it were, racially homogenised as *black*. She is saying, in effect, ‘I am not just racially black; I am also ethno-culturally Haitian. I not only have a race; I have an ethno-culture too.’ This is not quite the same as if the teacher were simply not aware of ethno-cultures at all, or only very dimly, and so did not recognise the importance of this characteristic to his students. The presence of the racial backdrop gives the demand for recognition here an element of resistance to a tendency for race to submerge all other internal differences and render them invisible, or at least unsalient. So the desire for recognition here is not simply, as it were, to be *seen* (although that is part of it) but to resist being racially homogenised.⁵

This example suggests then, that the value attached to ethno-cultural recognition is not entirely independent of the context of recognition. This is just one indication that ‘recognition’ does not name a single value, as Taylor implies, though he does not say so explicitly.

A different dimension or form of recognition involved in Mohamara’s situation concerns the teacher’s assumption that it is useful, or even intelligible, to speak of ‘the black point of view’. The failure here is a failure to recognise the internal diversity of the racial group ‘black’. It is profoundly ignorant of this teacher to think of ‘blacks’ in this way. Especially in a teacher, such a lack of recognition of internal diversity in a racial group that comprises millions upon millions of persons of many faiths, class backgrounds, occupational positions, political opinions, personal experiences and the like, is disturbing and culpable. The object of misrecognition here is not the existence or distinctness of the group itself but rather important features of the group.

Despite their differences, the forms of recognition so far discussed, do not require affirming *value* in the features of the group calling for recognition. It is their existence alone that demands the recognition.

A third dimension of recognition involved here is quite different. It is that the teacher viewed Mohamara, in her role as a student, as a representative of a group, not in her individuality as a learner. Here the problem has less to do with the character of the group itself, as in the

previous two forms; it would be present even if the teacher asked her to give 'the Haitian (or Haitian-American) point of view' (i.e. the point of view of a group with which Mohamara does strongly identify). The problem is that Mohamara is not being treated *as an individual*. This value of individuality is no doubt culturally relative; not all cultures value it equally. But in Western liberal democracies, it can be assumed that persons desire to be treated as individuals, not merely as representatives of groups. This value is particularly salient in educational contexts. Each individual student's own individual educational growth should be of concern to his or her teachers. Without in any way denying the collective dimension of learning (group work, class interchange, collective projects and so on), the teacher's asking Mohamara to give 'the black point of view' misrecognises Mohamara as an individual learner.

That a teacher should not treat a student, even if only in one specific context, as a representative of a group does not mean that a student may not appropriately choose to present her contribution to a class discussion under the rubric of 'a black (Indian, Pakistani) point of view' on a subject. (Note the vital distinction between '*a* black point of view' and '*the* black point of view.')

'A black point of view' means more than 'a view held by a black person.' It is an attempt to, as it were, draw explicitly on one's blackness in forming the point of view in question. In fact, in my experience, students often parlay their ethno-racial identities in class discussions, often to lend authority to their contribution. This is frequently quite unwarranted, and involves illegitimate overgeneralising about their own view, or an inadequate evidentiary basis for their ethno-racial attributions. It is entirely appropriate for instructors to challenge such students to explore their evidence for these opinions. Recognition of ethno-racial identities is by no means the same as agreeing with, or allowing to stand, every remark made by a student in the name of that identity. Nevertheless, educationally and morally, there is a difference between a student's freely choosing to invoke her ethno-racial identity in making an ethno-racial generalisation, and her being treated by her instructor as a spokesperson for that group.⁶

THE CONCEPTUAL INFLATION OF 'RACISM'

I wish to say a bit more about individuality and its relationship to multiculturalism, but before doing so I want to note how these failures of recognition exemplified by Mohamara's teacher might likely be regarded in the United States. In the USA, any failure — moral, political, educational — related to the domain of race or ethnicity risks being thought of, and called, 'racist'. This accusation of racism carries severe opprobrium; other morally-inflected concepts related to race or ethnicity — for example, racial insensitivity, racial ignorance, racial discrimination, racial prejudice and failures of ethno-cultural recognition — lack the public salience and power of 'racist' and 'racism'. For

that reason, these alternative, more nuanced forms of moral assessment are frequently neglected, and there is a temptation to call anything that goes wrong in the area of race or ethnicity 'racism'. As a result moral missteps that may warrant criticism but that do not rise to the level of moral severity appropriate to the term 'racist' are nevertheless, by being so designated, implied to be of that severity. I have argued elsewhere that this conceptual inflation of the terms 'racist' and 'racism' — their tendency to imperialise the entire moral terrain related to race and ethnicity — has seriously impeded both moral understanding and cross-racial communication on racial matters.⁷

None of the three forms of recognition that Mohamara's teacher engages in is properly called 'racism'. In saying this, I do not mean to minimise the professional and moral failure involved in the teacher's behaviour. As Taylor has so eloquently articulated, misrecognition can be serious business. However, since the teacher shows neither racial animus toward Mohamara or other black students, nor does he (I am presuming) believe them to be racially inferior, he has not engaged in racism.⁸

MULTICULTURALISM AND ANTI-RACIST VALUES

Drawing a clear distinction between 'multicultural education' and 'anti-racist' education might facilitate seeing a clear difference between values related to ethnocultural and identity recognition, and those implicated in racist conduct. I have been impressed in my admittedly cursory readings on British educational and political theory that this distinction is in fact frequently made. In the USA, the concept of 'anti-racism' is much less salient than it is in the UK, and than 'multiculturalism' is in the USA. In the USA 'multiculturalism' is a far more familiar term, naming an ideal that most educational practitioners and theorists would affirm, although there might be broad disagreement as to what it encompasses. By contrast the expression 'anti-racism' is regarded as having a radical, somewhat hostile and challenging quality to it. That 'anti-racist' education would be promoted under that description, even if somewhat inadequately, in a document with the national recognition and prestige of the Swann Report, would be unheard of in the United States.

I do not mean to minimise the anti-racist concerns of many American educators. In actual practice, the gap between British and American anti-racist education is, I am sure, a good deal smaller than the gap in its theoretical articulation and social legitimacy. However, in the USA anti-racist concerns are generally purveyed under the rubric of 'multicultural education'. This makes for a good deal of confusion, at least at the level of theory. One manifestation of this confusion is a conflating of recognition concerns with more strictly anti-racist ones. This conflation encourages educators to think that according curricular recognition to, say, Mexican-Americans automatically counts as coming to grips with racism against Mexican-Americans. While I cannot attempt a full account of anti-racist education here, it must include, at least, teaching

the value of racial equality; teaching about the social, economic and political forces that stand in the way of such equality; and teaching the wrongfulness and avoidability of racial prejudice. Merely making students more knowledgeable about ethno-racial groups other than their own would at best go only a very short way toward accomplishing these goals.⁹

By emphasising the way that anti-racist goals can fail to be articulated in forms of education commonly called multicultural, I do not, however, mean to imply that multicultural education, and anti-racist education, are usefully understood as ranged on a single scale, with anti-racist education further along that scale. Some educational writing does indeed imply this; anti-racist education is presented as a more thorough-going form of multicultural education (see, for example, Sleeter and Grant, 1990). I would suggest that these two forms of education are more helpfully seen as having distinct, if empirically related, goals. There can be superficial or tokenistic, and deep or substantial, forms of *both* kinds. For example, multicultural education is often derided as being no more than ‘saris, samosas, and steel bands’.¹⁰ The Swann commission reports having attended a school’s ‘ethnic evening’ with music and dance performances of Asian, African Caribbean and ‘white indigenous’ groups. They rightly note that this form of multicultural education is often viewed as tokenistic. But they also correctly note that such performances should not be so derided, as long as a school *also* engages students in a deeper exploration of the cultures of its students, or of ethno-cultural groups making up the national polity.¹¹ Citing Roger Scruton, Terence McLaughlin lists seven dimensions of ‘cultures’, and, although music and other popular artistic forms are not clearly present as such on this list, quite a few clearly distinct other dimensions of culture — ‘high’ culture, moral values, language, ‘deep’ customs and beliefs of religion — would have to be addressed in any substantial (non-superficial) form of multicultural education (McLaughlin, nd).

But the more comprehensive and substantial forms of multicultural education are still not anti-racist education; they are of value in their own right and not simply in their empirical link (whatever that may be) to anti-racist goals.¹² Moreover, and analogously, anti-racist education can also take either superficial or deep forms. A superficial form might involve telling students that racial equality is an important value; a deeper form might entail arranging for students to undertake projects in which they research race-related inequalities in various areas of social life (housing, criminal justice, education) and suggest policy initiatives to decrease that inequality.

To summarise, in the United States at least, there is a tendency to reproach as ‘racism’ any form of wrongfulness in the domain of race or ethnicity. This tendency should be resisted, partly by recognising that we possess a varied and nuanced evaluative vocabulary applicable in the racial and ethnic domain. One part of that vocabulary concerns values related to ‘recognition’. Those recognition values play a role in multicultural education, and it is thus useful to distinguish multicultural

from anti-racist education, as is insufficiently done in the United States.¹³

INDIVIDUALITY, MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION, AND 'STUDENT-CENTRED' EDUCATION

I earlier discussed individuality in relation to recognition, and to group identity. Let me now turn to its complex relationship to multicultural education. Although Taylor explicitly focuses his theory of the dialogical formation of identity on individuals — it is individuals who have the human need to be recognised, in Taylor's sense — he does not, in this particular essay, articulate individuality and its recognition as a value distinct from recognition of group-based identities that are important to an individual. By failing to do so, Taylor tacitly lends his support to a version of multicultural education that overemphasises ethno-cultural groups, and groups in general, at the expense of the individual. It is in no way necessary to choose between these two. Treating someone as an individual is not an *alternative* to treating her as a member of a group, membership in which is important to her. We are individuals, and we are also members of groups. Part of what it is to see another person 'as an individual' is to see her as not *just* a member of a given group, or even of all the groups of which she is a member. But seeing someone as an individual does not require *denying* the importance of those group memberships (black, Haitian-American, female and so on) to the person.

This point has a special pertinence to the educational domain, as illustrated by a respondent interviewed by the Swann Commission. The respondent appears to be a teacher, and she or he is defending the teaching profession against the charge of racial prejudice. In making this defence, the respondent says, 'The English teaching profession has a very pronounced tendency to perceive children as unique individuals — regardless of the colour of their skins' (1985, p. 11). Treating students as unique individuals is indeed a laudable and appropriate educational ideal for an educator; but the respondent appears to counterpose doing so to appreciating the importance of racial identity and racial membership. (Speaking of 'the colour of their skins' makes it easier to forget that the issue is not a mere matter of physiognomy, but of *race*, a deeply socially significant identity.)

Although the value of individuality may be overshadowed and devalued by multiculturalist outlooks, in a broader sense both individuality and multiculturalism are part of a more encompassing, 'student-centred' educational outlook. While this label could perhaps be put to other uses, I am intending by it a philosophy that places particular emphasis on the individual learner; that recognises a myriad of differences among students that affect how they learn, their motivation to learn and what learning means to them in the context of their own lives. Painting in broad strokes here, I am contrasting 'student-centred' with 'subject-centred'; in the latter teachers are less concerned about their students as individuals and see themselves first and foremost as teaching a subject

(maths, English, history and so on). This difference is no doubt more readily manifested in teaching practice than in theory; most teachers see themselves as teaching students and not only subject matters. They see themselves as both student-centred and subject-centred. In practice, however, some teachers are much more concerned with the particularities of their individual students, and others with their subject matter. (Of course some teachers — poor ones — are concerned with neither, and most good ones, with both.)

My point is that *both* individuality (as an educational value) and recognition of group-based identities are student-centred values. Both involve attentiveness to the particularities of an individual student's identity and situation, and a commitment to acknowledging those particularities.

This student-centred link between recognition of individuality and recognition of group-based identities does not necessarily imply that the former should be seen as *part of* multicultural education. Whether to do so is no doubt in part a somewhat arbitrary terminological matter. In that regard, I would suggest that individuality be seen as *complementary* to multicultural education. Multicultural education is concerned with ethno-cultural groups and the ethno-cultural-group dimension of students' identities. Recognition of individuality must provide a counterweight to this, lest the group-based dimensions of students' identities assume too great an importance.

In a similar spirit, I would resist the notion that 'multicultural education' be construed as a comprehensive philosophy of education, but would wish to regard it as only one part of such a philosophy. Some educational writing in this area embraces such a wide range of educational aims under the rubric of 'multicultural education' that it is implied to be a comprehensive account, or to be aspiring to such. For example, critical thinking, civic participation, reflection on the meaning of life are, on some accounts, all taken as part of multicultural education.¹⁴ While the latter values are not totally unrelated to the proper aims of multicultural education, I think it advances clarity in this area if they are seen as part of a broader philosophy of education (of which multicultural education may constitute an important part). (I do not, however, mean to imply that 'student-centred' fully captures this broader, more comprehensive philosophy of education.) If so, then acknowledgement of individuality will be part of this broader philosophy, and in particular will cohere with multiculturalism within 'student-centred' philosophies of education. In addition, individuality will maintain a particularly important relationship to multiculturalism, as a value especially essential to highlight as a complement to the group-based direction of multicultural education.

RECOGNITION AND ETHNO-CULTURAL IDENTITY: HOW ARE THEY RELATED?

Taylor ties recognition to multiculturalism, and up to now, with the exception of extending recognition to individuality, I have generally

followed him in this linking. However, Taylor's actual argument for the importance of recognition suggests what I claimed earlier — that the value of recognition, when directed toward individual persons, is not as closely tied to multiculturalism as his stance implies. Taylor essentially argues that the human need for recognition is met by recognising those features that are important to an individual person's identity. Taylor appears to make the assumption that an individual's ethnoculture is always important to his or her identity, and often he at least tacitly assumes that it is the *most* important feature of identity. This is not an uncommon assumption on the current scene; the Swann Report, for example, says explicitly at the outset, 'Membership of a particular ethnic group is however one of the most important aspects of an individual's identity' (p. 3).

However, this assumption is not universally true, even if it is for the most part. Many individuals acknowledge a particular ethnicity, or ethnic identity, but do not care very much about it. In the United States, for instance, there are many people who would acknowledge an ethnic identity as 'Irish-American' or 'Polish-American', but do not care very much about this identity. It might be much more important to someone that she is a lawyer, lives in a certain region of the country, belongs to a certain political party, is disabled, is a cricket devotee and so forth.

As Mary Waters demonstrates with relation to the United States, 'white' people are able to care less about their ethnicity than are persons of colour (Waters, 1990). I imagine that this is true for the United Kingdom as well. The reason for this, of course, is that the ethno-raciality of people of colour is a much more socially salient feature of their identity than is the ethno-raciality of 'white' people. To put it crudely, people think it *matters* much more if you are black or Asian than if you are white. Hence it is more difficult for individual persons of colour than for whites to be relatively indifferent to their ethno-raciality.

Nevertheless, there are *some* blacks, Asians and Latinos who would regard their ethnic identity as of relatively little importance to them, compared with other facets of their identity. The Parekh Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain rightly notes that ethno-racial and ethno-cultural minority communities are not generally sharply demarcated from one another and from majority cultures, and that individuals belong to and are aware of belonging to cross-cutting and overlapping communities in addition to their ethno-cultural affiliations. This is true of the United States, and no doubt of every at least moderately ethno-racially pluralistic nation, as well. Such a situation facilitates *some* members of a particular ethno-racial community not being much concerned about their membership in it. Moreover, as these communities become more accepted in the cultural, social and civil life of their nations, the numbers of persons who do not feel fully bound by their identity as such members is certain to increase.

From the point of view of recognition, we must distinguish between an identity feature that is important to the individual himself, and an identity feature of that individual that is socially important, or

important to a significant reference group outside the individual in question. Suppose an African-American recognises that other Americans (including other blacks) regard her blackness as very important; they think it licenses all sorts of inferences about what she likes, whom she socialises with, how she thinks about things and so on. But she herself does not regard her blackness as important, and in fact many of those inferences are not true of her. She knows that her self-identity is, as it were, out of line with her social identity; but she thinks this is 'society's hang-up', and she wishes that people would get past racial thinking entirely.

The thrust of Taylor's recognition argument appears to be directed toward the individual's self-identity, not to her socially salient identity(ies). It is the way the individual sees herself — not the way others see her — that the individual wishes recognised and affirmed by others. The woman in the previous paragraph would not feel that she was being recognised in a personally affirming sense if people made a point of acknowledging her blackness. She would not be personally affirmed by attention to blackness, or to African-Americans, in the curriculum or organisational life of her educational institution. (She might think it is good that African-Americans are paid attention to because they are a historically important group in American history, but not because that fact plays a personally affirming role with regard to her.)

So, Taylor's argument about the importance of recognition leads to focusing on what is important to the individual in question. It is an open question whether that will turn out to be the individual's ethno-culture or race. Consequently, the argument about individual recognition is much less conceptually linked to multiculturalism than Taylor, and most of his readers, have presumed. This is also the case in the educational domain. Student-centred teachers will want to know the range of personal concerns significant in their students' lives. Some of these concerns may be group-based identity features — sexual orientation or religion, for example — that are not ethno-cultural or racial in character. Such features allow for broader and narrower conceptions of 'multicultural education'; a consistent definition has not yet been settled upon in the educational world. The narrower definition would encompass only ethno-cultures; the broader would embrace a wider range of socially salient group-based characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation, religion (although religion is also sometimes part of an ethno-culture).

But for other students, what is important to them at the moment, and what may affect their learning and how they are thinking about things, may be that their parents are recently divorced, that they have just moved to the school district from another part of the country, or that they are strongly invested in becoming a ballet dancer and spend an enormous amount of time practising ballet. 'Recognition' of these features of one's students is appropriate and is grounded in the same values as recognition of ethno-cultural identity and other socially salient identities; but these features bear no link to *group* recognition, nor, therefore, to multiculturalism.

INTRINSIC AND INSTRUMENTAL VALUES IN RECOGNITION

What are the values that underlie the identity-recognition of individual students? Drawing on Taylor's argument, one reason is the personal affirmation of the individual student.¹⁵ Although, as I suggested earlier, Taylor does not provide a systematic account of the appropriate agents of recognition — one does not expect, for example, a sales clerk to 'recognise' (in Taylor's sense) her customer — it is plausible to think that a teacher is a sufficiently important figure in the life of a student to be an appropriate agent of recognition.

However, there is at least a second, distinct (if related) reason for a teacher to recognise a student's important identity features. That is because such features may have a causal effect on the student *as learner*. A student's race may affect his learning because, as various researchers have demonstrated, a student can be aware that members of his race are thought not to be 'good at school', and the recognition of this stereotype can disrupt his ability to perform at the top of his ability (Steele, 1999). But the non-multiculturally-relevant factors just mentioned — such as that a student's parents are recently divorced — may also be quite pertinent to a student's learning, accounting, for example, for emotional outbursts, unreliability about turning in work and seemingly unaccountable and emotionally charged stances on certain curricular issues (for instance, ones that deal, directly or indirectly, with families).

This type of recognition, essential to any good teaching, is entirely instrumental to a further goal — enhancing the student's educational development.¹⁶ It is not, in that sense, *intrinsically* valuable, as pure Taylorian recognition is. But both types provide valid reasons for conferring recognition on a student in light of characteristics important to him.¹⁷

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RECOGNITION

Taylor implies that both individuals and ethno-cultural groups warrant recognition; and he does not give much attention to the systematic differences and relationships between the two. In his argument, the individual level is the philosophically more fundamental of the two. Keeping in mind, but putting aside for the moment, the claim of the previous sections that the logic of the individual-centred argument points to recognition for a much wider range of characteristics than ethnocultural ones, I want to make some brief remarks about the relation between individual and ethnocultural group recognition.

In school contexts, according institutional recognition to groups can be one way to accord it to individuals. For instance, in a school with a substantial number of Bangladeshi students (students of Bangladeshi ancestry and identification, not necessarily themselves immigrants from Bangladesh), these students are likely to feel, individually, recognised by recognition accorded to Bangladeshis as a group — for instance, by taking a half day for an assembly devoted to Bangladeshi culture,

history and current experience, which all students in the school are encouraged or even compelled to attend.¹⁸

But the value of group recognition — of ethno-cultural or racial groups — cannot be fully and solely derivative from the value of individual recognition. As our earlier discussion implied, not every group-based characteristic important to individuals warrants *institutional* recognition. Suppose a school contained a group of students who all lived in a particular neighbourhood; the group was personally close and their bond was closely linked to their identity as being from this particular neighbourhood. Whilst it might be appropriate for a teacher to recognise this feature in individual students, it would be odd and inappropriate for the school to hold a assembly, comparable to the Bangladeshi one, devoted to this neighbourhood. The difference between the two cases seems to involve a judgement about the relative social and educational importance of the two groups. Bangladeshis are a socially significant group (in Britain) in a way that a particular neighbourhood (generally) is not.

So we accord recognition to some groups because doing so has educational value, and this is a different reason from recognising the group as a way of conferring Taylorian individual recognition. But how do we decide when recognising groups has the appropriate educational value? Obviously no clear and foolproof standards are available, but instructors, institutions, curriculum planners, textbook authors and so on, constantly make judgements about what should be included, within the space and time allowable, and what must therefore, perhaps unfortunately, be omitted. Three general guidelines suggest themselves. First, group recognition can have instrumental value in promoting individual educational engagement. For example, it has been argued, with some although not entirely conclusive evidence in support, that African-American students will be more engaged with their studies if they see themselves reflected and honoured in the curriculum and the organisational life of their schools (Steele, 1999). A second reason is the one Taylor gives for studying other cultures — that they have produced great works of art, music, dance, literature and so on, which possess a kind of objective value. One studies what is of objective value, whether it is part of one's own culture, or the culture of others. A third reason is in the spirit of Susan Wolf's argument considered earlier. We study some ethno-cultures not because their products are of intrinsic worth, but because they are part of the social and historical fabric of a given nation, region, or other governmental or geographical unit. In this third reason, British students are taught about West Indians, not because doing so enhances the motivation of West Indian students (reason #1), nor because West Indians have produced great thinkers, artists and the like (reason #2); but because West Indians are a socially and historically significant group in British life and history. A given ethno-cultural group can, of course, be an appropriate object of study for more than one of these reasons.

PROCESS *VERSUS* RESULT OF RECOGNITION

One of the main ways that Taylor links recognition to multiculturalism is through the implication that his normative conclusions about cultures and society are grounded in the value of recognition. In the segment of the essay concerned with social policy (Section IV), Taylor argues (as mentioned earlier) in favour of allowing Quebec province to place certain restrictions on the official use of English — requiring Franco-phone and immigrant parents to send their children to French rather than English language schools; requiring businesses with more than fifty employees to be conducted in French; and requiring commercial signage to be in French.¹⁹

A reader may well get the impression that Taylor's normative stance regarding these provisions for protecting and sustaining French-Canadian language and culture is rooted in the value of recognition. In fact, Taylor is quite ambiguous on this point. The argument he actually gives rests on the legitimacy of cultural preservation as a policy goal in a liberal state, provided that certain fundamental liberties are honoured in the political unit (in this case, Quebec province) sustaining the culture in question. He only minimally explores the normative basis for such cultural preservation; the argumentation in this section is directed toward showing that certain kinds of collective goods, such as cultural preservation, are consistent with liberal principles, rightly understood. (I am not here concerned with the validity of this particular part of Taylor's argument.) It is possible to infer that Taylor is implicitly drawing on the premise he articulates late in the essay, and to which I adverted earlier — that every culture is the repository of value, and thus has a moral claim to continued existence. But he might be presupposing a weaker premise — that in a liberal state an ethno-cultural group that desires its continued existence has a justified claim to institutional support for doing so (provided that it adheres to certain liberal principles in its internal functioning).

But neither of these arguments for the legitimacy of cultural survival as a political goal is a recognition-based argument in the sense that Taylor has delineated. Neither is concerned with how non-Québécois, or the wider Canadian national society, regard the Québécois. A recognition-based argument would be analogous to Wolf's argument for an educational institution to recognise a distinct ethno-cultural group within it; the Québécois would seek to be recognised as a distinct and worthy ethno-cultural group within the larger Canadian society. They would have a human need for this (ethno-cultural) recognition of their distinctness, and the validity of their seeking continued existence as this distinct ethno-cultural group would derive from this need for recognition.

In fact, Taylor does tacitly acknowledge that the argument he actually gives for French-Canadian *survivance* is not recognition-based; for in the following section of his essay, Section V, he says that the argument of Section IV has concerned allowing cultures to defend themselves,

whereas what he is preparing to talk about in Section V is recognition (p. 64). In fact, Taylor goes on to suggest that nationalist movements, or movements of territorially located ethno-cultural groups for various forms of self-rule, are often indeed driven by a sense of perceived non-recognition by the broader, dominant society — in particular, that Quebecois nationalism has been driven by this consideration (p. 64). Taylor also suggests that this motivation is often unacknowledged, and even explicitly denied, by those involved in the nationalist movement.²⁰

But once Taylor has conceded that a group's demand for self-rule, perpetuation, venues for cultural expression and the like, *can* be driven by a desire for self-perpetuation or self-expression, it is difficult to see why we should follow him in thinking that in fact it seldom is but is rather driven by a desire for recognition from others. This point has particular relevance to the world of education. In many colleges and universities in the United States, and some high schools as well, ethno-racial groups form organisations based on a specific race, ethnicity or pan-ethnicity — Korean-Americans, Asian-Americans, blacks, Afro-Caribbeans and so forth. Often these groups require the official imprimatur of their host institution — for example, for a space in which to hold meetings, for separate residence halls; for funding of their activities and so on.

One might naturally use the term 'recognition' to describe what these groups seek from their host institutions. But, in light of the previous discussion, this would mask an important distinction. Some of these groups may not care a whit whether their fellow students, or the institution itself in its official capacity, 'recognise' them in the sense of according them the identity-affirming and identity-creating function that Taylor describes. They may care only about the provision of space to engage in social, cultural and political activities with their fellow ethnics. By contrast, other groups may indeed care about the official stamp of Taylorian recognition involved in the institution's acknowledging them as an 'official student group'. Taylor is, I think, correct to suggest that some minorities who desire this Taylorian recognition may not want to make themselves vulnerable to rejection by admitting this, and will therefore say that they are concerned only with 'provision'. Nevertheless, there is a real and important distinction between these two forms of 'recognition', and it does not seem to me plausible to claim that every case that appears to be of the 'provision' sort is actually of the more maximal, full Taylorian sort. Multiculturalism is legitimately concerned with both of these forms. But only one of them is recognition in Taylor's sense. This, then, is a further way in which multicultural concerns are distinct from Taylorian recognition.

It may be of interest to note that the Swann Report implies that it would not favour *either* of these forms of recognition, since both could plausibly be construed as 'cultural preservation', which the report claims is not the province of the schools (Section 2.5: 'not "Teaching culture" or "Cultural Preservation"'). This is a complex issue. It could be argued that appropriate individual recognition cannot be cleanly distinguished

from some degree of cultural preservation. At the same time, it seems that, even at the group level, *some* distinction can be drawn between *acknowledging* the existence of important ethno-cultural groups in the school or the community it serves, and *actively re-inforcing* an ethno-cultural group identity that competes with other identities, such as a national identity. It appears to be primarily the latter worry about competition that drives the Swann Report's stance, and the authors may be unduly pessimistic, or perhaps simplistic, in seeing a necessary conflict between national identity and ethno-cultural identity.

CONCLUSION: RECOGNITION AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF EQUALITY

Recognition, in the context of multiculturalism, has generally meant recognition of ethno-cultural distinctness, and Taylor's 'Politics of Recognition' provides a philosophical defence of this link. We have seen, however, that a Taylor-like recognition should also be directed toward students' individuality (which is a different matter from their ethno-cultural group distinctness), and toward important group identities or personal features other than their ethno-cultural memberships.

Reasons for, or values involved in, recognition may differ for groups and individuals, even if we confine ourselves to ethno-cultural groups, the staple of multicultural education. But the range of values we have examined so far, on both the group and individual level, does not capture some important values related to another value central to education in several distinct ways — equality. Equality is often (misleadingly, I believe) regarded as part of multicultural education itself. The temptation to see multicultural education as a comprehensive philosophy of education — a tendency I criticised with regard to anti-racist education — can lead us astray regarding equality.

Equality bears on education at several levels, and I cannot explore them all in a paper on recognition and multiculturalism. But we can see one important contrast between equality and distinctiveness-recognition by imagining that my Haitian-American student is viewed by her instructor as racially inferior, and is treated as a 'second-class citizen', as someone who is not regarded as fully belonging as a member of the class and school.²¹ What the student would then want, and need, would not be so much a recognition of her ethno-cultural distinctiveness as Haitian, as an acknowledgement of her as an equal. She would wish her racial or ethnic membership not to be taken as a badge of inferiority.

In educational contexts, equality has both a recognitional and a material dimension. The latter, for example, involves equality of opportunity — ensuring that all students have equivalent educational resources, equally qualified teachers and the like. I mentioned earlier that Taylor initially articulates a recognitional dimension of equality — that which the student in the previous paragraph would desire — one that he rightly distinguishes from the recognition of ethno-cultural distinctness. But as his essay proceeds, this strand falls away, and the

material/political aspect of equality is all that remains. So it is worth being reminded that students want to be recognised in their appropriate group-based distinctness, but *also* recognised as equals to their fellows, in class and in school — equally worthy of their teacher's attention, of educational development, and so forth.²²

There may seem little harm in counting these equality concerns as part of 'multicultural education'. In the United States, this is often the politically most effective means of securing attention to them. But, as I suggested in my discussion of the differences between anti-racist and multicultural education, to do so muddies the conceptual waters, and makes it more difficult to articulate distinct educational goals corresponding to distinct elements of an overall educational philosophy. I hope to have contributed to that enterprise in a small way by building on Charles Taylor's canon-establishing essay to disaggregate some distinct goals and values involved in educational recognition and multiculturalism.²³

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NOTES

1. Many types of groups, or other social entities, can have cultures. There can be regional cultures, religious cultures, national cultures, professional cultures, youth cultures and so on. 'Ethno-cultures' are the cultures attached (or, more broadly, assumed to be attached) to ethnic groups and ethnic identities.
2. I have argued elsewhere that Taylor confuses the issue of how cultures possess value by claiming (although not consistently) that cultures can be presumed to be of *equal* value. There is a great difference between saying that a culture possesses something of value, and saying that this, or any, culture has equal value to any other. The latter claim strikes me as meaningless; the values realised by cultures cannot be totalled up in such a way as to be compared to other cultures. And an ethno-cultural group can resist an objectionable devaluing of its own culture without having to claim that its culture is of equal value to other cultures (see Blum, 1998). To say that a culture is a repository of value is in no way to deny that cultures can be appropriate objects of criticism.
3. It is at least theoretically possible that the teacher was fully aware of Haitian-Americans as a distinct ethnic group, but made the incorrect (but perhaps not entirely unwarranted) assumption that Mohamara was African-American. Neither her first nor last name was 'obviously' Haitian. Still, even if so, it would have been misleading of him to use the racial or pan-ethnic term 'black' to refer solely to African-Americans, although many Americans do so.
4. Here there might be a somewhat relevant difference between a national university, such as Wolf has in mind, where the relevant community that provides the context of recognition is simply the university itself, and a more local institution such as a secondary school, where the relevant reference group is not only the students actually present at a given time in the school, but the salient ethno-cultural groups in the community served by the school.
5. Race is of course not the only category that lends itself to a masking of internal differences. One of the complaints about a certain kind of 'identity politics' is that virtually any socially or politically salient identity — gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, even ethnicity itself — can be deployed, or regarded, in such a way as to mask internal differences within the group sharing that identity. However, race involves a particularly intense form of such masking, because it so strongly implies the possession of biologically-grounded characteristics shared by members of a given race and distinguishing it from other races. (Perhaps this is true of gender as

well, although gender homogenisation is less likely to occur because the sexes are not segregated from one another in the way that races tend to be.) On the conception of race on which I am drawing here, see Smedley (1999) and Blum (2002).

6. It should be noted that to the extent that ethno-racial generalisations are educationally pertinent, the legitimate proffering of them should not be confined to members of the ethnoracial group in question. A student from group *B* may be sufficiently knowledgeable about group *C* to at least proffer generalisations about group *C*.
7. In Blum (2002), I draw the initial insight that the concept of 'racism' has been subject to 'conceptual inflation' from the British sociologist Robert Miles in his indispensable treatment of the subject (Miles, 1989, pp.41–68). My specific proposal for reining in the meaning of 'racism' is, however, different from Miles's. In my view, Miles fails to accord adequate recognition to the deeply moral connotation of 'racism', and thus fails to analyse it as a moral concept. With regard to the emotional and moral charge attached to the term 'racism', the Swann Report notes, 'Whereas in the early part of our work the mere mention of the word racism, in meetings and discussions with educationists and others, was sometimes sufficient to provoke extreme reactions of anger, distress, and defensiveness, more recently we have found a far greater willingness to explore this issue in a balanced and dispassionate manner' (Swann Commission, 1985, p. 10).
8. Here I am drawing on an account of racism that I defend at greater length in *'I'm Not a Racist, But . . .'* (Blum, 2002).
9. My cursory reading of chapter 6 of the Swann Report, entitled "'Education for All": A New Approach' — the chapter apparently dedicated to a vision of anti-racist education — appears to suffer from this conflation of anti-racist and multiculturalist aims. Although occasionally the report articulates the goal of racial equality, much greater attention is accorded ethno-cultural recognition, as if the latter constituted the prime content of anti-racist education. (Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the report simply has a weak commitment to anti-racist education, and so slips more readily into discussing multicultural education?) A recent development that contains the potentiality for confusing racial and cultural matters is the neologism 'cultural racism', utilised in the Parekh Report and elsewhere (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000, p. 60). Modood (who played a significant role in the preparation of the Parekh Report) defines it as the claim that certain groups (primarily Muslims, in the British context) are so culturally alien from (alleged) British culture that they must either be forcibly assimilated, prevented from immigration, or both, and that their culture is distinctly inferior. It is the inferiorising of a group, and its exclusion on the basis of its alleged 'unworthiness' that makes it appropriate to call this phenomenon 'racism'. But I would suggest that the targets of what is properly called 'racism' should be confined to actual persons, and not to a culture or religion as something distinct from the persons who may 'carry' that culture or religion. Thus hostility to the Muslim religion seems to me unhelpfully called 'racism'; the older term 'religious bigotry' is more accurate. Nor is, say, hostility to Pakistani customs of personal intercourse rightly called 'racism' (There may be no single term available for this objectionable form of hostility.) It is only when these sentiments slide over into hostility toward the persons manifesting these cultural forms (as it often does) that 'racism' is appropriate. (Even then, I think the term is being used in a secondary sense.) The Parekh Report states, 'Either way [i.e. with regard to skin colour or culture], the variations among human beings are imagined to be fixed and final, something determined by nature and unchangeable' (p. 60). This remark pays tribute to the standard or traditional meaning of 'racism' which implies inferiority or defectiveness *by nature*, and thus inherent and inescapable. But it seems very odd to say that that which is due to *culture* is also inherent and inescapable; culture is precisely that which is learned and changeable, and is *not* nature, both in the sense that cultures themselves are changeable and that individuals can choose to abandon a cultural affiliation and adopt, or attempt to adopt, another one (although this may be difficult to accomplish fully). Modood's understanding of 'cultural racism' avoids this confusion by saying that the cultural discourse builds on an already existing biological one, so that the group in question remains a target of biological racism (i.e. racism in the traditional sense) (Modood, 1997). Note that even if one agrees that some uses of 'cultural racism' are misleading, this does not mean that the phenomena to which it points are not seriously morally objectionable.

10. This characterisation of multicultural education is drawn from Bonnett (2000, p.91) although I have seen it elsewhere in British literature on these matters.
11. The Swann Report's further description of this 'ethnic evening' is pertinent here: 'with none [of the performances] being presented as "exotic" or divergent from an assumed "norm" but all being seen as expressions of the pluralist character of the school's population' (p.324). This is significant because a prime reason for devaluing this sort of multicultural education is precisely its tendency to 'exoticise' the cultures presented, and to re-inforce the majority culture as a norm.
12. I do think it quite plausible to suppose that learning about ethno-cultures other than one's own would bear some empirical relation to reducing racial prejudice against racial groups who possess those ethno-cultures.
13. My discussion of anti-racist and multicultural education has been a bit oversimplified in implying that each of these forms of education is founded on one single value. In fact, both forms are best seen, from the point of view of moral or value education, as embracing a *range* of values. On this point see Blum, 2000.
14. Some language in the Swann Report comes too close to this conflation of multicultural education with a comprehensive philosophy of education. In Chapter 6, the report is concerned (rightly) to emphasise that multicultural education should not be regarded as a form of education relevant only to 'minority' children. The authors propose the slogan 'education for all' to reflect the educational benefits to white British children of the curricular and institutional recognition of the multi-racial and multi-ethnic character of contemporary British society (p. 315). In doing so, however, they go on to imply (though not stating this explicitly) that their proposed education for cultural pluralism embraces virtually every significant educational aim. (For example, 'A good education must in our view give every youngster the knowledge, understanding, and skills to function effectively as an individual, as a citizen of the wider national society in which he lives and in the interdependent world community of which he is also a member' (p. 319).
15. Remember that affirmation of the individual student is not equivalent to 'affirmation of the student in her individuality', since individuality is only one (though a vital) aspect of the individual student's identity for which affirmation is appropriate (certain group-based features being others).
16. Patricia White has suggested to me a valuable distinction within instrumental forms of recognition of individual students, that bears particularly on Taylor's concerns. One form takes account of the particularities of a given student's identity and situation with the aim of furthering that student's overall well-being. The second form affirms a particular feature of the individual with the aim of enhancing the individual's sense of self-worth. (If self-worth is one dimension of overall well-being, then the second form of recognition is a subcategory of the first.) The second form is obviously very close to Taylor's notion, and this reveals that Taylor is not concerned about the individual's overall well-being, but only about one part of it, albeit a part that he regards as fundamental. But I do not think that Taylor would embrace the idea that one confers recognition *in order to* promote the individual's sense of self-worth. For Taylor, one recognises others because they warrant recognition. Although he strongly implies that a sense of self-identity and self-worth are not sustainable in the absence of recognition of others, Taylor does not treat the former as a motive for proffering the latter.
17. I can only mention, but do not have the space to explore, forms of instrumental recognition that focus on features that may be important to a student's educational growth, but are not recognised by the student herself to be significant. One such feature much discussed in the race studies literature these days, is the 'whiteness' of white students. In the United States at least, and I presume this is true as well elsewhere, many white people do not think of their 'whiteness' as an important part of their identity. They may, in a sense, not even think of themselves as having a racial identity at all — 'race' is something that 'racial minorities' have. Nevertheless, from the perspective of understanding American society, the category of 'white' is entirely central; white dominance and white privilege are facts of life. In this sense, a white student's racial identity is important educationally, even if he does not initially see this importance. In such a case, 'recognition' by the teacher of this identity feature will not have the affirming quality of Taylorian recognition, but may nevertheless be an important form of instrumental recognition.

18. One important difference between the group and individual level of recognition, much discussed in recent feminist, race studies and post-colonial studies literature, concerns the issue of how the character of a given group is to be described, or who gets to determine that character (of the group that is to be recognised). In allowing a Muslim group to portray British Muslims in a school assembly, does the school lend itself to a particular ‘take’ on Islam, say one that supports a particularly patriarchal understanding of Islam? This is a complex problem, both in theory and in practice. However, it presents much less of an issue at the level of the individual. For at that level, the student simply wishes her Muslim identity to be recognised *as she understands it*. It is her version of Islam that comes in for recognition, and the teacher, or school, is not compelled to assess whether her understanding coheres with dominant, or recognised, understandings extant in her own communities. The Parekh Report makes an important point pertinent to this matter when it says that post-migration communities have never aspired to be separate enclaves; they very much aspire to be part of British society, not cut off from it (p. 27). No doubt some members of these communities would prefer to have as little as possible to do with the world outside their communities; but when a teacher extends recognition, she does so in light of how the individual construes the meaning of her communal membership, whether that student views it in the ‘integrationist’ or ‘hybridist’ form suggested by Parekh *et al.*, or in a more separatist fashion. Finally, let the reader be reminded that the forms of recognition involved here do not require the placing of positive value on the communities or identities or identities in question. It is here not a matter of saying that it is good to be Bangladeshi, or that Bangladeshi culture is of positive value. It is rather simply the recognition of existence in the sense described by Susan Wolf and Terence McLaughlin — that Bangladeshis are a significant ethno-cultural group, in the national society.
19. Taylor, 1994, pp. 52–53. Taylor notes that the Quebec government had originally passed an even stronger version of the last provision — forbidding all commercial signs to be in a language other than French — but this provision was struck down by the Canadian Supreme Court.
20. ‘Very few Quebec independentists, for instance, can accept that what is mainly winning them their fight is a lack of recognition on the part of English Canada’ (p. 64).
21. I understand from the Parekh Report that the concept of ‘citizenship’ that has proved so powerful in the USA to articulate ideals of racial and ethnic equality does not carry this power and resonance in the UK (p. 54).
22. The ideal of ‘equality’ here does not mean, of course, that students are to be regarded as equal in ability in school subjects. It does mean, however, that it should be regarded as equally important for each to live up to his or her potential in those subjects.
23. This paper was originally presented to the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, and I am grateful to probing questions from that audience, and especially to my commentator, Patricia White. Subsequent exchanges with Patricia White and with Nigel Blake also raised important issues, some of which I have attempted to address herein, while others I must reluctantly leave for another time.

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