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A Study of the Understanding of Our Multicultural World
as Constructed by Students in a Private Christian School

by

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Abstract

This study looks at the world and life views in relation to cultural "others", religious "others" and economic "others" being constructed by grade six students in an independent Christian school. Because the students are symbol users, the perspective of symbolic interaction is used to study their interpretations of literature selections focusing on "others". Responses to cultural "others" seem based on subjective "I" stances. Although religious "otherness" poses a barrier to relations of "friendship", it does not pose a barrier to caring attitudes towards religious "others". The students express a capitalistic world and life view that allows them to view poverty as the problem of economic "others" and teachers as dispensers of knowledge capital. When confronted with the relationship between our wealth and "their" poverty, the students react defensively preferring to restrict their education to a more entertaining format and factual details.

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Dedication

This work is first of all dedicated to my husband, Peter Nicolai, who in fulfilling his marriage vow to help me to develop my gifts has single-handedly comprised the complete trumpet section of my fan club.

And this work is also dedicated to the many faithful supporters of and workers in Christian education. I pray that this study may help us to serve God to the best of our abilities in the work we are doing.

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Chapter One

Interpretations Are Important!

Cry Freedom! What an apt title for a film about the life of Steve Biko, a black social activist who died in the prisons of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Cry Freedom! In the sense of town crier, let everyone know the path to take towards freedom. Cry Freedom! In the sense of sorrow, be willing to shed tears on the road to freedom. Cry Freedom! In the sense of emancipation, let all people know that they were created equal.

I am not sure if Biko ever heard of symbolic interaction but certainly his concept of black consciousness as a non-violent weapon in the fight for freedom for blacks living under apartheid in South Africa is based on its principles. His message to black South Africans was that they should learn to reject the whites' definition of "blackness" as "inferior humanity". Because both whites and blacks accepted such an interpretation, it was possible for the whites to push the blacks into homelands, to restrict them to menial jobs and to control the education of young blacks in such a way that young blacks would be presented only with symbols from a world and life view based on the white definition of blackness.

Steve Biko preached that the way out of this oppression was to develop "black consciousness". Blacks should learn

the symbols of their own culture and their own history. They should become critically conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses. They should learn to live their lives without any reference to the whites. In this way they could define themselves as fully human and live in equal partnership with whites. If whites could accept this new interpretation of blackness, oppression could be ended by peaceful negotiations between equals.

Unfortunately, the apartheid regime considered Biko's ideas so dangerous that it killed him. However, his ideas, once expressed, could not be killed. They caused the beginning of the end of apartheid.

Theoretical Framework

This illustration points to the importance of interpretations. Interpretations that are communally accepted are the basis on which social structures are built. Such social structures, in turn, have a strong shaping influence on the interpretations that are made by members of the community. Although such social structures have a real existence that is not easily changed by individuals, they are not immutable entities (Foster, Gomm and Hammersley, 1996; Reynolds, 1990). Interpretation of the social structures by members of the community out of which these structures arise, render them constantly emergent (Charon,

1985; Hewitt, 1988; Karp and Yoels, 1979; Perinbanayagam, 1985; Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

Interpretations are also important because they are the basis of human actions (Charon, 1985; Karp and Yoels, 1979; Perinbanyagaman, 1985; Prus, 1996; Wallace and Wolf, 1986). Once more using the example of blacks in South Africa will illustrate this point. As long as both blacks and whites accepted the interpretation of blackness as inferior, black people were marginalized and oppressed. When blacks began to change their interpretations of themselves, they began to reject the marginalization and oppression. This concept is closely related to Freire's critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

Finally, interpretations are important because they are the building blocks used in constructing world and life views. Human beings develop a theory of how the world works as they attach significance to their experience (Smith, 1988). Attaching significance is basically a process of interpretation. Once the interpretations become established as part of a world and life view, they guide future interpretations that will be made.

Making interpretations is possible because we live in a world of ambiguous symbols (Charon, 1985; Wood, 1982). Words are such symbols. Choosing words to describe experience involves making assumptions and value judgements

about that experience (Charon, 1985). These assumptions and value judgments are indications of world and life views.

Not only South Africa but many countries in the world face the challenge of a pluralistic society. Canada with its aboriginal peoples and many immigrants is among these. The basic question that any pluralistic society must face is, "How will diverse groups of human beings relate to each other as they participate in a common community?" In the era of apartheid, the suggested answer in South Africa was to keep the diverse groups separate and unequal. The suggested answer in Canada has been to have diverse groups live together as equals in a multicultural society.

Another question that any pluralistic society must face is, "What is the best way to nurture children who will live with social issues arising out of diversity?" In the sense of practice makes perfect, do children need to experience dealing with diversity in a public setting in order to develop into multicultural citizens? Or is it more important that children are nurtured into a set of clearly defined positive values so that they develop self-esteem and live out their commitment to those values as good multicultural citizens? (Porter, 1984; Jackson, 1992; Leicester, 1992; McLaughlin, 1992; National Indian Brotherhood, 1984; Pring, 1992; Sweet, 1996). Each option has its proponents.

In Canada, each group of proponents has developed its own system of education. On the one hand are public institutions of education which stress the need of children to experience living with diversity. On the other hand are the private institutions of education which stress the need of children to be nurtured into clearly defined values. The line of demarcation is a matter of stress rather than mutual exclusivity. Public institutions do nurture children into values and children in private institutions of education do also experience diversity.

Purpose of the Study

Little has been done to study how the world and life view of children in either tradition is actually developing. Yet, as was pointed out previously, such world and life views influence how children make their interpretations that are the basis for their action in the world. Since as a student, as a parent and as a teacher my educational experience has stressed the second option, this study looks at children in the second tradition.

The focus of this study, therefore, is the world and life views of a group of students working in a particular private Christian school setting. Within the walls of this school, the students experience a homogeneous social setting and a strong emphasis on nurturing into a specific value system but beyond those walls, they live in a multicultural

context which requires them to respond to "otherness". To attempt to present a complete world and life view held by each student would be too massive a project. Therefore, since this study is focused on issues of diversity, only those parts of the students' world and life views that pertain to interpretation of "otherness" will be presented. Cultural, religious and economic differences are highlighted.

The sole aim of this study is not to verify expected views, but to present an emergent picture of student world and life views. Assessment of present social attitudes or formulation of a social theory regarding Christian education are beyond its purview. I hope to present my research in such a way that others may recognize their own students in parts of this classroom and by analogy use some of the understandings that may be uncovered (Van Manen, 1990).

Method

Interpretations of "otherness" arise out of world and life views. This study follows this process in reverse. By studying interpretations made by the students, some insight about their world and life views can be gained. A series of three questions are used. First, "How do students in this particular Christian school interpret 'otherness'?" Second, "What stances towards "otherness" are indicated by the student responses?" Finally, "What do the

interpretations and stances indicate about student world and life views?"

It is possible to view the interpretations that students are making by watching their interaction with the symbols that they meet. Because language is a system of word symbols, the literature component of the Language Arts program was chosen as the vehicle for studying the interpretations the students were making. Student responses to stories about "others" were recorded and analyzed. In this way a picture of their interpretations emerged.

Limitations

Literature selections allowing the students a vicarious experience of cultural "others", religious "others" and economic "others" were chosen from the current curriculum. Forms of "otherness" such as differing abilities or sexual orientations are not included. A modified version of reader response was used to accommodate the current teaching style.

Time factors also presented constraints. My role as guest teacher precluded conducting personal interviews during the literature classes. Also to conduct such interviews during other classes proved to be too disruptive. Social Studies might have been a fruitful area to explore but the study was limited to the literature component of the Language Arts program. Although some of the recorded class

discussions included stories from experiences in the wider social contexts, these could not be viewed directly.

The most serious of these time constraints was the lack of personal interviews. Therefore, student response journals were used as a substitute. Teacher responses to student writing focused on individual understandings and asked for further clarifications. Students wrote responses to these teacher responses during class time. Some advantages of using this method were that students did not feel singled out and all students were "interviewed" consistently.

Limitations do affect the clarity and breadth of the picture that could be presented. Perhaps this study should be considered a glimpse rather than a full view. However, even a glimpse is significant as a first attempt to look in a different direction.

Significance

Grant and Tate (1995) distinguish between research on multicultural education and multicultural educational research. In the first stance the researcher takes a position of being outside looking in and tries to engage in objective value-free research which results in social theories to guide decision making. In the second stance there is an emphasis on the researcher acting

multiculturally in the sense of trying to gain a critical comprehensive multivocal understanding of student experience in order to improve that experience and to promote justice.

Multivocal suggests that many voices are heard. However, if all voices start from the same world and life view, the result is a choir that sings in unison as only one voice. Multivocal, therefore, also implies that authentic voices from many different perspectives should be heard.

This study provides an opportunity for the reader to take Grant and Tate's second stance in considering educational issues. Because my twenty years of teaching experience as a Christian school teacher qualify me as an "insider" in Christian education, I am able to contribute an authentic voice from a different perspective to the chorus of voices that are addressing multicultural education thus increasing the multivocality of that chorus.

This study offers an opportunity to view students growing up in a largely monocultural setting. They live in a white middle class community. Their families, school and church all exist within the boundaries of the same faith community. Of interest is the question of how such students interpret "otherness".

Overview

Chapter One, Interpretations Are Important, indicates the purpose and general outline of the study. Chapter Two,

Interpretations Pertinent to the Study, sets the stage by presenting interpretations of important terms that are used throughout the study. Chapter Three, Methodology, presents both the mode and the technique of the methodology.

The main body of the study consists of three sections. The first section in Chapter Four, The Photo Album, presents a direct view of the students at work. Each of the fifteen "snapshots" includes direct quotes of student responses focusing on interpretations or stances.

The second section in Chapter Five, Studying the Photographs, is an attempt to deduce something about the world and life views that guided the interpretations of "others" and stances that were seen in the "snapshots". During this process several themes seemed to develop.

The third section in Chapter Six, Thinking About What Was Seen, sets some of the themes that arose out of the study of the "snapshots" into a broader educational context. This section raises some questions that Christian educators may want to ask themselves and questions that members of the broader educational community may need to ask themselves.

Chapter 7, Conclusion, sets the "findings" of this study into a general social context including the expressed aim of Christian education and its role in society.

Because my research depends on my interpretation of student interpretations, it is important for the reader to understand clearly my personal world and life view which

guides my interpretations. A statement of my world and life view is provided in the appendix.

Chapter Two

Interpretations of Pertinent Terms

Because the issue that this study addresses lies at the juncture of multicultural education and private Christian education, an emphasis on both of these areas will be included in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the reader in terms of understanding my interpretation of commonly used terms and in terms of establishing how the research in this study is related to other research in the fields of multicultural education and Christian education. These two goals guided the selection of authors to be included here. Other authors are mentioned throughout the study as their ideas became pertinent to the discussion.

Multicultural Education

Recent Historic Interpretations

In Britain, multicultural education has been framed as anti-racist education addressing relationships between more recently arrived immigrants and the indigenous population (Leicester and Taylor, 1992). Short and Carrington (1990) quote both the 1985 Swann Report which suggests that if the indigenous population is made to understand the "exotic"

groups, then racism will be overcome, and Troyna who suggests that such a stress on the "exotic" may also breed resentment because it highlights differences. Their own research supports Troyna's fears. Modood's (1992) suggestion, therefore, is that there is a need to recognize an individual's cultural identity to support self-esteem but also a need to define a commonality of what it means to be British. He wants to emulate the model of hyphenated Americans.

In the United States the term "multicultural" arose rather directly out of the civil rights movement in which marginalized social groups of all kinds demanded the right to express their own voice (Banks, 1989). As a result of these roots, the American voices calling for multicultural education have seemed much more insistent on structural transformation of schools as part of the multicultural process. Banks as well as Grant and Sleeter calls for "total school reform designed to increase educational equity for a range of cultural, ethnic and economic groups" (Banks and Banks, 1989:6; Grant and Sleeter, 1989). Hernandez (1989) calls for educational innovation and school reform that takes into account socio-cultural factors. King (1994) calls for careful consideration of all planned reforms to see that they are not adaptive in nature.

More recently American voices in multicultural education are even more closely aligned with the roots of

the civil rights movement. They have begun to stress the need of transformation of not only American schools but also of American society. Sleeter, (1996) called for "whites" to become aware of their ways of oppression. McLaren (1995) has suggested that the "mainstream" should learn to see themselves as one voice among many. They have suggested that the role of multicultural education is to promote a critical awareness of American society in all students both marginalized and mainstream. The assumption that is made is that such critical awareness will lead to justice.

In Canada, an official multicultural policy was adopted in 1971 as a way to defuse the bipolar French/English cultural division (Magsino, 1989). This policy stated that the government of Canada would assist all cultural groups according to available resources, provide assistance in overcoming cultural barriers, promote creative interchange between cultural groups and assist immigrants to learn one of the official languages of Canada (Moodley, 1995). One outcome of this policy is that schools in Canada find themselves mandated to promote cultural diversity and social cohesion at one and the same time (Mallea and Young, 1984).

The Canadian understanding of multiculturalism seems to be that minority cultural groups should have freedom of expression in the private sphere of life and that there should be equality of opportunity in the public sphere of life. This equality in the public sphere is predicated on

standardized acceptance of the existing Anglo model for that public life. Multicultural education in this setting tends to be education that promotes tolerance towards, but not opportunities for, minority cultural groups (Dossa, 1989).

Moodley (1995) reports that a recent survey indicated that there is a resistance to moving beyond the comfort zone of celebrating culture and ethnicity in Canada. Attempts at anti-racist education to promote tolerance more directly have suffered from the attitudes of teachers who are implementing it. She quotes Coombs who suggests that students need to acquire a view of justice in individual actions towards others as well as in institutional actions.

Interpretations Underlying This Study

Fair and just relationships among human beings is the goal of many types of education described by a variety of adjectives such as peace education, global education, development education, anti-racist education, democratic citizenship education and, of course, multicultural education (Lynch, 1989). In order to bracket the interpretation of multicultural education underlying this study, it is necessary first of all by way of contrast to briefly identify the interpretations of its cognates. Peace education wants to address the causes of conflict whether they are inter-cultural or intra-cultural (Fien, 1992). Global and development education place an emphasis on the interconnectedness of all life on earth (Pike and Selby,

1988). Anti-racist education deals with issues of relative power and discrimination. Democratic citizenship education is designed to encourage students to be active promoters of freedom, equality and the rights of others using political channels (Osborn, 1991).

In my view, what distinguishes multicultural education from all these cognates is its focus on understanding. The aim of multicultural education is to help students to become critically aware of their own culture as well as "other" cultures. Being critically aware involves an ability to interpret a culture. Such an ability to interpret or understand should enable open channels of communication to exist between cultures. Since interpretations of "others" are the basis of action towards "others", issues of just relationships among differing groups of human beings are not entirely beyond the purview of multicultural education. However, the emphasis in multicultural education remains on the interpretations that are being made.

In order to understand what it is that is being interpreted, the term "culture" needs to be examined more closely. Bullivant (1989) points out that the definition of culture that is accepted by an educator will determine the design of the multicultural education that is provided. If culture is only explicit behaviors and artifacts, then it makes sense to view multicultural education as a sharing of foods and festivals. Success or failure of multiculturalism

then depends largely on personality factors such as shyness or gregariousness. However, if culture also includes implicit values, beliefs and attitudes then multicultural education becomes a much more difficult issue. In this case differences will be much more intractable (Halstead, 1992). Once again, our interpretations make a difference.

Culture is the type of term for which we have an intuitive interpretation, but when we try to articulate that interpretation, the process becomes almost unmanageable. Choosing among several popular uses of the word culture, Bullivant (1989) prefers to define culture as the knowledge, ideas, and skills that enable a group to survive in an environment. Bennett (1990) reports that Spradley and McCurdy define culture as "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and to generate social behavior." She also reports that Goodenough adds the distinction that culture is learned behavior and that culture also includes the concept of knowing what is acceptable to the group. Bennett points out that Levin adds the concept of shared communication. Also according to Bennett, Triandis points to the subjective nature of culture in that it determines how the group will view the world and others and also includes artifacts in the definition of culture. Bennett herself defines culture as "a recipe for producing behavior, artifacts, and interpretations of one's reality". Citing a number of sources, Hernandez (1989)

agrees with Bennett on many points but she adds the concept that culture gives meaning to the lives of people. Every culture has its own coherent and integral system of values, attitudes, beliefs and norms that give significance to a person's identity. She distinguishes between this implicit or covert element of culture and the explicit or overt elements such as styles of dress and speech.

These differing interpretations of the term "culture" include elements of four related concepts: "culture", "beliefs or religion", "values" and "world and life view". Lack of clarity in defining these terms will result in lack of clarity in an understanding of this study. Therefore, each of these concepts also needs to be identified in order to locate more exactly my own understanding of the term "culture".

According to Foster, Gomm and Hammersley (1996), all people are decisionist because everyone makes "a leap of faith" accepting by an act of will the basic assumptions of life. It is the nature of such assumptions that they can never be proven rationally but are revelatory in nature. For example, everyone makes an assumption about the existence or non-existence of a god. If the existence of a god is accepted, then further assumptions about the nature of such a god are made. "Belief" or "religion" refers to this basic leap of faith that is made. In this sense all people are religious.

Values are motives that guide our lives. Some motives such as love and care tend to encourage beneficial relationships to others and the environment while other motives such as pride and greed may lead to detrimental relationships. Values may be given explicit expression or may function implicitly in our lived experience. Individuals within differing religious communities may hold identical values.

However, membership in a community of faith does affect how the ontological nature of values are viewed. If one accepts the existence of a god, then the determination of which values are to be emulated and which values are to be sanctioned is presented by means of revelation usually in the form of sacred writings. If one denies the existence of gods, then such determinations must be made solely on the basis of human thought.

Culture consists of the lived out expressions of our values. Since all revelation must be received by humans in a process of interpretation, no one is able to achieve the ultimate final understanding of revealed truth. Therefore, all cultural expressions, both by those who accept the existence of a god and those who do not, are constructed in nature. It is possible that a particular value may lead to a variety of cultural expressions (Lee, 1991).

Misunderstandings between communities may be the result of two possible causes. The first is that sometimes

cultural expressions of a value are viewed as revelation. The second is a misunderstanding about the nature of revelation itself. That which one accepts as revelation is not open to discussion or reformulation. Others who do not accept the existence of revelation may view those who do as close-minded and intransigent (Halstead, 1992).

Finally, "world and life view" is a set of significances we assign to the things that we perceive in our environment. It consists of what is taken for granted about attributes of various objects, events and human nature. It is the order of things remembered and expected as well as what is actually perceived. It is the matrix through which one views the environment and provides the premise for action in that environment (Charon, 1985).

In lived experience these concepts should be thought of as a set of three-dimensional Venn diagrams. A particular value may be held in common by people of many different faiths. One culture that may include several religious groupings may arise out of the common values. Because cultures are constructed, different people may build different cultures on the same leap of faith and accepted values. One element of a physical environment may be viewed differently by the holders of different world and life views. In reality these concepts are intermeshed.

The Relationship of This Study to Other Multicultural Research

In the area of multicultural research there is a lack of focus on the experience of the student (Sleeter, 1996). Grant and Tate (1995) suggest that most research attention is given to curriculum material used in schools. They call for more studies on how multicultural content and instructional practice affect students' school experience. Banks (1994) calls for teachers to adjust their curriculum and methodology. Later, in his heuristic description of five dimensions of multicultural education which he suggests could be used to guide the implementation and assessment of programs, he focuses on the knowledge presented, methodology and school structure (Banks, 1996). The experience of the student seems to be omitted.

Some studies do include a focus on aspects of student school experience. May's (1994) critical ethnography of the Richmond Road School in New Zealand does include interviews with students but it focuses on student reaction to the teaching methods used in the school. Mehan, Okamoto, Lintz and Wills (1995) report on ethnographic studies which focus on teacher and student discourse styles. Nieto (1995) reports on a study by Walsh and a study by Torres-Guzman that focus on how students learn but not on what students learn. Lomawaima (1995) includes a study by Deyle that focused on the reasons that students leave school. Grant and Sleeter (1994) did a longitudinal study of junior high students from 1986 to 1991 but they focused on how students

viewed their place in society. Not one of the studies focused on student interpretations of "others" that would guide their actions towards "others". Therefore, even a glimpse of such interpretations might be helpful.

Christian Education

Recent Discussions of Private Religiously Based Education

In recent years, the role of private religiously based schools in multicultural societies has been discussed in Canada, Britain and the United States. In Canada, Sweet (1996) in raising the issue of separate and private schools has suggested that the inheritance of separate and public school systems arising out of the compromise between English and French cultures, provides a poor model for the future because it is a recipe for accentuating differences rather than building bridges and understanding. Hiemstra (1994) has pointed out that although the Shapiro Commission in Alberta suggested that homogeneity fosters thinking of others as outsiders which is an invitation to prejudice and intolerance, there is a lack of empirical evidence that private religiously based education systems increase the risk of the development of prejudice.

In Britain there has been a discussion of the relationship between private religiously based schools and anti-racist education. On the one side of the discussion are those who suggest that children need to be able to

identify clearly with one specific world and life view and on the other hand there are those who feel that children need to live together with "others" holding differing world and life views (Leicester and Taylor, 1992). In both instances the aim is to develop the ability to live peacefully in a multicultural society.

In the United States the role of separate religiously based schools has been highlighted through in-depth studies of particular institutions. Peshkin's 1986 study of Bethany Baptist Academy presented the organization of this Christian school as a total institution whose purpose is to separate its students from the influence of the rest of society. In another study of two American Christian schools, Rose (1988) concluded that although the parents' intention was to protect their children from the influence of secular humanism, the actual effect of the schools was to perpetuate the existing social strata. In a later 1990 study of several other American Christian schools, Wagner (1990) suggested that the culture of these Christian schools indicated that they were far from total institutions but rather a compromise between Christian and secular American culture. In 1991, Christian post-secondary educators looked at the acceptance of ethnic minority students within the context of post-secondary Christian schools. They concluded that although the body of Christians in the world is extremely multi-ethnic, this multi-ethnicity has not been reflected by

Christian colleges generally (Lee, 1991). All of these studies have discussed the main issue of concern in this study.

Interpretations Underlying This Study

Within the Christian school movement itself there have been several strands of thinking about the purpose of establishing Christian schools. The purpose of fundamentalist Christian education is to protect children from "secular humanism". The emphasis is on being against something rather than articulating being for something. Parochial Christian schools are Christian schools under the control of a church. The emphasis of such schools is the passing down of specific interpretations of the Bible as sanctioned by the controlling church to its younger members (Beverluis, 1982). Both of these types of Christian schools have as part of their purpose the building of walls around the minds and lives of young people.

There is also a group of Christian schools which belong to the organization of Christian Schools International. These schools are operated by societies of parents. The desired emphasis in these schools is to help students develop a Christian world and life view to prepare them to serve the God of the Bible in whatever they chose to do (Beverluis, 1982). Especially in Canada, such schools have made some attempts to help students to become critically aware of the culture that surrounds them and to help them to

develop a Christian world and life view which could be an alternative to the world and life view of the dominant culture (Van Brummelen, 1986). This is the type of school in which this study took place.

Although these schools have made some attempt to be critically aware of their cultures, there is much room for improvement. In spite of the fact that the body of Christians in the world is probably one of the most culturally diverse groupings, many of these Christian schools have been very white Eurocentric institutions (Wolterstorff, 1991). In my own twenty year experience of teaching in this type of school, I have noted that many of the supporters and staff of these schools often accept uncritically as a standard of normalcy a capitalistic way of life. Attempts to articulate a Christian world and life view have not always been successful or strongly encouraged (Van Brummelen, 1986). It is time to take a closer look at what we are accomplishing.

The Relationship of This Study to Other Research in Christian Education

The studies of Christian education which have been done in the last decade have generally not focused on the students as they form their world and life view. Peshkin (1986) focused on the organization of the school. Rose (1988) focused on the curriculum of the school. Wagner's

(1990) ethnographic study focused on the culture of the school. In a recent book on ethnic minorities in evangelical Christian colleges, the contributors focused on curriculum, faculty and philosophy (Lee, 1991). The series of articles in the Toronto Star by Sweet addressed the question of religious education from the point of view of how Canadian society organizes the schooling of its children (Sweet, 1996). The Spring, 1996 issue of the Journal of Research in Christian Education lists the titles of approximately 400 studies carried out in the last five years. The titles indicate that only approximately ten are focused directly on the student. A later review of the Spring 1998 issue revealed that the trend had not changed. Also the work done by the alliance of Christian schools in which I have my experience has focused on curriculum material and teaching methods. Again there seems to be a lack of exploring how students respond to our work.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In discussing the methodology of researching lived experience, Van Manen (1990) identifies two aspects of methodology that need to be considered. The first he calls the mode of the methodology. This aspect includes the theory of what the world is like that is implied by the choice of methodology. The second he calls the technique of methodology. This aspect includes practical procedures which will be followed. The mode of the methodology will provide the rationale for the techniques of methodology that are used in this study.

Mode of the Methodology

This research uses the medium of a literature class consisting of students who are by nature users of symbols. Therefore, both reading theory and symbolic interaction theory are part of the mode of the methodology of this study. Because, in my view, there is some overlap of concepts in these two areas, they will be intertwined in this discussion.

The Nature of Being Human

Authors who write from a symbolic interactionist perspective often describe an individual human person as a self capable of adopting two alternative stances, the "I"

stance and the "me" stance, towards the world (Perinbanyanagam, 1985). While in the "I" stance the self acts and initiates idiosyncratically, spontaneously, capriciously and impulsively. In this stance the self is wilful subject beyond the purview of social mores. While in the "me" stance the self makes indications to itself about the surrounding social reality and shapes itself as emergent object to conform to that social reality (Karp and Yoels, 1979; Wood, 1982; Charon, 1985; Perinbanayagam, 1985; Hewitt, 1988). The human self, therefore, is a critically conscious, active, never completely socialized, emergent agent (Charon, 1985; Shor and Freire, 1987).

The fact that human beings are critically conscious and active underlies the human ability to be active conscious interpreters of their experience. Rosenthal and Zimmerman (1978) state that abstraction or thinking about experience is something more than combining discrete stimulus/response associations. Instead, as Smith (1988) suggests,

What we have in our heads is a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understandings of the world, the root of all learning, the source of hopes and fears, motives and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. And this theory is all we have. If we can make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions with the world in the light of our theory. This theory is our shield against bewilderment.

The fact that a human being is an agent, implies the existence of a goal to achieve and the ability to actively pursue that goal. This goal is a "program" of motives and

ways of defining oneself that are integrated into ongoing interactions, relationships and patterns of activities that give a person's life a semblance of order and purpose (Perinbayanagam, 1985). This program influences the process of interpretation.

Human beings also have a drive to communicate. The earliest experience of an external environment is a young child's first sense of reciprocity which a primary care giver instills in a child (Applebee, 1978). This is the child's first experience of an Iserian gap which induces the drive to communicate (Iser, 1974). Although the earliest attempts at communication take place directly with another human, much later that same drive to communicate applies to communicating with others via text.

Such communication via text involves the use of symbols. Not only are human beings active interpreters of their experience, they are also active interpreters of symbols used to describe that experience. Human beings are symbol users.

The Nature of Symbols

Symbols are complex entities and should not be confused with signs. Signs, or pointers, have a one to one relationship between signifier and signified (Wood, 1982). They limit us to stimulus/response relationships with our environment (Charon, 1985; Hewitt, 1988). They can only be received (Karp and Yoels, 1979). Symbols, on the other

hand, are ambiguous allowing for creativity and agency in their interpretation. They help us to give significance to the objective reality that surrounds us (Karp and Yoels, 1979). Symbols also give us the ability to transcend space and time and our own person (Charon, 1985).

The source of symbolic meanings lies neither in the person using the symbol nor in the symbol itself but in the interaction between them as expressed in social relationships (Woods, 1982). This interactive process begins with the use of a symbol as a sign. For example, a child first learns to associate the word symbol, "chair", with a specific object because the caregiver points to a particular piece of furniture and says, "Chair." As more and more experience of the word symbol, "chair", is added, the child begins to abstract essential characteristics from similar objects and to form concepts of "chairness" (Vygotsky, 1978) through a process of ontic dumping (Feldman, 1987). The word symbol, "chair", now has a referent concept which is ambiguous.

But symbols are not totally ambiguous. Both the word "symbol" and the material from which the referent concept is built are derived from a shared cultural environment. Through repeated use of a word symbol, each member of the cultural community forms a shared concept of that ambiguous symbol creating an interpretive community (Fish, 1980). Using the example of "chair" once more, each member may have

an idiosyncratic actualization of a chair but any chair should have the function of "chairness" agreed upon by the community. In this way word symbols are a repository of objects that have proved important in the communal life of the members of a particular cultural community that produced the symbols (Hewitt, 1988).

Since each cultural community produces its own distinct set of symbols with a range of significances, it is not an easy task to cross the boundaries of communities. For example, within a given community the concept of "chairness" may be quite stable but to ancient Romans who usually stood or reclined the word "chair" might have been unintelligible. Fish (1980) points out that unless we accept that meanings are determinate [or at least semi-determinate] only within interpretive communities, we would have to assume that any disagreement must be due to "waywardness, original sin or theological error". To deny the plurality of interpretive communities would be equivalent to bigotry. Any culture needs to recognize itself as one voice among many.

Because the source of their significance lies in the process of assigning meanings, cultural symbols are emergent. A person generally assigns meaning to a symbol from within a range of meanings that are part of the experience of the person (Wood, 1982). However, as experience broadens, the significance of a symbol may change (Karp and Yoels, 1979; Wallace and Wolf, 1986). It is also

possible to create new significances through the use of metaphors (Hewitt, 1988). At times individuals may even chose to redefine a symbol in a process of deconstruction.

Karp and Yoels (1979) tell the story of a Russian prisoner who was sent to Siberia. There he decided not to view Siberia as a prison but as a vacation resort. His captors were very frustrated but he was a happy and "free" man.

Although symbols are malleable, they are not created anew by each human agent using the symbol as in the case of the Russian prisoner. There is a limit to the amount of deconstruction that is possible (Perinbanayanagam, 1985). Shared symbols are the basis of communication and shared culture (Charon, 1985). For communication to take place a sender must use symbols that a receiver will understand and the receiver must be willing to adopt the perspective of the sender (Prus, 1996). Individuals must orient towards each other and be able to interpret each other's acts and intents (Hewitt, 1988). Such an orientation requires a personal commitment to the existence of communal interpretations and a willingness to use them.

The Nature of the Relationship Between Culture and the Individual

The theories of the world in the minds of human interpreters are shaped by the range of symbols that are available for use. A whirlwind of stimuli originating in an

objective reality surrounds the human agent who is unable to process all of them to achieve an absolute grasp on this reality (Charon, 1985). The stimuli that are not fleeting but become constructed into idiosyncratic theories are those for which cultural symbols are known (Charon, 1985; Hewitt, 1988; Prus, 1996). In this way the available symbols for use within a culture also limit what may be expressed (Perinbanayagam, 1985). The culture into which a person is socialized, therefore, directs focus and tends to determine what can be seen (Charon, 1985). In these ways culture shapes the emergent human agent.

Yet at the same time the human agent shapes the culture by giving meaning to its symbols. Human culture is not a series of deterministic cause and effect relationships which manipulate human beings as though they were objects producing clones with machine-like precision (Charon, 1985; Perinbanayanagam, 1985; Prus, 1996). Instead individual acts of interpretation produce a reciprocal process of shaping and being shaped (Charon, 1985; Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

The Nature of Interpretation

Since symbols are social objects that represent rather than point, interpretation involves a process of determining what it is that is being represented by a symbol. Given the ambiguous nature of symbols, no one to one relationship between a symbol and what is being represented can be

assumed (Berthoff, 1991). The schema found within the mind of an interpreter holds a range of possible significances for a symbol (Hirsch, 1976). In essence interpretation occurs when an interpreter brackets a chosen connection between a symbol and what that symbol represents in a diadic process.

However, interpretation is more than a diadic matching game. The cultural context which surrounds the process of interpretation makes interpretation a triadic rather than diadic process (Berthoff, 1991). Each interpreter is shaped by his or her cultural context (Gadamer, 1995) because the range of possible connections between a symbol and what it represents is provided by that cultural context (Prus, 1996). Although such a cultural context is a constructed entity shaped by human interpreters, once established it becomes an objective entity that is not easily changed or deconstructed (Foster, Gomm and Hammersley, 1996). It is a constant factor in the process of interpretation.

For example, a rounded piece of wood approximately one meter long with a circumference of approximately 20 centimeters at one end and approximately 10 centimeters at the other end and having a knob at the narrower end will have different representations in different cultures. To a pygmy child in Africa it represents war and violence but for the North American children it represents fun and relaxation (Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

Another example will illustrate the fact that the "programs" which guide human agents render interpretation a quadadic process. A tomato could be used to satisfy nutritional needs. It can also be used as a projectile to express anger especially if the tomato is very ripe. It is the "program" of the human interpreter that helps shape the connection made between the tomato and its possible representations (Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

Viewing interpretation as a quadadic process involving symbol, representation, culture and programs still leaves out an important element that also affects the process of interpretation. It should be remembered that the self that is doing the interpreting could take two possible stances towards its environment, the "me" stance and the "I" stance. It is the "I" stance that makes interpretation an idiosyncratic unpredictable process.

Each of these aspects of the interpretation process are intertwined in each act of interpretation. Much of the self-interaction takes place within the mind and must be deduced by an observer from what is expressed overtly. Each aspect cannot be identified clearly or linearly in every act of interpretation.

The Nature of Reading

The act of reading can be construed in three different ways. The first way, decoding, views human beings as intricate wonderfully made machines that are able to

perceive configurations of ink on a surface as words that carry meaning. Gough, Goodman and Rummelhardt are some of the reading researchers who have studied the process of decoding as it is done by the human brain (Samuels and Kamil, 1984; Anderson, 1984). Their work is very helpful, especially at times when a "machine" seems to malfunction.

The second way of construing reading is to view reading as a process of interpretation. Through a process of assigning meaning and significance to word symbols, readers reconstruct a possible world that was encoded in symbols by an author and experience this world vicariously. Some theorists who have described the reading process from this perspective are Rosenblatt (1978), Iser (1974) and Langer (1995) who focus on the "poem", "virtual world" or "envisionment" of reading respectively.

It seems to me that a third way of construing reading is to view reading as a process of reconstructing a possible world and becoming critically conscious of that world. Being critically conscious involves a process of stepping out of the reconstructed possible world and critiquing both the quality of the experience of being in that world and the nature of that world. Adding this final step to the process of reading helps us to use our reading not just as a ludic exercise which in itself has intrinsic value but also as a tool to make us become more critically conscious of our own world.

Langer (1995) describes four stances that a reader could take in the process of reading. They were used in this study because they included the third way of construing reading. The first stance that a reader could take is a stance of being outside the text and considering the text as an object with certain characteristics. In the second stance, the reader enters the text, moves through it and constructs an "envisionment". The third stance is one of stepping back and rethinking by comparing prior knowledge to the new envisionment. The last stance recognized by Langer is a stepping out and objectifying the experience. In this stance the reader's response consists of reflecting on and reacting to the experience of being in the text. Stances are chosen either consciously to suit the reader's purpose or unconsciously. When they are chosen consciously, then the reader is purposefully in control of the reading.

The Nature of Education

In my view, it is the task of education to help students become critically aware of their world by bringing unconscious assumptions to conscious awareness. As long as a status quo remains unconsciously accepted as a "normal" theory of the world, it can not be questioned or critiqued. This precludes the possibility of ever constructing a better world.

Education, therefore, is more than training for citizenship in an existing world. Students will need to

learn skills, of course. They cannot be expected to critique a possible world if they cannot decode the ink configurations and interpret the symbols. However, the real task of education is to move beyond training.

The Nature of Teaching Literature

Two main criteria guided my teaching practice in the literature class. The first was that as much as possible the teacher should facilitate a direct interaction between the students and the text. In order to view student interpretations of "otherness" more clearly, it was important to avoid having the students focus on my interpretation of the text rather than on the text itself.

The second criterion was that the students should be active in making their own interpretations. Multicultural scholars who advocate a critical social reconstructionist stance, suggest that students need to be active learners in order for them to become critical thinkers about their society (Gay, 1995b; Grant and Gomez, 1996; hooks, 1993). When the process of teaching literature is approached from an envisionment building perspective on reading, reading lessons will tend to focus on the interpretations that the students are actively making (Langer, 1996). This is the focus that is needed for this study if its readers are to get a glimpse of the interpretations of "others" that the students are constructing.

The interpretations that the students make do matter. The words that they use reveal the assumptions and value judgements they are making (Charon, 1985). Changes in social structures such as working towards a more just society begin with individuals interpreting their social milieu and acting in it (Wallace and Wolf, 1988).

Setting

This study took place in a parentally controlled independent Christian school. The school belongs to an alliance of Christian schools which are guided by the following vision statement.

"The purpose of the Christian day school is to help each student to grow into an independent person who serves God according to His Word and is able and willing to employ every talent to the honour of God and for the well-being of all fellow creatures, in every area of life."

It should be carefully noted that the school is not a parochial school because it is not operated under the auspices of a specific denomination. Instead a school society of contributing members, some of whom may not even have children attending the school, elect a board which oversees the operation of the school. The board is accountable to the society which meets a minimum of twice in a school year.

The board appoints an Education Committee consisting of the principal and vice-principal of the elementary school, the principal and vice-principal of the high school, two

board representatives and six members of the society at large. This committee is a standing committee of the board and has as its primary responsibility the task of advising the board with respect to the professional quality and religious direction of the school's faculty and program as well as student behavior. This committee discusses issues of curriculum direction, makes informal classroom visits, interviews prospective teachers, makes decisions about inclusion or exclusion of curriculum materials and about student affairs.

The majority of parents who send their children to this school adhere to a protestant Christian faith in a Calvinistic tradition. Within this scope, however, there is a variety of denominations. The school, therefore, has a population that is homogeneous in its faith commitment but not necessarily in its daily living out of that commitment.

The school includes about 175 students ranging from kindergarten to grade seven in eight classrooms. Curriculum materials used in the school come from a variety of sources. Some such as reading anthologies and math textbooks are recommended by the ministry of education. Others such as social studies and science units are published by the Alliance of Christian Schools. Still others such as the Bible curriculum and some history resources are published by Christian Schools International. The material from these last two sources is written from the perspective of an

expressly Christian world and life view. Class sets of novels and library books are generally trade books.

The vision statement of this particular school states expressly that the goal is to consciously nurture these students into a Christian world and life view. An official policy statement suggests that in an age appropriate way, students should view "others" from a clearly christian perspective. The practical application of this policy in the curriculum that these students experience is inconsistent. In one particular instance "age appropriate" was interpreted to mean that students below high school age should not view Christians with slightly different perspectives on sexual morality than those of the Christians who belong to the supporting community of this school causing the removal of a novel from the curriculum. Yet at the same time stories about "others" who clearly have a non-Christian world and life view such as Sadako and Mr. Benson are part of the curriculum because they represent "otherness" only in terms of the "exotic".

Within the school there is a strong ethos of caring. The older students participate in a Peace Maker program that provides skills for them to help prevent problems on the playground. Regular public recognition of students who have received service awards is made in the weekly school bulletins. Their birthdays are recognized by the principal. Students prepare gift packages for needy children at

Christmas time and they support a sponsor child. Students, therefore, interpret "loving your neighbor", as being nice and helping those in need.

The staff of this particular Christian school is very much committed to encouraging students to become avid readers. All the students and staff participate in an Accelerated Reader program. Books are assigned points on the basis of length and level of difficulty. Students earn the point value of a book by reading the book and taking a computer test of comprehension. Points become currency to buy prizes such as posters, pens, etc.

The program seems to be very successful in encouraging habits of reading in students. Whenever I was working as a volunteer in the library, I always saw students coming in to choose new books for their silent reading time in class. Part of my volunteer time was spent with grade two students who wanted to finish their books. I was aware that students often took the computer tests. In an impromptu discussion which I witnessed in the staff room, teachers expressed the feeling that students had become such avid readers that their points were no longer very significant for them.

I have the impression that the Accelerated Reading program emphasizes reading as a process of decoding. No response other than a computer test of comprehension is required. I saw no evidence of students building idiosyncratic responses to their reading nor of students

critiquing the virtual world they had experienced in their reading.

Literature was taught four times a week for 35 minutes. The students were accustomed to clear specific directions laid out by their teacher. Although they did group assignments and there was a warm open atmosphere, the typical lesson would be based on a teacher presentation followed by individually completed assignments.

Participants

Ten boys and ten girls aged ten or eleven participated in the study. Academically they were a fairly homogeneous group having good skills. Socially they formed a generally cohesive group. Because of these factors, they had a reputation of being a "nice" class that was pleasant to teach.

The Researcher

During the collection of data, I functioned as participant observer because I taught the literature class for these students for almost a full year. Within a fourfold typology of possible researcher roles, Atkinson and Hammersley (1983) identify two possible variations of participant observer. The researcher could be an observer as participant or a participant as observer. My role in this research could actually be identified as including both

variations. Within this particular classroom I would be classified as an observer acting as a participant because of my role as "guest teacher" for the literature class. Yet in terms of the larger research question which addresses christian education in general, not just this particular class, I would be classified as a participant who also observes.

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) go on to identify other dimensions of variation that also need to be clarified. They suggest that it is important to know whether the researcher is known to be a researcher by all those being studied, or only by some, or by none as well as knowing how much is known by those "in the know". Since observed people may feel "on display" this seems like a valid comment. In the case of this research, all of the students were aware of the fact that I was collecting all of their literature work for analysis but they were not aware of exactly which question I was addressing in my research. The classroom teacher was aware of my research as well as its theme.

Another dimension of variation in the role of participant observer that is identified by Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) refers to the exact roles that are played or not played by the participant observer. In this research project it is important to note that although I planned all the lessons independently, I was restricted to using material that is presently in the curriculum. Therefore, I

was able to slant the emphasis in the assignments towards attitudes to otherness but I was not entirely free to chose material that I thought would be most provocative. However, since this is a vignette of a class in a Christian school in its normal operation, I felt that this was an acceptable restriction.

It should also be noted that although I played the role of teacher as facilitator, I did not play the role of teacher as evaluator. This was a definite advantage for this research. The students were more free to express their ideas rather than search for a "right" answer for a good mark.

One final dimension of variation in the role of participant observer should be mentioned. Clarification is needed in the orientation of the researcher as insider or outsider (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). I am definitely oriented as an insider in this type of Christian education in general. However, each individual school has its idiosyncratic version of typical Christian school culture. It should be pointed out that in this particular Christian school, I was an outsider.

Length of the Study

Woods (1993) suggests that successful inquiry using symbolic interaction requires that the researcher have the ability to establish good relationships with the

participants. I was able to teach literature to these students from December of their grade five year to the beginning of October in their grade six year. All of the data except the data related to the story of Sadako were collected during my last month of teaching these students. By this time the students and I had established a good relationship.

Techniques of the Methodology

Since description is the focus of this study, the first step in narrowing the choice of methodology was to choose qualitative inquiry over quantitative inquiry. Hammersley (1990) suggests that researchers need to realize that quantitative research is in essence linking abstract concepts to particular data. He points out that qualitative researchers as soon as they choose any adjective are following a similar process. In both kinds of research objective reality is linked to abstract concepts.

However, an essential difference between the two is the matter of starting point. A quantitative researcher begins by conceptualizing a theory and a measurement instrument and then proceeds to fit lived experience into the established categories. As such, the quantitative researcher of necessity adopts the role of assessor in order to decide which category to apply to a particular incidence of lived experience. A qualitative researcher, on the other hand,

begins with lived experience and either depicts that experience in such a way that it speaks for itself or allows an analysis to emerge out of the experience (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Although word choice does imply an act of assessment, there is a much broader palette of choices and more room for letting lived experience guide the creation of categories.

The second step in narrowing the focus was to choose one of three possible approaches to qualitative research. Some qualitative researchers suggest that data should not be analyzed only reported verbatim to prevent the intrusion of researcher bias. Others suggest an approach of accurate description in which the data are reduced and ordered to illustrate what the lived experience is really like. Still others continue on to build a grounded theory out of the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

This study takes the second approach of accurate description although some questions which could lead in the direction of a grounded theory are posed at the end. However, a much broader base of research would be required to establish such a theory. Once again the reader is reminded that this is only a glimpse.

Teaching Style

Because these students have been shaped by a teacher-directed school culture which continued in all their other subjects, a much modified version of the more student

centered reader response approach was used for the literature class. The students learned to make sense of their reading through discussion and dramatization. Both formats allowed students to help each other in making sense of their reading. As well group responses were shared with the class to widen the circle of support (Leal, 1993).

However, the discussions were directed by prompt questions which did limit and direct the students' focus of attention at times. The prompt questions were designed to elicit opinions rather than to check comprehension. As such they did allow the students some freedom to deal with their own reactions (Probst, 1988). Since no "correct" answers were given, I avoided as much as possible placing my interpretation of the selections between the students and the text.

Drama responses were completely open-ended. The simulations of the story made the situation come to life for the students making the selections emotionally and intellectually meaningful (Carney, 1975). The focus was directly on the students as they interacted with each other rather than on teacher understanding of the story (Seidner, 1978). The students were actively engaged in interpretation which is necessary for them to think critically (hooks, 1993; Gay, 1995b; Grant and Gomez, 1996).

Response journals were used but once again the students responded with unease at the open-endedness of the

assignment. The intention was to have students use discovery writing so that they would express their own analysis and speculation rather than write for the expectations of the teacher (Spanos, 1992). Although their journal writing did not achieve this goal, the students still gained the advantage of being able to show themselves what they understood (Stringer, 1994).

In general journal entries tended to summarize group discussions and as such they tended at times to reflect group rather than personal responses. At other times unresolved differences of opinions occurred in the discussion groups leading to more personalized responses. I also maintained written conversations with each student through responding in writing in each individual journal.

Literature Selections

Three parameters guided the choice of literature selections to be included in this study. The first was that the selections were part of the normal curriculum. The second was a sensitivity towards the mores of the school community. Finally, I was also guided by Francis Aboud's (1993) study "A Fifth Grade Program to Reduce Prejudice". She suggests that prejudice declines in children who notice similarities between races, who can understand and evaluate as valid different perspectives and who notice individual differences. Aboud's work is restricted to racial prejudice but to the children in this study, religious and economic

differences are probably more salient than racial differences. Therefore, selections that allowed students to discuss similarities and differences in faith commitments and economic situations were chosen. In this way some selections might encourage inclusiveness and work against stereotype formation (Banks and Banks, 1993). Such selections could indicate how these students understand difference.

Although I would have preferred to use selections written by "insiders" in an authentic voice, such selections were not always feasible to use (Winston, 1996). I tried to stay as close to this ideal as possible.

Data Collection

The lesson plans for each of the lessons were written out in detail and recorded. I also kept a daily journal of my responses to the lessons. These were not field notes as such because they were recorded daily in retrospect rather than being recorded while the lesson was actually in progress. However, this journal contains comments on many incidents that occurred.

The small group and class discussions were audiotaped and typescripts were made of the tapes relating to the literature selections used in this study. These scripts do not reflect the intonations used by students but they do indicate pauses and hesitations as well as some comments on facial expressions and instances of laughter. Student

response journals including my written responses to the journals were photocopied and filed. Field notes were taken on the dramatic presentations.

Data Analysis

To begin the process of analysis, student and teacher responses were broken down into discrete thought units. When actions were being described, a thought unit consisted of a subject and a predicate that completed a thought. When attributes were being described, each separate discrete attribute constituted a thought unit. In this case a single adjective, adverb or phrase was used as a thought unit. The degree of a descriptive phrase such as "very" or "a little" was generally not considered. In instances of figurative images a thought unit sometimes focused on the connection made between two elements each of which could have constituted a separate thought unit. In this case, two statements are combined into one unit because the thought unit consists of the connection between the two.

Next, a close examination of the thought units revealed a pattern of differing elements. Some thought units displayed stances towards "otherness". Other thought units referred to direct interpretations of the selections. Still other thought units indicated student understanding of social roles. Often the prompt question which guided the response evoked a specific element.

The first step in grouping the thought units, therefore, was to group them according to element expressed. Each group at this level of categorization became a separate "snapshot" of the students at work.

A system of open coding as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990), was then applied to the thought units in each particular "snapshot" separately. Again a close examination of similarities and differences revealed how the thought units in a "snapshot" could be grouped into categories. Each of these categories was given a label. The intended interpretation of each label was supplied by representative quotes taken directly from the typescripts or journals. These low inference descriptors (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) allow the reader a direct view of the students' thoughts.

As the categories emerged, it was possible to arrange them along a dimensional continuum. The sequenced order of the categories in each "snapshot" indicate the dimensional continuum. The dimensions are not always a matter of degree. Sometimes the continuum moves from one pole to the opposite pole.

In the case of the dramas, classroom incidents and stories of incidents from their lives outside the classroom, it was not possible to break the data into thought units. In such cases the outline of the actions were presented and the general themes were included in the later discussions.

Chapter Four

The Photo Album

This first section of analysis presents snapshots of students interpreting multicultural situations that they experience vicariously through their reading. Although a photograph reflects reality, one photograph is unable to present a full view of all of reality but instead focuses on one small part of that reality. Some snapshots focus on student ability to step out of their home culture. Other snapshots focus on the stances that are adopted by students in relationship to "others". Still other snapshots focus on the interpretation of the social roles of "friend" or "good neighbor".

The organizational structure of this first section of analysis is based on the individual stories that were selected for inclusion in this study. This presents a clearer sense of the students at work in their classroom than would be possible if an alternative organizational structure based on groupings of the snapshots in terms of similar foci were used. The result is a kind of family photo album which presents a series of snapshots of students busy interpreting these selections.

The Cultural "Other": Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes

by E. Coeurr

The Story

As part of the school's regular curriculum, the class read the novel, Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by E. Coeurr. It is the true story of a ten-year old Japanese girl, Sadako, living in about 1954. Because she was in Hiroshima at the time that the bomb was dropped, she developed leukaemia. She deals with her illness by attempting to fold one thousand paper cranes because she believes that if she completes the task before she dies, the gods will grant her one wish. That wish will be to continue to live. She fails to complete the task before her death. Her classmates complete the task for her and now she lives on as a heroine in the minds of the people of Japan. School children still visit her grave and bring paper cranes in memory of the tragedy of the atom bomb and in honor of Sadako's spirit of hope.

Sadako, is clearly presented as belonging to a culture that is "other" in the sense of exotic to that of the students. Sadako survives in her environment by eating bean soup for breakfast (Bullivant, 1989). The students view the artifacts and behaviors of Sadako's culture as she receives a kimono as a gift and celebrates Peace Day by lighting candles in balloons and floating them down the river (Bennett, 1990). Sadako's value system is expressed as she

participates in ancestor worship and is more concerned about the honor of her family and her class than about personal glory (Hernandez, 1989).

All of these aspects of culture clearly define Sadako as "other" in the lives of these students. They do not eat bean soup for breakfast. They did not know what a kimono is. They are surrounded by the artifacts, practices and values of the Christian religion.

It should be remembered that it is inevitable that the students will be making sense of Sadako's world in terms of the theory of what the world is like that has been established in their own minds (Smith, 1988). In this sense some measure of parallel experiences could enhance the ability of the students to enter into the virtual world of Sadako's life (Iser, 1974). Sadako is the same age as the students. She loves carnivals and cotton candy as these students do. Sadako is involved with trying to win sports honors for her school which is something very familiar to these students.

The Plan

Students were guided through a process akin to three of the four possible stances taken by a reader as described by Langer (1995). The students began by "being out and stepping in". In a class discussion we considered some general characteristics of the book. "It's a book about a girl in Japan." A few students who had read an excerpt of

the book earlier knew that the girl would get sick. Students were asked to relate their knowledge of World War II and Hiroshima. Finally they looked at the pictures and read the chapter headings. In this way, students were led to enter Sadako's world.

A second stance of "being in and moving through" occurred as the students had parts of the text read to them and read other parts of the text independently. While in the text the students constructed their virtual experience of Sadako's world (Iser, 1974). To encourage them to focus on details of this world, they were asked to identify Sadako's character traits supporting their suggestions with evidence from the text. Constructing plot outlines for parts of the story also helped students to focus on the virtual world of the story. Finally students were asked to identify the source of Sadako's hope in the face of her illness. The character analysis, the plot lines and discussion questions were all handled in peer groups.

At other times the students were encouraged to adopt a third reading stance of "being in and stepping out". They used Sadako's story to reflect on their own lives (Langer, 1995). Open-ended questions such as, "Would you like Sadako to be your friend?", "In what ways are you the same as Sadako and in what ways are you different?" and "If you were in Sadako's situation where would you find hope?" supported students as they took this stance.

The term "friend" seemed a suitable term to use. First of all it is a rich complex term for which a social perspective can be built quite readily (Charon, 1985). Secondly it is term that is available in the symbol system of our culture. Also it is a cultural symbol that these students would understand and one whose perspective they would be able and willing to adopt (Prus, 1996). Finally, the concept "friend" is associated with positive relationships.

This final aspect is perhaps somewhat misleading. It should not be assumed that refusing friendship with Sadako implies an anti-multicultural stance of disrespect (Aboud, 1992). Friendship implies close relationships. It is possible to respectfully allow "others" to have their own voice and opportunity to define themselves without having such close relationships with them (McLaren, 1995). However, friendship does imply mutual respect and the absence of active animosity.

At the end of the unit students were asked to write a letter expressing their response to the story to one of Sadako's siblings who could well be alive still today.

The Snapshots

I have taken four "snapshots" of the students at work interpreting this story. The first snapshot displays student thought about the possibility of having "others" (i.e. Sadako) as a friend. The second snapshot focuses on

student interpretation of the cultural symbol, "friend". The third snapshot presents student understanding of difference between themselves and Sadako. Finally the fourth snapshot highlights the stances that students take towards "otherness". The first three snapshots view interpersonal relationships while the last snapshot views intergroup relationships. Both perspectives affect interactions with "others" (Gutman and Hickman, 1996).

Snapshot #1: Sadako, "The Exotic Other", as Friend

The first student responses to the suggestion that Sadako could be a friend were made after the character of Sadako had been introduced and before the story of her illness was related. The topic was revisited later on in the story. Although many of the students related in their first response that they knew the outline of the plot of the story, they had not yet become emotionally involved with the tragedy of her death. Their feelings of pity did not seem to play a role in their decision about whether or not friendship with Sadako was attractive.

Five criteria used as basis for judging possible friendship emerged out of applying a system of open coding to student responses (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These categories could be placed along a continuum moving from "Barrier to Friendship" to "Attraction to Friendship" because they were viewed differently by different students. The number of responses placed in each category is given to

indicate whether or not the stated opinion is commonly held or whether it represents an exception.

a. Dissimilarity in Beliefs (13)

Seven thought units expressed quite adamantly that Sadako could not be a friend because "She believes in good luck signs and spirits." Another four thought units recognized the same barrier but suggested that Sadako could be changed to fit into their own mold. "Cause she believes in spirits but you could tell her about Jesus, the real God." One thought unit expressed some ambivalence about friendship because there was a recognition of the same barrier but also the positive feeling that Sadako "sounds nice" which made friendship with Sadako attractive. One thought unit viewed the difference in belief as an opportunity to spread one's own belief. "It would be one chance to teach her about the real God."

b. Dissimilarity in Cultural Expressions (11)

Dissimilarity in cultural expressions evoked a binary response. Seven thought units expressed the feeling that Sadako could not be a friend because "She speaks a different language," and "She's obviously never heard of hockey." Some discomfort with anything foreign was also included, "It might be a little scary," Four others viewed the dissimilarity in cultural expressions as an attraction to friendship because something new could be learned. "She

would know swords and all that," and "She lives in Japan," which is a different country with different customs.

c. Situational Factors (13)

Of the thirteen thought units included in this category, twelve viewed situational factors as barriers to friendship. One obvious hindrance, "She's dead," was expressed four times. Other barriers expressed several times were, "She's not my age," (Sadako is one year older.) and "She's a girl." (This was expressed by boys.) Some of the situational barriers mentioned expressed self-concern. "She has a disease and I might get it." "Sadako would never have time for me because of her running practice." Only one thought unit viewed Sadako's situation in a positive light. "We could wheelchair around the hospital together."

d. Personality Traits in "Other" (7)

The only negative reaction to Sadako's personality was towards her frenetic energy level. "She's hyper." As Sadako's illness forced her to slow down, Sadako became more acceptable as a friend. The majority of the thought units expressed positive personality traits that were an attraction to friendship. "She's nice to Chizuko." "She doesn't fight with her brothers and sisters." "She hates to give up."

e. Ego-Centric Parallels (26)

This category also displays a strong binary emphasis between like and dislike often based on the same criteria.

It contains twice as many thought units as any other category. Of these half were focused on Sadako's love of running. For example, one student who is not allowed to run said, "Since I have bunions I wouldn't really like her," while others said, "She likes to run and I like to run." Other decisions about friendship with Sadako were based on a variety of existent or non-existent parallel personality traits. "We both like being first." "She runs past pictures of dead people. I would stop to look." Finally some decisions about friendship with Sadako were made on the basis of parallel likes and dislikes of things such as reading, making things out of paper, music, lego, fairs and even cotton candy. Only one thought unit expressed a globalized, "I don't like her."

Snapshot #2: Interpreting the Role, "Friend"

Because I was quite surprised at the strong egocentric emphasis in the student responses, I decided to explore their concept of friendship further. I wrote the following questions as part of my response in many of the student journals. "Do friends have to be exactly alike? What makes a person a friend?" The students were given an opportunity to respond to my questions in their journals.

The students displayed a difference of opinion about whether or not friends should be alike. Their responses are presented here in a continuum from a strong, "Yes, friends

have to be alike," to a definite, "No friends do not have to be alike.

".. a friend's supposed to be...uh.. someone uh.. like you with the same sorts of interests." (1)

"Friends have something in common." (1)

"Friends don't always have to be exactly alike but it certainly helps," (1)

"What it means to be good friends is that you think the same things are good. Other friends are just friends that you play games with sometimes together." (1)

"Two friends do not have to believe the same thing." (1)

"No, friends don't have to be alike." (3)

"Friends can be any type of people." (1)

On the relationship between friends, two students agree that, "Real friends should trust each other and that they can understand each other when they're sad." Another student suggests that friends "stick up for each other and... um... help each other." The nature of such friends is that they "are supposed to be nice."

Snapshot #3: Understanding That a Difference in Beliefs Exists

Towards the end of the novel study, one of the discussions was focused on the questions, "What was Sadako's hope?" and "What would your hope be in that situation?" The responses to these questions showed that the students understood clearly the difference in basic "leap of faith" between themselves and Sadako.

Nineteen students responded with a variation of "She believed she could live if she made a thousand paper cranes." Two students mentioned, "They pray to spirits." One student mentioned that Sadako "believes in good luck" while another student mentioned, "She believes in weard gods fake ones."

As to their own hope, ten students stated, "I would find hope in God," and two students stated, "I know I'm going to heaven one day." One student thought, "I don't think I could find hope." Other students interpreted being in Sadako's situation as their own transposition into Japanese culture. Their responses will be included with snapshot #4 because they indicated a stance towards "Otherness".

Snapshot #4: Stances Towards Cultural "Otherness"

The word "stance" was chosen carefully because this snapshot presents a view of how students position themselves over against "otherness". Students displayed these stances in three categories of topics: beliefs, cultural expressions and Sadako as a person. Not every topic evoked responses for every stance.

a. Refusing to Look Beyond Home

All three of these quotes that refer to beliefs indicate that these students were looking towards their "in" group only but three different reasons were given for this stance. The first snippet of conversation taken from the

typescripts of the group discussions indicates the use of an interpretation of a Biblical directive to justify building a fence around an "in" group. The three students in the group seemed unanimous in their stance of exclusivity.

- Student A: "In the Bible it says you're only supposed to have christian friends."
 Student B: "Yeah so it can't be.... so it can't be a friend."
 Student A: (Makes noises that indicate an attitude of ha-ha-hu-ha-ha.)
 Student C: Be quiet. (With a little laugh)

The second snippet of conversation also clearly uses difference in belief as a division between "in" and "out" groups. However, here the building of the fence was justified on the basis of personal likes and dislikes rather than on Biblical directives. Once again no difference of opinion was expressed among the three students in the group.

- Student A: "Because I only like Christians."
 Student B and C: "So you have to make her a Christian."

One student indicated she could only see the possibility of having a belief just as she has today no matter what the circumstances of her life might be. "If I were Sadako I would trust in God to heal me. I wouldn't believe in paper cranes. I would just keep praying." This student is not building a fence but she assumes the existence of the fence.

Exclusive "in" group identification in terms of cultural expressions was exhibited in the thoughts of six students. Two reasons for this strong division between "in"

and "out" group are implied. The first reason was based on personal likes and dislikes. "But then she likes bean soup!!! I never had that and I don't want it." The second reason was a difference in skills between the "in" group and the "out" group. "She wouldn't be a good friend because we'd have to learn each other's language."

None of the students used Sadako's personality as a reason to refuse to look beyond home.

b. Looking Beyond Home with a Condescending Eye

The term "condescending eye" was chosen because the thought units that indicated this stance, expressed negative critique of the "out" group. This stance differs from the first stance because there is a willingness to look beyond the "in" group but the experience of the "in" group is used as normative. Fourteen thought units are included in this group.

In terms of beliefs such normative standards were applied in two ways. The first way was in a pejorative sense. The "in" group is normal automatically rendering the "out" group abnormal. "She believes in weird gods fake ones." The second way of applying the normative standard was in terms of a correspondence theory of truth. The "in" group decides what is "true" and the "out" group is judged according to whether or not they fit the definition of truth as posited by the "in" group. "I don't think I would be able to [believe in getting well after making a thousand

paper cranes] because I don't think the thing about making a thousand paper cranes is true." A slight twist on second way of applying the normative standard is to also base likes and dislikes on the result of applying the correspondence theory of truth. "She's kind of superstitious and I don't like that because it's not true at all."

Applying normative standards in a pejorative sense was also expressed in the thought units that were reactions to cultural expressions. "Chirpin crickets?!? Siiick!!!" In some of these thought units, the pejorative sense was implied by a mocking attitude.

Student A: "Yeah, I know she has a friend."

Student B: "And she has a name Cuckoo [Chizuko]."
(Giggles)

Within this stance the reactions to Sadako's personality followed the same pattern as the reactions to social customs. "She always wants to run, run, run. Makes me sick!" and "Guys, she likes folding laundry." (Spoken with disdain). One thought unit expressed a globalized pejorative judgement on Sadako as a person. "She's a clod."

c. Tentatively Exploring Beyond Home

The thought units and conversations that expressed this stance indicated that some of the students, although somewhat discomfited by the foreignness, viewed "otherness" as another viable though exotic possible world that they were willing to explore. Instead of inspecting Sadako's world as though it were an object, they entered Sadako's

world and looked around in it. This allowed them to interpret Sadako's actions more accurately.

In terms of belief, they accepted Sadako's hope as a religious commitment on a par with their own religious commitment.

- Student A: "I mean... if you were Chinese would you believe in paper cranes?"
 Student B: "Yeah."
 Student A: "Maybe if you made a thousand...."
 Student B: "I think I would..."
 Student C: "I think I would because she was religious."
 Student A: (Reading the question.) "Where would you find it."
 Student B: (In a silly voice) "Ummm... if you were Chinese."
 Student A: "Where would I find it? I'd find it in paper cranes."
 Student B: "Yeah."

The silly tone of voice used by student B and the following bit of conversation indicate the sense of discomfit. As well the mistake in using Chinese in place of Japanese indicate the unfamiliarity of Sadako's ethnicity.

- Student A: "Yeah and they pray for her spirit every morning and their ancestors."
 Student B: "Wouldn't that be scary to look at? You're a ghost."

Their ability to interpret Sadako's actions more accurately shows in this conversation in which one student offers an explanation for Sadako's impatience.

- Student A: "I don't think she likes... she likes... she doesn't like doing that thing..."
 Student B: "She doesn't like doing..."
 Student A: "She doesn't like praying..."
 Student C: "She doesn't like praying to her.... She just doesn't like doing it because she wants to hurry up and go."

Students in this group also made more of an attempt to understand the significance of Peace Day and Sadako's reaction to it.

- Student A: "And she's happy on carnival days."
 Student B: "Yeah, I guess so."
 Student A: "She doesn't like the people who have scars that don't look human and all that."
 Student C: "And she doesn't like to look at pictures from the war."
 Student A: "And the dead people."
 Student B: "That'd be awesome!"
 Student A: "And her mother yells at her a lot because she thinks going to a place to have pictures of all dead people is fun."
 Student C: "No, not that."
 Students A and B: "Yeah."
 Student A: "No the carnival."
 Student C: "She's always in a hurry to get to the carnival."
 Student A: "But it's not..."
 Student B: "I know."
 Student A: "Like sorrow and all that."
 Student C: "No, it's Peace Day, the day the war ended."
 Student A: (sarcastically) "Yeah, but sorry that all the people died. Um..."
 Student B: (sarcastically) "Yeah."

Some of the comments about friendship with Sadako expressed the tentative nature of their venture. "Maybe I could learn to do the things she does and she learn things I do." "If I were her friend it might be a little scary."

There was also evidence of students exploring Sadako's personality. In interpersonal understanding, the students made the judgement that Sadako was more the same than different.

- Student A: "I think Sadako.. is... really hyper most of the time because she never has time to sit down."

Student B: "I think... like... Sadako.. like...
she puts candles in boxes and puts them
over the water because it shows a
picture of it on p. 19."

Student A: "Sadako never forgets her grandmother."

Student B: "Of course because she respects Oba-
chan."

Student A: "So she's like us, bad and good."

d. "Walking With a Different View" (Slater, 1992)

Slater suggests that to be educated is not to arrive at a destination but to be educated is to travel with a different view (Slater, 1992). The criterion used to determine inclusion in this category was very similar. The thought units in this category indicate evidence that students were able to leave their home culture and imagine themselves to be in "otherness" thus walking with a different view.

Only two students were able to imagine themselves with different world and life views. The first of these suggests that as a desperation measure she would try anything. "If I had the same problem I would believe the story about the cranes just for the sake of getting better." The second student actually placed herself in Sadako's world and imagines what she would do in a similar situation. "I think making a thousand paper cranes to live would raise my hopes and I would work like crazy."

These students did not know enough about Sadako's cultural expressions to walk with a different view in that sense. However, several thought units displayed an attitude of eagerness to explore. "It is interesting to know what

happened at a place on the other side of the world."

Learning about differences would be a prerequisite for walking with a different view. Others were more specific about actually walking with a different view. "It is also pretty cool because you get to see how Chinese celebrate festivals." "I would like to learn to speak her language."

Other thought units in this category displayed a willingness to walk with a different view but with an element of ego-centrism. Sadako's treatment was interpreted in today's medical knowledge although the book does not mention such treatments.

"I feel sorry for Sadako because I saw on a show about a little boy who had leukaemia. He had to go into a machine for 2 hours. He got shots and needles. So how I know how Sadako feels when she gets her treatment."

Sadako's ability to fold paper cranes is interpreted as a benefit for the student. "I would like Sadako because she could teach me how to make paper cranes."

The students were almost unanimous in their expression of an appreciation for Sadako's courage and determination.

"It's a touching story to hearts as she tries to overcome the sadness that comes her way. It's amazing how much courage she still has when she finds out she has leukaemia."

"She fought for her life by trying to make a 1000 paper cranes. She kept folding cranes, and folding cranes, and folding cranes, she never stop until she was too weak to fold any more paper cranes. She's a good example to other children."

Interpreting the Moral Directive: The Good Samaritan

The Story

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:25-37 New International Version of the Bible

This selection was chosen for inclusion in this study because it provides a view of the moral directive on how to relate to "others" that is part of the value system into which these students are being nurtured. The focus of the parable addresses the precise issues addressed in this study. The story is told by Jesus to a Jewish lawyer who is trying to side-step the responsibility of loving his neighbors by asking, "Yes, but who is my neighbor?" After hearing the story, the lawyer recognizes that the Samaritan who was considered an "outsider" in Jewish culture at that time, acted as a good "neighbor". In this way the story is about interpersonal relationships and also obliquely about intergroup relationships.

For these students the Bible, as God's revelation, is a powerful tool in shaping the "me" of its listeners. These students have heard the parable about The Good Samaritan many times since they were very young. They are well aware that they should love their neighbor. How the "I" of the students interprets (Wallace and Wolf, 1986) the Biblical directives reveals some of the understandings that are being constructed by these students.

Another reason for including this selection is that it also illustrates my own understanding of how human beings ought to relate to each other. In order to make sense of the findings of a researcher focused on the social world of students, it is necessary to know the ideal to which the researcher is committed (Newby, 1997; Grant and Tate, 1995; May, 1994). This story makes more explicit my own world and life view which guided my interpretation of student interpretations contained in this study.

The Plan

Since the students were very familiar with the story no activities for the stance of "being out and stepping in" were planned. Instead the lesson began with the reading of the Bible passage which provided for the stance of "being in and moving through". This stance was supported by asking the students to express their understanding of the story through drama, art, writing or any other preferred means.

All of them chose to present dramas either retelling

the story or transposing the story into modern terms. Arranging themselves into groups of three or four, the students were given ten minutes to prepare an impromptu skit to present to the class immediately. The skits were presented in an open space in front of the coat closets at the back of the classroom. The atmosphere was very relaxed because they knew that they would not be graded on this activity in any way. This allowed them to express themselves freely rather than trying to guess at a "right" or "wrong" answer.

The stance of "being in and stepping out" was taken by students as they wrote journal responses in which they were asked to focus on meanings for the terms "love" and "neighbour". Finally they received teacher responses to their journal entries.

The Snapshots

In this section three snapshots were taken. The first, focused on the impromptu skits, provides a picture of the students busy interpreting a specific example illustrating a moral directive about relationships to "others". The second, focused on student journal responses, provides a picture of student interpretation of the cultural symbol, "Love your neighbor" which is an expression of the moral directive. The third, focused on classroom incidents, provides a view of actions which may speak louder than words

about how the moral directive functions in the lives of the students.

Snapshot #5: Understanding an Illustration of the Moral Directive

In all six impromptu skits were presented. Each skit was about two minutes in length. They ranged in interpretative mode from simple retelling of the Biblical story to complete transposition of setting, characters and theme. The descriptions of the skits are arranged along a continuum from simplest retelling to most complete transposition. This was done simply for the sake of convenience and not because one mode carries more understanding of the story than another. The simple retelling of a story indicates how a reader made sense of the story because in retelling choices are made about which details are included and which details are left out of the retelling. The transposition of a story indicates meaning because it illustrates the associations that a reader has made. Generally very little dialogue was used by the students. Instead they depended on action and facial expressions to carry meaning.

a. Skit 1 - There were four students presenting this skit, two stationed in the hall way, one in the coat closet and one on the "stage". The scene opened with the student on "stage" nonchalantly walking past the closet doors. Suddenly the second student jumped out of the closet,

attacked the first student and proceeded to beat her up. The violence, which the class thoroughly enjoyed, lasted approximately a minute. Leaving the victim lying on the floor, the attacker disappeared into the hall way. A third student entered the classroom and walked past the victim without paying any attention to her. Finally the attacker, now playing the role of the donkey, entered the room on all fours with the fourth student "riding" on her back again to the enjoyment of the class. They stopped at the victim where the fourth student got off the donkey and put the victim on in her place. The skit ended abruptly with the victim slung over the donkey and the donkey taking a few steps.

b. Skit 2 - This skit was presented by three students also playing dual roles. Their skit was identical to the first skit with one exception. The characters who refused aid to the victim did not simply walk past but made a great show of the disdain that they felt by having their noses upturned and their faces averted.

c. Skit 3 - This group of three students decided to make their skit "more interesting". The victim entered the classroom riding on her "donkey". When the usual attack from the closet occurred, it was repelled. A much more active fighting ensued because the victim fought back against her attacker. At the end of the fight which was the

main focus of the skit, the victim was victorious. She put her attacker on her donkey and the skit ended.

d. Skit 4 - The four students who presented this skit gave the entire story an atmosphere that differed significantly from that presented in the first three skits. Once again one of the students hid in the coat closet and attacked another student who was simply walking past. This time, however, the attack was much gentler and of much shorter duration. The victim was not beaten but only had her wallet stolen. During this part of the skit there was no conversation just like in the first three skits. When the third student entered from the hall way, she spoke to the victim gently asking questions about what happened and how she could help. She took the victim to Sunnyside Inn and spoke to the fourth student, the proprietor of the inn, to make arrangements for the care of the victim. The skit ended with a promise by the third student to pay any bills that were incurred.

e. Skit 5 - The four students presenting this skit did not use the "stage" area. Instead they chose to use an area of desks at the front of the classroom. As the skit began, one student was sitting at a desk having obvious difficulty doing a math assignment because she kept erasing her work and looking frustrated. Another student walked past the desk totally ignoring the student having trouble with the math assignment. Next another student came past, looked

over the shoulder of the student having trouble and said, "That's easy! A grade three'er could do that!" She refused to help the student who was having trouble. Finally the last student came by and offered to help. She sat down beside the student who was having trouble and explained how to do the assignment. The skit ended with a thank you from the student who was helped.

f. Skit 6 - Three students presented the last skit. Its theme was different from that of the original story and from those of the other five skits. Two students were walking along when a third student took something from one of the students and then ran away. After a few moments the thief returned, gave back the item that had been stolen and apologized. She was forgiven and the skit ended with the three students being friends.

Snapshot #6: Student Interpretation of "Love Your Neighbor"

Like the term "friend", the terms "love" and "good neighbor" are ambiguous symbols that are part of the culture of these students (Charon, 1985; Woods, 1982). The interpretations that are given also mobilize the interpreter's responses to his/her world (Karp and Yoels, 1979). Therefore, a "snapshot" of the meanings assigned to these words by these students will give a view of their perspective on social relationships.

Not all the readers of this study will be members of the faith community that accepts the words of Jesus as

revelation. Yet in spite of religious differences, there exists enough commonality of interpretation for these symbols within our culture to identify these symbols as "cultural symbols" that supply a means of possible communication. Whether or not communication takes place will depend on whether or not the reader is able and willing to adopt the perspective of the student (Prus, 1996).

Three roles adopted by students emerged from a study of their written responses. Sometimes these roles were evident in student interpretation of the term "good neighbor" and sometimes they were evident in student interpretation of the term "love". Student responses also ranged from globalized statements to statements referring to specific actions and attitudes.

a. The Role of Caregiver (50)

By far the majority of thought units showed the students adopting the role of caregiver. Most of these caregivers interpreted "Love your neighbor" globally as "You should love and help" "Anyone in need." These students clearly identified with the Good Samaritan as helper.

The restatement of the word "love" offered as interpretation for the word "love" seems to indicate that the students who expressed these thought units had some difficulty pinpointing the exact nature of "love". However, "love" is clearly associated with "help". Therefore, in actual fact this interpretation defines "love" as "help".

Other students were able to more clearly identify how a caregiver would express "love". Some referred to specific attitudes that could be identified as "loving". "Love" is "... to be kind," "...to respect people," "... to please other people," and "... to like other people." Others referred to more specific actions. "Love" is "...to do good to them," "... to talk to them when they have a need," and "... sharing..." Other even more specified examples were also given. "I think the way we can love them is by helping them do chores like running down to the store and buying them the stuff they need." "You should encourage them if their people at school You should say Hi! if they are people on your street walking." "When you love your neighbor you can't just say that to please him you have to show it by praying for that person if he or she needs it."

A few thought units defined love in terms of negative care which is a term parallel to the term negative peace as used by Fien. Negative peace indicates the absence of war as opposed to positive peace which seeks justice and the well-being of all (Fien, 1992). In the same way negative care indicated the absence of harm rather than positive support. "I think love is somebody care for and don't want to be hurt." "... not hateing them."

Other students who cast themselves in the role of caregiver offered more specific interpretations of the term "neighbor" which emphasized inclusivity. "I think the story

ment that you should help someone whether you know them or not." "... and it don't mean that we can only help white people we can help different coulored people as well."

These thought units contain evidence of some missed communication in the interpretation of the term "neighbor". On the one hand the students clearly identify with the Good Samaritan who provides help and whom Jesus posits as "good neighbor" in juxtaposition to the priest and Levite. On the other hand the students identify "neighbor" as the person in need or the victim. The Biblical story defines "neighbor" as a way of acting towards "others" but the students defined "neighbor" as an ontological state of being non-self.

b. A Reciprocal Role of Giving and Receiving Care (5)

The thought units in this category do not differ from the thought units in Category "a" in their interpretation of the term "love". "When someone's in need, you should help that person." "Love means that you should care for and like ...". The differentiating characteristic lies in the fact that the students were portrayed as both giving and receiving love. "...just as you would want someone to help you, in a situation like that." "... care for and like one and other."

The focus here was on defining "love" but the concept of "neighbor" remained nebulous. This seemed logical since the thought units in Category "a" conceptualized "neighbor" as non-self. For the students who expressed these thought

units care recipients are both self and non-self. Who, therefore, is neighbor?

c. The Role of Care Recipient (2)

It is interesting to note that the few thought units contained in this category conceptualize the term "neighbor" as "a way of acting towards 'others'" thus paralleling the Biblical story. The nature of such acting largely followed the interpretation of "love" given in Categories "a" and "b". However, the students who expressed these thought units seemed to be viewing the world from an ego-centric stance. In the role of care recipient they interpreted "good neighbor" as people close to them who were loving to them. "Neighbor is a loving caring person. Sometimes they are like a family. They treat you as if you were there child." "I think my neighbors are my friends, my parents, and my teachers. The way I know is how they act like they are kind, caring and don't fight you to get what they want." The last phrase in the second quote certainly emphasizes the ego-centric nature of the thought units in this category.

Snapshot #7: Actions Speak Louder Than Words

A commitment to a world and life view is expressed most clearly in actions. This snapshot contains vignettes of several people in action. The vignette of myself as teacher displays the social perspective from which I am interpreting cultural symbols while the vignettes of the students give an

indication of the "me" stance that they are developing in response to the social perspectives surrounding them.

a. The Teacher

It should be remembered that the students are interpreting cultural symbols and being shaped by a social perspective as well as shaping that social perspective (Hewitt, 1988). Since I provide some of the cultural symbols for the students to interpret, this little vignette of myself seemed important to include.

As an example of how the Biblical story might be transposed into modern terms, I made the following statement, "For example, today we don't usually have priests." The students immediately suggested, "Ministers" to replace the term priests. The statement caught my attention as I transcribed the audio tape because of its focus on a very narrow social reality. I decided to correct myself the following day and to point out to students that many religions in the world today have priests and that my statement was incorrect. I asked the students to correct me if I made such a mistake again.

One student responded by relating that a friend of hers who lives on her street has an uncle who wanted to be a priest but who changed his mind. Her demeanor indicated that she thought that the decision to not become a priest was a wise one on the part of the uncle. Another student

related that two girls on her soccer team had relatives who were priests.

b. Student A

During the presentation of the assignment, one student began to immediately signal to her best friends so that she would be able to form a group together with them. Based on my experience with this student at other times, I interpreted her actions as a spontaneous urge to make sure that she would be included in a group and that she would not have to work with students whom she considers to be "other". When she was asked to pay attention to the assignment, she did so immediately.

c. Students in Several Groups

After almost all the groups were formed, several groups looked around to make sure that everyone was included. (This is something I have stressed with them.) When it was noticed that one student was alone, she was invited to join a group.

The Religious "Other": The Young Maple Tree by

E.J. Harrison

The Story

This selection is a short story found in the anthology which is used regularly by the class. The narrator of the story is a young boy, Bill who has always been befriended by Mr. Benson, a seventy-six year old neighbor who lost his

only son, Biff, in the war many years ago. On his way to go fishing, Bill is asked by Mr. Benson to look at the new maple tree that Mr. Benson intends to plant.

"There's nothing like a maple to make you feel that it's worthwhile doing something and that what you do maybe does matter. See that maple? My dad helped me plant it when I was just a boy. We grew together, that tree and I. And times when I thought I'd have to give up, like when Biff got killed overseas, I'd go out and look at that tree. It's always helped me, Bill. I'd think, there's my tree. It's been through storm and hail and wind, and it's still standing straight and strong and beautiful. Then I'd feel better. Suppose you're wondering why I'm planting another young maple, when I'm an old man, eh?" Mr. Benson's eyes seemed unnaturally bright in the lined face under the white hair.

I had been wondering that, because he couldn't possibly see it grow till it was a big tree, and they had no family to leave the property to, now that Biff was gone. But I figured if he wanted to plant a tree, why shouldn't he? 'You're not so old,' I said, not knowing what else to say.

'Thanks, Bill but you and I both know it's not true. I am old. And maybe foolish. If I tell you why I want to plant this tree, you'll probably think I'm a foolish old man. I have a feeling that every time I plant something, a part of me is planted with it. That as it grows and strengthens, I'm growing and strengthening too. Do you understand? You remind me of Biff when he was your age,' he said, and then he stood there not saying anything. 'I wanted to plant one more tree....'"

While Bill is fishing Mr. Benson dies of a heart attack caused by the strain of trying to plant the tree. Bill decides to plant the tree for Mr. Benson.

The purpose for including student responses to this story in this study is that it clearly presents the "other" in terms of faith communities for these students. Although the story leaves open the question of whether or not

Mr. Benson has faith in a god, the story itself is focused on the comfort in sorrow that Mr. Benson derives from planting trees. In the lives of these students there has always been an emphasis on prayer and an encouragement to turn to God in times of sorrow. This represents a clear religious difference between themselves and Mr. Benson.

Official Canadian multicultural policy has not focused on such differences because it is based on a conception of culture as a recipe for producing behavior and artifacts. Cultural issues have generally been limited to styles and cooking recipes (Mallea and Young, 1984). The result is that multicultural education consists of eating "exotic" foods and celebrating "exotic" festivals. This is the comfort zone for most teachers (Jackson and Solis, 1995).

Beyond this comfort zone are the more intractable issues that arise when differing faith communities must live side by side (Halstead, 1992). In this story, Mr. Benson and Bill on the one hand and these children on the other hand, share a common Canadian experience. In this sense there is no issue of cultural "otherness" here. This similarity cultural background, allows for a more clear focus on how these children are responding to "otherness" in terms of religious difference.

The Plan

The stance of "being out and stepping in" for this story consisted of asking students to write personal answers

to the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" Next the students were assigned to discussion groups of three or four students. The goal that was set for their discussions was to forge one answer out of the individual answers that were given by each of the participants. The intent of this process was to encourage talk about the responses they had given. The negotiation necessary to arrive at one combined answer would help them to look closely at their own ideas and those of their classmates. Finally, the answer given in the catechism was presented to them and they were asked to list in their journals any differences and similarities between their group answer and the catechism answer. This process was intended to help them to expand their thinking about the issue.

I responded to their journals by asking for clarification of words that they used, especially overused words. "Can you explain what comfort is?" "What do you mean by, 'God is always there?'" The second lesson began by asking them to respond to my questions in their journals.

Another activity to support the stance of "being out and stepping in" was to ask the class if anyone was acquainted with someone who might think differently than themselves. Although a chorus of "Yeses" replied, the class discussion offered only two specific examples. "Umm, there was this guy who was always talking about how he

wanted to die like.. doing stunts, you know... like flying in the air.. He wanted to die while jumping out of a plane or something... like a stunt." "This lady I met at the old age home she wanted to die because she felt that nobody visited her and she thought like that she was all alone and nobody cared for her."

Since the story was short but contained some difficult nuances, I chose to read the story aloud to the class while they followed along in their texts to help them "be in and move through" the text.

Four activities were designed to help students "be in and step out" of the text. First of all the students were asked to make up an Accelerated Reading style comprehension test for the story. Working in pairs, the students exchanged tests and answered each other's questions. Secondly they were asked to write in their journals about what they thought Mr. Benson's answer might be to the first question of the catechism. Third a class discussion was prompted by the question, "If you had Mr. Benson as a neighbour, what would you do? How would you be a 'good neighbour' to Mr. Benson?" Finally students were asked to write their personal responses to this question in their journals.

The Snapshots

Throughout the snapshots related to this story, the word "comfort" should be interpreted as ultimate source of

solace because this is the context in which the Heidelberg Catechism uses the word. The Heidelberg Catechism is a statement of faith used in many of the churches which these students attend. Therefore, the issue of comfort is, in this case, a religious issue.

Three snapshots of students at work interpreting this story were taken. The first snapshot is focused on students interpretations of their own source of comfort so that they can be clearly juxtaposed with their understanding of an alternative source of comfort as presented in the following snapshot. The final snapshot in this section is focused on student understanding of the role of "good neighbor" in relation to religious "others" nearby.

Snapshot #8: Student Understanding of Their Own Source of Comfort

Students looked to God (16), their family (9) and their friends (4) for comfort in that order of importance but in various permutations. Comfort was defined alternatively as help in times of problems and hurt, "God is there fore me"; a state of well-being, "If I didn't have a family I would feel like see-through. But once you have a family you feel heavy and full of love," and "I feel safe"; or assurance at a time of death, "When someone dies I know Jesus is there and I will go to heaven." A few students defined comfort as good relationships, "Saying nice things and doing nice things." "Having fun," and "Being alive," were also

mentioned as sources of comfort by one or two students. The main source of comfort especially at times of trouble and death is clearly associated with God.

Although in the "me" stance the students clearly know that the source of their comfort in life and in death is in God, they are not completely socialized because in the "I" stance they express an irrational fear (Charon, 1985). Their discussion of this fear was not referred to in the written work which was unusual because often journal entries were used as summaries of discussions. The typescript for this section is provided verbatim here to give the reader the full sense of this bit of discussion.

- Student A: Yeah but you have to say your comfort in death.
 Student B: Okay, now I'm done. Well.. I kind of feel scared once in a while when..
 Student C: So am I. I hope I don't get shot.

[They all chime in about their fears so it is hard to distinguish exactly what they say.]

- Student B: ... some gang starts shooting at me and...
 Student C: I know... I always think I'll get cancer.
 Student A: I read the paper and it says like this bad guy and this news guy harassing these high school girls... and I think, oh, I don't want to go to high school. (Giggles nervously.)

[When I come by to see how far they are, Student B wants to know why they are discussing this. I tell her that we are going to read a story that is about a man who is close to death. As they prepare to discuss what to write together, Student B tells of another imaginary danger that she thinks about. It is difficult to get her words verbatim but the gist is that someone with a

machine gun would do a drive-by shooting of their school because this person doesn't like Christians. They do some negotiating about how to combine their responses. The tape seems to be cut off but it resumes again after an obvious hiatus. I suspect that something private which they did not want to share, has been discussed.]

Student C: But if you got cancer I would still get scared.

Snapshot #9: Understanding Religious "Others" Nearby

The direct quotes in the synopsis of the "The Young Maple Tree" indicate that Mr. Benson's relationship to the trees is stated explicitly. However, Mr. Benson's relationship to Bill as surrogate son must be inferred. The story only states, "You remind me of Biff when he was your age." Both the trees and Bill were construed by the students as sources of comfort to Mr. Benson.

Although Mr. Benson's relationship to the trees was stated explicitly, the students did not seem to take much note. Out of 125 "test" questions written by the students, only 19 referred to the planting of trees. Of these 19 only eight were directly related to the fact that Mr. Benson derived comfort in life from watching trees grow. None of the questions referred to Bill as surrogate son. Clearly, in this case, the students did not focus their attention on differences that could be perceived as religious differences.

It should be remembered that student experience of computer tests of comprehension could have influenced their

choice of questions. However, some students also included questions which would clearly lie beyond the scope of such tests. As well one student expressed some uncertainty about whether or not Mr. Benson is a Christian "...unless he is not a Christian then I'd tell him about God." Therefore, what is omitted seems significant.

The categories in this snapshot are placed on a continuum that moves from least precise understanding of religious "other" to most precise. The use of such a continuum implies that I have posited my interpretation of Mr. Benson's source of comfort as a standard of correctness. It was necessary to do this in order to indicate how students construed the "others" belief.

a. Transposing Own Belief Onto the "Other".

This first category includes those responses which seemed to transfer the student's own understanding of a source of comfort onto Mr. Benson with no recognition of Mr. Benson's relationship to the trees. Instead the students who wrote these responses seemed to be making the assumption that Mr. Benson would have the same religious understanding as the students themselves have. Five responses were included in this category.

Two students who cited their knowledge of heaven as a source of comfort suggested that Mr. Benson would be comforted by the fact that "He will live with Biff." No mention of a relationship between Mr. Benson and Jesus or

God is made which parallels the story line. However, these students cannot conceive of not believing that there is a life after death. Since they understood that Biff was very dear to Mr. Benson, they suggest that Mr. Benson will live with Biff rather than with Jesus or God. One student posited Mr. Benson's source of comfort as, "Happiness and knowing he had a good life." In reality the story is focused on Mr. Benson's sorrow. The student, herself, has not experienced such sorrow and seems unable to recognize sorrow in Mr. Benson.

The student who stated that she finds comfort in doing things for the elderly such as bringing them flowers or singing for them made the assumption that this kind of activity would bring comfort to Mr. Benson as well. "To know that Bill will take care of his plants and tree after he died." In reality the story makes no mention of Mr. Benson making such a request or of Bill making such a promise while Mr. Benson is alive. Instead the story ends with Bill planting the last tree for Mr. Benson after Mr. Benson has died. This student drew a parallel between her relationship to the elderly people she visits and Bill's relationship to Mr. Benson in planting the tree. The "otherness" of the trees as Mr. Benson's source of comfort is ignored.

The student who made the interesting comment about being "see-through" without her family's love around her,

was quite apologetic about that remark when she joined her discussion group referring to her own statement as "stupid". She clearly feels the uniqueness of her expression. She conceptualizes Mr. Benson as having a similar type of personality. "His [Mr. Benson] yard will look beautiful and Bill will remember him as a person with not regular thoughts." Mr. Benson's "otherness" is recognized but only in terms of the student's own personality.

b. Correct But Globalized Reference

The story made mention of the neatness of Mr. Benson's yard because Mr. Benson spent so much time caring for it. Nine of the thought units posited general yard care such as "Cutting the grass" as the source of Mr. Benson's comfort. No reference was made to the comfort that Mr. Benson derived from watching the strength of trees but in a generalized way these thought units were looking in the right direction. No such globalized reference to Mr. Benson's relationship to Bill is made.

c. Correct Particularized Reference to the Action Only

Three thought units referred to "planting stuff." Their focus is a little more precise because planting is involved but once again no mention is made of the maple trees as metaphor for the strength to face life's sorrows. Two thought units refer to a generalized reciprocal relationship of friendship between Bill and Mr. Benson. "His comfort was that he could be with his friends and

family." "He liked Bill and Bill was there for Mr. Benson everyday." No mention is made of the connection between Mr. Benson's friendship with Bill and Mr. Benson's grieving for his lost son, Biff.

d. Correct Understanding Implied

Nine thought units showed evidence of moving closer to a more precise understanding because they referred to "Planting maple trees." Here the focus is on trees rather than more generalized yard care but no mention was made of the reason for planting trees. Three thought units also included a reason for planting maple trees. The first, "Planting maple tree because he loved them," indicates that the student who expressed this thought understood that Mr. Benson had an emotional relationship to the trees but the focus remains on planting while in reality Mr. Benson derived strength from watching them grow. The last two, "Mr Benson's comfort was in planting trees and in watching it grow," and "Looking at the old maple tree" indicates that the process of planting was not as important as the looking at the trees as they grew. However, the students who expressed these thought units also did not refer to the reason for which Mr. Benson liked to watch the trees grow.

The thought unit, "Talking to Bill," focuses specifically to Mr. Benson's side of the relationship. Although no reference is made to Biff there is still more of a sense that the strength of the relationship between Bill

and Mr. Benson has its source in Mr. Benson. Given the context of the story, an inference could be made about Bill being a substitute for the lost son. Another thought unit refers only to the other side of the connection between Bill and Biff in Mr. Benson's mind. Mr. Benson's comfort is posited as "Remembering Biff." Once again a relationship between Biff and Bill in Mr. Benson's mind is implied.

e. Correct Understanding Stated Explicitly

Only one thought unit displayed an understanding of the reason why Mr. Benson liked to watch maple trees. "He liked that the trees could stand through storm and hail and he thought that he could too." This thought unit was taken from the typescript of the lesson but was not repeated in a journal entry.

Also only one thought unit makes the connection between Biff and Bill in Mr. Benson's mind explicit. Mr. Benson's comfort is "Having Bill as his neighbor to talk to since Biff was gone." The student who expressed this thought unit clearly understood that Mr. Benson viewed Bill as a surrogate for his lost son, Biff.

Snapshot #10: Being a "Good Neighbor" to the Religious "Other" Nearby

The categories in this snapshot form a continuum from a refusal to relate to the religious "other" to active support of the religious "other". These responses seemed very much related to personality traits. The utterances of the least

expressive students tended to be part of the category of ignoring the religious "other" while the student who often expressed reaching out in kindness to others was most adamant about giving the religious "other" active support.

a. Building Relationships With the Religious "Other"

Through Active Support

The most common interpretation of the role of "good neighbor" was to actively help Mr. Benson, the "other", achieve his own goals. Several thought units were very explicit that the reason for doing this would be to make Mr. Benson happy. "Because that's what makes him feel better inside," and "...make him feel comfortable." Several other offers of help were clearly guided by Mr. Benson's desires but were not focused on making Mr. Benson feel better. "...if you want me to," and "...ask where he's going to plant it." Still other offers of help were focused on building a relationship with Mr. Benson. "... instead of going fishing like Bill did. Then probably talking while helping him plant the maple tree. Then ask if he would like some water," and "I've never planted a tree before but I want to plant my first tree with you."

b. Giving Encouragement Without Active Support

The five thought units in this section did not contain any offers of active help but only encouragement to Mr. Benson to achieve his own goals, "...plant as many trees as you can while you still live." Some of the reasons for

giving encouragement also expressed a concern for Mr. Benson's own welfare. "Plant more since you like it so much," and "... because it gives you good exercise." Other reasons for giving encouragement were also for the building of relationships with Mr. Benson. "I would say that it was a good idea and that if he died I would take care of it so I could remember him."

c. Ego-centric Basis for Building a Relationship

"I would like to be Mr. Benson's neighbor because I like to talk to people." This thought unit expresses a wish to build a relationship to Mr. Benson but it is focused on idiosyncratic needs rather than on Mr. Benson's needs.

d. A Response of Non-approval of the Religious "Other"

The one thought unit included in this category is described as non-approval rather than disapproval because it questions Mr. Benson but doesn't critique him explicitly. "Why? You won't see it grow!" Clearly a rationale that is different from that used by Mr. Benson is being used as the basis to question Mr. Benson's actions. However, there is no indication that the student who expressed this thought unit is placing Mr. Benson into any category of any kind.

e. Ignoring the Religious "Other"

The thought units in this category revealed a wish to not become involved at all. "I wouldn't say anything." If pressed into a recognition of a relationship with Mr. Benson, then such recognition would be as little as

possible. "I would mind my own business and just nod slightly that I understand but if I had to say something I'd say you're not that old." This last statement would be encouragement for Mr. Benson to ignore his life situation as well. Another way to ignore the situation was expressed in the thought unit, "... I would go fishing." This is a total refusal of relationship with Mr. Benson.

The responses expressed in the class discussion were very strongly in favor of helping Mr. Benson because planting the tree is what made Mr. Benson feel good. This surprised me somewhat because I had expected to hear some voices expressing a wish to share their faith and their own source of comfort since this is something that they are encouraged to do. I probed a little further by asking them to think about how they, as Christians, would respond to Mr. Benson.

Thirteen students stated explicitly that being a Christian would make no difference in their response to Mr. Benson. "I would do the same." Others implied that as a Christian they would be more helpful than their previous response indicated. The student who had suggested previously that she would ignore Mr. Benson and "go fishing," now suggested "I would help him. Then go fishing." One student expressed a willingness to use what she views as a power in her Christianity to support Mr. Benson. "I would pray for the tree to grow before Mr.

Benson got older and died so that he could see the tree strong." A few students expressed explicitly an unwillingness to even speak about their own religious beliefs while a few others mentioned that they would be willing to share their own source of comfort with Mr. Benson.

Only one student would use her Christianity as a critique of Mr. Benson. [As a Christian] "I would say, 'Is your comfort planting trees?'" This question had the flavor of implying that such a source of comfort might not be the wisest choice. It was not a question that asked for information because the student who posed it had already previously stated that Mr. Benson's comfort was in planting trees. Therefore, I interpreted this student's question as an opening gambit to have Mr. Benson reconsider his choice for a source of comfort. As such it implied a critique of Mr. Benson's religious views.

The Economic "Other": Nam's Journey Begins by Leo Heaps

A Question of Duty by Dr. Yin Wong

Child Labor Aids Miracle of Asia by David Todd

Hari and the Watchmender by Anita Desai

These four selections are grouped together as one unit because they are all focused on the economic "other" rather than on the cultural or religious "other".

The Stories

A. "Nam's Journey Begins"

This selection is an excerpt from the book, A Boy Called Nam, by Leo Heaps who tells a true story about child refugees from Viet Nam. Nam and his sister, Ling, are sent by their father to find a new start in life in Canada. The excerpt only describes Nam and Ling saying farewell to their family, walking to the harbor with their father, boarding the ship where they unexpectedly meet their cousin Kon Ki and waiting in the dark crowded hold to sneak past the harbor police. The excerpt ends with the rickety boat sailing out onto the sea. Since the preface informs the students that Nam now lives in Canada, they are aware that the journey ends well.

B. A Question of Duty

This selection was suggested by one of the students who had read it in a Readers' Digest magazine at home. This abridged version which keeps all the pertinent details of the story but reduces the article to a more practical length, was presented to the entire class.

The hospital in southern China was busy in the early morning of December 24, 1989. My supervisor had put me, a young doctor, in charge of that night's shift. I was exhausted and hadn't eaten for about eight hours.

Now at last growing drowsy, I remembered that it was Christmas Eve. Like millions of Chinese, my parents were Christian. I thought of the times we had celebrated this holy day together: decorating a tiny tree, singing "Silent Night"--quietly, so our neighbours wouldn't report us--and hearing my father whisper the story of the Christ child.

I was awakened by a knock at the door. The nurse asked me to come. A mother, eight months pregnant, already had one child--a second was forbidden under China's strict population control law. She had been arrested and forced into the hospital by the local Family Planning Office. There the baby had been aborted but it lived. By law it was my duty as doctor to give the baby an injection so it would die. "Doctor!" the mother screamed from across the hall. "Doctor, stop!"

I looked at the baby. His angelic face was ringed by a halo of black hair. *This life is a gift from God*, I thought. *No one has the right to take it away.* The thought became so persistent that I had the impression it was being said by someone else. I wondered: *Is this how God talks to people?* For the next two hours I stood vigil over the child. Gradually he ceased whimpering and fell asleep.

Finally, I went to see the supervisor. "I'm sorry," I told her, but I can't do this. I feel it's murder." The supervisor gaped at me.

Lowering her voice, she said ominously, "If you continue to disobey the law, you will never practice medicine again."

"I would rather not be a doctor than commit murder," I said. "Please," I said. Then I began to cry. My legs buckled, and I fell to the floor. The last thing I remember was a spreading blackness before my eyes.

When I came to, I was lying outside the doctors lounge. It was almost noon. *The baby!* I leapt up and ran to the delivery room.

Despite all my efforts the little boy had been killed.

For interference with China's family-planning policy, Yin Wong was banished to a remote mountain area. Eventually she escaped to the United States.

From "A Question of Duty" by Dr. Yin Wong, Reader's Digest, September, 1995.

C. Child Labor Aids "Miracle" of Asia

To help the students to understand the economic context within which Nam and Ling's father made the decision to send his children to Canada, I provided the students with abridged excerpts from a Toronto Star article.

The rapid growth of industry in Asia is being fuelled by the cheap labor of millions of children. Construction sites and factories are the joyless surroundings of illiterate, ill-cared for girls and boys producing low-cost goods for export to America. Children in electric light bulb factories in Indonesia work from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. six days a week for \$3 US a week. In Bangladesh, children as young as eight spend up to 16 hours a day cutting cloth for shirts and blouses that end up in Canadian department stores. During the first three months, they are paid nothing. After that wages start at \$9 or \$10 a month. In India small boys earn \$0.50 for 10 hours of work a day applying poisonous, skin burning chemicals to animal hides without protective masks or gloves to make leather for American shoes and purses. Lower and lower wage costs allow owners to sell more products."

From "Child Labor Aids Miracle of Asia" by David Todd,
Toronto Star, December, 1994

D. Hari and the Watchmender

This selection is an excerpt from The Village by the Sea by Anita Desai. The introduction to the story presents Hari, a twelve-year-old boy in India who leaves his poverty stricken family in the village by the sea to go to Bombay to earn money for his family. In the city Hari finds work in the Sri Krishna Eating House. He is happy to have work but he must live in the cafe in the heat and noise of the city.

Hari is befriended by an old watchmender who suggests that Hari sleep on the bench in the park which is cooler than the Eating House. In the park a policeman who wants to chase Hari away is reprimanded by an old man after which the policeman becomes Hari's protector. The watchmender also offers to teach Hari his trade during the quiet hours at the cafe. All of this leads to the concluding paragraph,

"That was how Hari became an apprentice watchmender and saw that it was possible to have a future, that one did not remain where one was stuck always but could move out and away and on."

These four selections comprised one unit of study for the students because they are all related to issues of poverty in Asia. Nam, Ling and Hari, who are all approximately the same age as these students, all leave home because their parents are unable to provide for them and they have a responsibility to help their parents to provide for younger siblings. China has its abortion policy for reasons of overpopulation resulting in a lack of available resources. Desperate economic conditions create a context in which child labor practices thrive.

This represents a clearly defined "otherness" for these students. Unlike the children of South-East Asia, these students experience that their financial needs are filled without question. This does not mean that all of their "wants" are fulfilled but they accept as "normal" that they will attend school until they complete high school or college. Within their families, abortion is generally viewed as murder not as an economic tool to control population. These children expect to grow up surrounded by loving families. They do not, like some children in South-East Asia, have to leave their families in order to survive.

Student responses to this type of "otherness" were included in this study because they present a picture of the students making sense of multicultural issues conceptualized

as issues of "justice". This represents a change of focus from that used in Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes in which multicultural issues were conceptualized as "dealing with the exotic". In the first instance, the focus is on individual psychological changes that may be necessary. However, in the second instance when multicultural issues are conceptualized as issues of justice among all groups of human beings, the focus switches to social transformation. This may lead into the uncomfortable zone of questioning what has been accepted as "normal". (Jackson and Solis, 1995; hooks, 1993; Sleeter, 1996; McCarthy and Willis, 1995).

"Normal" for these students is a white middle class existence within the context of a capitalist economy. These four selections provided an opportunity for students to become aware of the advantages they enjoy as a result of their membership in western white society (Sleeter, 1995) and to become aware of issues of injustice in our lives (Jackson and Solis, 1995). This emphasis on critical pedagogy parallels multicultural pedagogy (Gay, 1995a).

The Plan

"Being out and stepping in" consisted of my relating some stories of South-east Asian students whom I had met while teaching in a former school and looking at the pictures of South-east Asian people living in poverty which accompanied the first selection. This led into quite a long

discussion of related stories suggested by the students. One student offered to share with the class an article which she had read at home in Reader's Digest about a doctor who refused to do an abortion in China. This article became selection B.

"Being in and moving through" occurred at the times that the students read the selections silently. They were supported in this stance by an assignment which asked them to adopt a first person point of view and assume the role of either Nam, Ling or Kon Ki. While in that role, they were to write a first letter home to their family. We discussed the logistics of the journey that were not described in the excerpt. I suggested that probably their first destination would have been a refugee camp in Thailand. We discussed the distance and the probable number of days that the children spent on the boat.

During the majority of the time spent on these selections, the students adopted the stance of "being in and stepping out" as they reflected on the lives of the people in the selections and on their own lives. The activities that supported this stance were intended to lead students into critical self-reflection without having my opinion be dominant (Carlson, 1995). Occasionally I shared some of my experiences to enhance their understanding.

I designed the first of these activities, a mock trial of Nam and Ling's father, with some hesitation. My goal was

to have students understand the cruel choices facing Nam and Ling's father whose love for his children shone through the story while at the same time he was doing something to his children that might be unthinkable to these students. However, with the format of a trial, I risked that these students would feel that they had the right to sit in judgment. I downplayed this aspect by not appointing a judge or jury to reach any verdict. Instead the students could choose whether they would join the "prosecution" or the "defense". Each group met with me to make a list of statements in support of their choice. These two sets of statements were shown to the class after which the students were asked to write a journal response.

Because I know that all of these students are very strongly pro-life, I attempted to balance their view of abortion in China with my abridged version of a Toronto Star article on child labor in South East Asia. I wanted the students to be aware of the social pressures created by extreme poverty. Using the example of child labor provided an opening for showing a connection between our desire for cheap clothes and the dismal economic situation in South-East Asia. In this way students were encouraged to avoid facile judgmental attitudes. After a lengthy class discussion, the students were asked to revisit their journals and see if they would change their minds at all about Nam's family situation.

It seemed unwise to leave the students with the impression that poverty is only an Asian problem. This would remove issues of justice too far from their own lives. It might also lead to feelings of superiority. This is why the students were led to discuss issues of poverty close to home.

My own most recent involvement with poverty which I related to the class concerns some Mexican Mennonite immigrants. I related their story to the class. The mention of Mennonites immediately triggered associative responses because they are a visible minority in this area. A lengthy discussion about poverty and unequal distribution of wealth ensued. Unfortunately because of time constraints, this discussion was cut short before the students were ready to stop talking.

Selection D was presented to the students as another example of economic difficulty but one in which "good neighbours" were present. They were asked to read the story and find examples of good neighbours and to suggest ways in which they could be good neighbours. This returned student focus to the Biblical norm presented in the story of the Good Samaritan.

The Snapshots

Five snapshots of students responding to these stories were taken. Because of the length of this section, the

focus of each snapshot is described in a brief introduction to each separate snapshot.

Snapshot #11: Student Knowledge of "Others"

The first snapshot in this section presents a glimpse of student knowledge of "others" before they read the selections. It is presented for two reasons. First of all, it indicates the degree to which their monocultural setting precludes their knowledge of "others". Secondly the amount of knowledge of "other" which the students have at their disposal, affects how they envision "other" (Smith, 1988).

a. Knowledge of "Others" Located Faraway (South-East Asia)

Upon hearing that the pictures of poverty illustrating the story of Nam's Journey depicted Viet Nam, the following associations were made spontaneously. "On my old street, yeah, there were some Vietnamese people there." "Where we went for holidays there were some Viet Nam missionaries there." When I began to tell the story of a former student, a twelve year old girl from Hong Kong who came to Canada to live with her aunt, the following conversations ensued without any prompting.

Conversation 1

Teacher: One girl whose name was Kum Kanh came from Hong Kong when she was twelve years old. But, you might think that at that point she might come with her mom and dad...

Student A: She was married. (There are some giggles.)

Teacher: No she wasn't married but..

Student A: Sometimes that happens.

Teacher: That's right sometimes that happens sure.

Student A: The Mexicans they get married at 12 or 13. Student B: In India they have like, um... like child brides like.. They like are married when they are children and they have babies before they are out of their teens. (She shows the book she has been reading.)

Conversation 2

Student A: I have this aunt who adopted this baby from China. Ummm. from an orphanage because they only allow girls in the orphanage.

Teacher: So they only allow girls in the orphanage?

Student A: Yeah because they're not boys right? Because like they can only have one person in the family and so they only want boys.

Teacher: How many of you knew that in China there is a law that says that each family is only allowed one child because there's so many people and then what happens is that parents want only boy children because otherwise nobody carries on the family name.

Student A: Because boys can work hard.

Teacher: I think it's not only because of hard work it's also to carry the family name.

Student B: If there are only boys, who will they marry?

These conversations led to other associations made by other students. "I know of this story. There was a man and a wife in a war and the man left and after he couldn't find his wife so he came to Canada and here he found his wife again." "I saw this show and these people they found these children in this hole in bags and they rescued them."

Several students showed enough interest to return to the topic the following day.

My mom said that in China, the first child you had got a good education and all the money that they needed. They also wanted all the first born children to be boys, but if you decided you wanted to keep the girl, you wouldn't get as much as if it was a boy. If

you were pregnant they would take an ultrasound to see if it was a boy or a girl. If it was a girl and you wanted a boy, they would (of course) abort the baby.

The student who had mentioned the TV show which included finding children in bags in a hole, informed me that the name of the show was "Bay Watch".

b. Knowledge of "Others" Located Nearby (Canada)

The students responded hesitantly to a general prompt asking for stories of poverty in Canada. They seemed unwilling to share stories that they did know until I shared a story of a Mennonite family of farm workers whom I had met. The following stories were told.

Conversation 1

- Student A: We went to a Mennonite town. We went to a Mennonite school.
- Student B: My mom' work has a secretary who is married to Mennonite but she just wears jeans or ..
- Teacher: Okay, so you have seen Mennonites who dress differently and Mennonites who dress like a normal teenager.
- Student C: Umm, by my house the Mennonites work in the candy store.
- Teacher: What do they do there?
- Student C: They just take your money and everything.
- Teacher: Okay, so they're cashiers?
- Student D: [The tape is unclear but she is talking about seeing Mennonite buggies at St. Jacobs.]
- Student E: One time I heard on the news that these Mennonites were in their buggy and someone threw a beer bottle out of the car window and hit them.
- Teacher: Did they do that on purpose throw the beer bottle at them?
- Student E: I don't know. They could have done it by accident as they threw the beer bottle out of the window or on purpose.
- Student F: [Unclear]
- Teacher: Okay, so you have seen them also on the side of the road.

Student G reported that she has a great aunt who befriended a young Mennonite family. This Mennonite family had a child and then moved back to Mexico where they had another child. They decided to return to Canada and when they arrived they called this student's great aunt in the middle of the night to say they had no place to stay. The great aunt had to drive a few hours to go and pick them up. The tone of voice that was used was quite deprecating.

Student H reported that when she and her friend go for bike rides they see Mennonites living close to town.

In the following conversation the students move beyond discussing examples to a discussion of the causes of poverty.

Conversation 2

Teacher: What do you think causes poverty?

Student A: No jobs.

Student B: They don't save their money.

Student C: They spend their money on lottery tickets.

Student D: Sometimes if a family is poor there's a good chance that the children will also be poor.

Student E: They spend the money on beer.

Student F spoke too softly to hear the words verbatim but since I echoed her response to the class my response is given verbatim so that her response shines through.

Teacher: That's what we call a vicious cycle, right? Where you can't get enough money so you can't get a good education so you can't get a job so you can't get money.

Student G: And some people don't know how to spend their money.

The next discussion made reference to a simulation which I conducted for the students a half year before this discussion took place. The class was divided into sections proportional to the economic groupings of the world population. A cake representing world resources was shared among the groups in a way that reflected the distribution of world resources among the economic groupings. The result was that one student was given approximately one third of the cake, a few students had a normal size piece of cake and the majority of the class got only a small bite of cake.

The discussion began with my suggesting that the basic cause of poverty is unequal distribution of wealth. In response to a request for clarification, I suggested an illustration based on the excess of clothes in my closet compared to others in the world who have very little. A large section of discussion is presented here to allow the reader to get a sense of the tension in the classroom during the discussion. My echoing of student responses has been removed to shorten the presentation here.

Conversation 3

Student A: You know how you said that like some people have more than other people. Well some people have like this huge, huge house. Well they earned their money, they got their education and they got what they needed to get that. I think like it's fair enough for them and like I know like I see on TV sometimes the people with the better education helping the other people who have none and they're all sorta like sharing what they're doing but they got their education, they did it and they like

- teachers some times like they're teaching other kids and they're also sharing it.
- Teacher: How many of you agree that people who are rich have earned the right to be rich?
- Several Students: [It's unclear but the gist is that they question that it's bad to be rich.]
- Teacher: Okay, I don't think that when I ask whether people who are rich have earned the right to be rich... umm... Do I sound as though I'm making a judgment? Like that I'm saying that they're bad?
- Student A: Well,... just a bit ... like how they shouldn't do it like how they should give more. Like I give some stuff to my cousins that don't have much and my cousins give some to me... like we're sharing and like we bring clothes to the thrift store and I know like a lot of people like they're helping and like they buy Bibles for other people, they're helping. Everybody helps around even if they're rich or even if they're poor.
- Classroom Teacher: I'd like to make an observation that they did a study last year or so that if everybody in the world would live like Canadians, the world would have to be three times as big so that sort of suggests that we use five times as much of everything than many other people in the world. That much is not right.
- Student B: But we don't know how poor they really are because some people take care of them.
- Student C: Okay you know like... some of the rich people why do they buy that stuff.. cause like they know they're going to die and then it's all going to go to waste. At the thrift store my mom used to work there, and the Bibles are paid for by the Christians.
- Student D: You know why those people they buy stuff cause they leave it.
- Student E: Okay, well, if we have the money, we can use it. [The rest is too soft to hear on the tape but it is something about working hard to get enough.]
- Student A: My neighbours they're like they bought a motor home and well they could always sell it if they know they are going to die. But they're still healthy and they're still at a good age to do stuff.

Student F: For when they people die they usually have a will to leave things to someone.

Student B: Well like we also do Operation Christmas Child.

Teacher: Do you remember last year, I think I did this with you where I brought a cake to school?
[There is a chorus of Yeah's.]

Teacher: Yes.. and some of you [the tone of voice reminds them of the chagrin that some expressed at getting very small pieces of cake.].. and look, student G still remembers that she got the biggest piece. And how did the rest of you feel when you got only a few little crumbs?
[There are a number of negative comments made.]

Teacher: Bad... But that's the way the world is divided, isn't it.

Student F: I guess so.

Student H: Well you may have money but like if your body is not working

Snapshot #12: Understanding a Different Reality

The second snapshot presents a picture of student ability to envision a different reality as experienced by "others". This snapshot focuses on how well students are able to recognize "otherness". Jackson and Solis suggest that unless we can see ourselves as "one among many", we will not be able to truly address multicultural issues (Jackson and Solis, 1995). A prerequisite to seeing ourselves as "one among many" is an ability to accurately see "others".

a. Transposing Home Culture Onto "Other" Culture (11)

One student seemed to transpose her own religious experience onto the Vietnamese children. When she wrote a letter in the role of Nam, she stated, "We praised and sang when we reached Canada." Although the word, "God", is

omitted, the tone of the phrase implies that it should be there. Another student seemed to understand the simplicity of the food the Vietnamese children ate but she referred to the Vietnamese children eating bread and butter which is a basic staple in her home culture. "We had rice with different berries everyday. For lunch we had two pieces of bread and butter and for supper we had two pieces of bread and butter and rice for supper." In reality the story relates that the children are given two pots of cooked rice and some roast duck for their journey.

Other students in this group displayed some difficulty in envisioning the effects of poverty accurately. They imagined the Vietnamese children as having "binoculars" with their parents "buying tickets" so the children could "fly" to Canada. One student who had adopted the role of Kon Ki who, as the story relates, spent one summer at sea transposed Kon Ki's experience into summer camp. "I [24 year-old Kon Ki] tried to keep them [Nam and Ling] safe since I went to summer camp I knew how."

Another style of transposing home culture onto "other" culture was indicated by this student who was trying to make sense of the results of over population in China.

- Student: Like China has to sell the food and there's not enough food to give to all the kids that are being born.
 Teacher: What do you mean that China has to sell the food?
 Student: Like.. well.. they have to sell the food to earn money to feed the kids.

This student conceptualizes money as the only source of food which implies that the only source of food is the grocery store as this student experiences it.

The last example in this category is interesting because, even when gently challenged, the student persists in transposing her doing of chores onto the daily drudgery of children in South-East Asia. Her inability to distinguish between these two prevents her from envisioning the life of "others".

Student: I work.
Teacher: This many hours?
Student: I work about one hour.
Teacher: But do you work from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon, six days a week?
Student: Yeah, I work everyday.

The thoughts included in this category display an inability to step completely into a different culture. Instead these students implicitly made the assumption that "other" people experience the world as they themselves do.

b. Misconception of the Situation (28)

These thought units displayed some misunderstanding of the problem faced by "others". They did not transpose their own culture onto "others" in a universalization of their own experience but they did not accurately envision a different life situation.

The first example included in this category seems almost to be an example of transposing the home culture onto the "other" culture. Hiding in the dark hold of the boat to

avoid the harbor police is associated with more familiar war stories. "We couldn't have any lights on cause the enemy would fire at us." Since both situations are basically "other" for these students this example was included as a misconception. Five students posited freedom as the antidote to poverty in their imaginary letters to their families. "I'm glad we're in freedom now." Four students had difficulty grasping the permanence of Nam and Ling's separation from their family. "Nam is ill and we want to come home. See yah."

Twelve thought units displayed evidence of adjusting the physical context. For example, the story made no mention of sharks anywhere but the students talked about "...shark infested water." Although such acts of interpretation seem less crucial in terms of social justice issues than misconception of the children's situation, they are included in this category because they also display inaccurate envisionment of the world of "others."

c. Correct Conception of the Situation (97)

This category is extremely large because the majority of the thought units written in the imaginary letters (80/130) presented the conditions on the boat accurately. "Many of the beams were rotten and were leaking water through the floorboards." The rest referred to food supply and meeting Kon Ki. The physical conditions seemed to draw student attention.

The other seventeen thought units in this category indicate that the students who expressed them were able to envision some one else's feelings and experience. "It was weird being in such a small place with so many strangers. During the night I [Nam] felt very lonely when I thought about you guys. I thought I would never see you guys again." "Ling was scared of the darkness because we couldn't have any lights because you could see light through cracks and officials would see us." "Captain took everyone's gold and bribed government officials with some of it." In terms of issues of social justice, these interpretations may be of more importance than the interpretations of the physical conditions of the boat.

d. Entering Into the "Other" Culture (1)

The introductory discussion for the mock trial focused on whether or not the father was a loving parent. As evidence that the father was not loving, one student offered that she noticed that the father did not even wave when he left Nam and Ling at the boat. Another student countered that perhaps waving was not a part of that culture. This student who was able to imagine different customs for a different culture displaying an ability to see herself as "one among many."

Snapshot #13: Stances Towards Economic "Others"

The third snapshot in this section focuses on the stances taken by the students when they are confronted with

"otherness" in terms of economic injustice and their own privileged position. Because each discrete thought seemed to imply only one stance, no dimensional continuum is presented in this section of the analysis.

a. Normative Critic (18)

Here the student stood apart from "others" and looked at "others" with a critical eye and making normative judgements. Some critique (2) was positive. "I think Yin Wong did a good thing about not killing the baby even though he would not be working any more." However, much more of the critique (16) was negative. "I think the owners are too greedy."

b. Doctor/Patient (15)

The doctors stood apart from the life situation of "others" and suggested remedies. Some remedies (9) were applied to the patient (i.e. "other"). "I think that in China you should be able to have 1 kid and then if you had another kid you should have like a little center were a bunch of kids stay and get fed." Some remedies (3) were applied to the system. "I know the prices on clothes will go up, but the kids should get paid more to skin burning toxic stuff with out gloves or masks, or at least give them equipment." Finally some remedies (3) were applied to the doctor (i.e. We should change.). "I think we should feed the poor and give them our old clothes."

c. Spectator (22)

The spectators tried to make sense of the life situation in which "others" find themselves. No suggestions were made for changing the status quo. No empathetic emotions were expressed. "For when the people make their kids work I understand b/c otherwise the people will die of hunger and also they wouldn't have a place to sleep."

Student A: Well.. at least the baby could live for a little while .. if they could hide it, the baby could live for a little while.

Student B: Why live if you know you're going to die anyway?

Student C: We all know we're going to die, so why do we live?

Student B: We're going to live much longer.

Student D: Well you might eat something bad and your children and you might not live that long.

Student B seems rather unmoved by the tragedy of killing a baby far away. Students C and D do not respond to this fact but try to defeat her argument by attacking its logic rather than its lack of moral outrage at a situation that results in killing babies.

d. Fellow Traveller (17)

Fellow travellers attempted to understand the life situation of "others" by struggling with the issues that "others" face and looking at multiple aspects of a situation. Fellow travellers differed from spectators in that more emotional involvement is displayed in the word choice. In order to indicate this stance, an exception to the plan to present discrete thought units separately has

been made because it is impossible to indicate multiple aspects of a situation in one discrete thought unit.

Some fellow travellers (6) were attempting to arrive at a normative stance. "I think it is horrible that China people kill their babies. But in another thing there doing a good thing b/c otherwise they would die painfully." Other fellow travellers (11) were working towards an empathetic stance. "Well, I guess Prosecutions and Defence are both right and wrong. The parent's are doing the best they can, but the children will miss them."

e. Sympathetic Friend (19)

The sympathetic friends displayed lots of empathy in understanding the difficulty of life situations experienced by "others". "I think the father really cared for them. I don't think it's nice that all the people there have very little food, and we usually have more than we need."

Snapshot #14: Revisiting the Role of Good Neighbor

The students displayed a large amount of unanimity in deciding which characters in the story about Hari could be recognized as "good neighbours". The typical format adopted for these responses was " (NAME) was a good neighbour because (ACTION)." This caused a binary yes or no inclusion of a character in the category "good neighbour". Therefore, no dimensional scale could be recognized in reference to story characters.

Student responses to viewing themselves in the role of good neighbor are included here as well to allow for clear comparison of differences and similarities in how students view "others" and themselves as "good neighbors." In terms of students interpretations of themselves in the role of "good neighbor" the dimensional scales are found in the order in which the thought units are presented in each category.

When the term "good neighbor" was thought of in relation to story characters, the students consistently interpreted being a "good neighbor" as an action of help for Hari, the needy person for whom provision must be made. Yet in relationship to themselves, all but one of the students again placed themselves in the role of caregiver. This was interesting because the "good neighbors" in the story are adults except for a few references to Hari in the role of caregiver for his family. These students are children of approximately the same age as Hari yet in terms of being a "good neighbor", they seem to identify with adult roles in the story. However, some characteristics of "good neighbors" are left to the adults and not taken up by the students.

a. A Good Neighbor Provides Protection. (20)

The most common characteristic of a good neighbor that was mentioned by the students in relation to story characters was that a good neighbor provides protection.

"The old gentleman helped Hari by stopping the policeman from taking him in [to jail]." None of them cast themselves in the role of "good neighbor" as protector. Perhaps they identified most easily with Hari in terms of a need for protection.

b. A Good Neighbor Provides for the Development of Abilities. (17)

All mention of the development of abilities referred to the watchmender. "The watchmender was [a good neighbor] because he taught Hari how to mend a watch." Only one student suggested that she herself in the role of "good neighbor" could help others develop their abilities. "I could teach people gymnastics." She has identified with Mr. Panwallah who helped Hari by teaching him the trade of watchmender. For the rest, the parallel between Hari learning how to mend a watch and these students busy learning in school seemed to guide their attention to this aspect of being a "good neighbor."

c. A Good Neighbor Provides for Physical Needs. (45)

Only fourteen of the thought units in this category referred to characters in the story who provided for Hari's physical needs including Hari who provides for the physical needs for his family. "One of the good neighbors is Jagu because he paid Hari such good wages and still provided him with food and a place to sleep." Food and shelter are certainly basic physical needs. Providing a job has been

included in this category because a clear connection between jobs and money was made. "The watchmender was a good neighbor because he made Hari a watchmender so that he could make money." Some of these students had previously made the connection between money and food while responding to the story about abortion in China. A connection is also made between money and the needs of Hari's family. "Hari was a good neighbor by going far away and work for someone he doesn't know just for money for his family."

Thirty-one of the thought units referred to the students themselves in the role of "good neighbors" who provide for physical needs. Of these approximately half suggested that sharing material resources is a way to provide for physical needs of "others". Some sharing suggestions would involve personal sacrifice which is sharing in the true sense. "Put money in the can for the sponsor child." "Giving food to the food bank." "Do the shoe-box thing" [At Christmas time the students are encouraged to fill a shoe box with small gifts. The boxes are sent overseas to needy children.] Other sharing suggestions would be at no cost to the donor but since they refer to distribution of material goods, they were included in this category. "Giving old clothes to Salvation Army." "Offer people jobs." "Lend stuff out." All of the sharing suggestions with the exception of the last one, "Lend stuff out." are quite specific in nature.

The other half of these thought units refer to actions that would provide for physical needs. Some referred to specific actions that would demand some self-sacrifice. "Cook some cookies." "If someone falls off a bike help him." "Working for people on cleaning" "Cut [an elderly friend's] grass." Others suggested a very globalized "... by helping them." A few thought units suggested actions that were in reality self-serving. "Clean my room." "Clean the table." "Do the dishes." "Walk the dog."

Perhaps "good neighbor" is associated with "being good" which includes doing the tasks you are asked to do. Perhaps the implication is that it is a parental duty to perform these jobs and the student may chose to do them as a way of being a "good neighbor" to the parents. No follow up interviews were given to ascertain why these self-serving actions were used to interpret the role of "good neighbor".

A few other thought units offered provision for physical needs from the perspective of care-giver but the students who expressed these thought units envisioned themselves within Hari's social context. Two of these suggested very specific actions, "Give Hari a cold drink," and "... giving him tips and better wages." A third thought unit was more globalized. "I would take care of Hari."

Only one student adopted the stance of care recipient. She suggested that a "good neighbor" is a "... a good friend

who helps you when you're hurt" and "...help you when you need help."

d. A Good Neighbor Provides for Emotional Needs. (17)

"Mr. Panwallah was saying kind words to Hari to make him feel welcome." Although this example was taken from the story by the students, only three students offered such examples. Adults in the roles of providing protection and physical needs were identified very clearly but adults in these roles were not noted often.

However, this aspect of the role of "good neighbor" is clearly applied to themselves because the rest of the thought units in this category referred to the students themselves as providing unselfishly for the emotional needs of others. A few made very globalized statements. "Being nice" and "... is nice and good to people." Slightly more specific were the statements "Being kind to others" and "Just being friendly." Sometimes very specific actions were mentioned. "Going to old people and talking to them." "By inviting people that don't get asked over." "Visit people who are lonely." All of these actions could be summed up in the statement "Being their friend." For these students, being a "good neighbor" equals being a "good friend".

The same student who suggested that a "good neighbor" provides for physical needs from the perspective of care recipient also suggested that a "good neighbor" provides for emotional needs. "... does not leave you to play with

someone else" and in a store "... does not leave you to help this rich guy." Here is one of the few times that a student seems to cast herself in the role of victim.

Snapshot #15: Student Attitudes Towards Being Confronted with Issues of Justice

This series of selections evoked some spontaneous expressions of like or dislike for the topic of study from the students. Because the number of these responses is limited and because they reveal something about student concern for those who suffer, all of the responses are presented verbatim along a continuum of self interest. A few incidents that occurred during class discussions are also included.

a. Disregard

When one of the students mentioned the T.V. show of the children that were found in bags, another student did a clown act pretending to choke herself.

b. Self-Interest

Classroom Teacher: (Playing devil's advocate) I think it's a good thing that they're [the children of South-East Asia] not paid decently because if they were paid decently, our clothes would cost more we couldn't afford them.

[There is a chorus of, "Yeah, that's right."]

"I don't like this story because there's no action."

"I like the story because their going to sneak out of the country that was the only good part. I didn't like the

rest because it has no adventure and it's not funny. The other thing is it's practically all describing things."

"I think this is a good story but it's not for me why because I like adventure like you know ummmm... like, like the Hardy boys and Hank the cowdog now those are awesome books their my favourite. I like this book it's not bad to read but there is other books you know."

c. Ignoring the Message

"I think this story is different because its not really a story its more telling what happened to people in the veanom."

"This story was okay but not the best. It has too much detail and not enough story."

"I thought the story was okay..."

d. Ego-centric Response to "Others"

"I don't like this story because it's sad."

e. Begrudging Interest in "Others"

"I think this is a boring story, but it also teaches us something. It teaches us that other people do not have as much as we do and how they have to suffer losing their family members."

"P.S. Could you maybe make the next story funner (not that this story was boring, it was kind of interesting), but I'm in the mood for an exciting story for kids."

f. Interest in "Others"

"I think this is a good story but I think there should be more to the story. They should have finished the story.

"At first I thought the story was very boring but after a while it got more interesting knowing that it really happened to someone. After reading those article's it made it more interesting."

"This is a good story it shows what other people or are like. And what some people have to do to live."

"I think this is a cool story b/c you kind of get to see what Nam's life sort of is. And what some parents get to go threw."

This completes the photo album which represents a first level of analysis. Making choices about inclusion or exclusion of raw data, grouping the chosen data and naming the groupings are all acts of analysis. The snapshots will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Studying the Snapshots

Introduction

Several possible perspectives could have been taken in this level of analysis. The students could have been looked at from the perspective of social development in which case their progress towards tolerant attitudes could have been studied. The students could have been looked at from the perspective of faith development in which case measurements of their commitment to applying the teachings of the Bible to their living would have to be made. The students could have been looked at from the perspective of skills development in which case this level of analysis would have been an assessment of their ability to read accurately. None of these perspectives were chosen as the focus of this level of analysis. Instead the focus of this level of analysis is on the world and life views that are being constructed by these students.

The students are active symbol interpreters. As such, they indicate the assumptions they are making about reality and the significances that they assign to "others" and to their own social roles in relationship to "others" as they respond to the stories that were read. Therefore, it is possible to gain some insight into their world and life views.

What is presented here is a generalized picture. No individualized portraits were made. Also the selections that they read guided the types of responses that were evoked. Therefore, what is presented here is a kind of conglomerate overview.

Christianity, which surrounds these students at home, at school and at church, is a definite shaping force in the lives of these students. Yet, although these students appear to be separated from mainstream culture, they also give clear evidence of being shaped by a white capitalistic society. As well they showed evidence of being aware of "other" cultures through having neighbors from different cultures, through participation in community sports, through contact with missionaries, vicariously through reading and TV. and through discussions with parents. Student interpretations were made within the context of these shaping forces.

Since, as temporary teacher, I was part of the students' home culture, I will also include here what the students could have seen in me as I was teaching. It was at times a very humbling experience to transcribe the scripts of my own presentations. On two separate occasions, I failed to take the advice of Ijaz who suggests that we need to watch our language extremely carefully (Ijaz, 1989). I unwittingly made statements which when I heard myself saying them later, sounded as though I made universals out of my

own social experience. The first instance was my reference to priests in Snapshot 7, Actions Speak louder Than words, and the second was during Conversation 1 in Snapshot 11 where I made the statement, "Okay, so you have seen Mennonites who dress differently and Mennonites who dress like a **normal** teenager." Although I reject a ludic postmodern view with its emphasis on multiple perspectives negating the possibility of universals (Lyotard, 1984), I have much in common with resistance postmodernists who emphasize the questioning of anyone's power to define universals for all people (Sleeter, 1996). Who determines what is "normal" for teenagers? These incidents do give an indication of how easy it is also for adults in this social context to slip into this type of soft racism of privileging one's own world and life view as a standard of normalcy (Halstead, 1992).

It should be remembered at this point that interpretation is a quadadic process involving a "program", a cultural context and a bracketing of a relationship between a symbol and a possible referent concept. Although all elements are intertwined in each act of interpretation, the snapshots vary in which elements of the interpretive acts are highlighted. Snapshots 3, 5, 8, 9 and 12 which focus on understandings highlight the bracketing process. Snapshots 2, 6 and 14 which focus on the roles of "friend" and "good neighbor" as well as snapshot 11 which focuses on

prior knowledge all arise more directly out of the cultural context that surrounds the students. Snapshots 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 15 which represent the stances and attitudes of the students are related most closely to student programs.

As much as is possible each interpretation in this chapter will begin by marking which perceptions were noted by the students. Next the diadic, triadic and quadadic aspects of the interpretation will be presented. Finally note will be taken of how the "I" stance shapes the interpretation. However, no human interpretations come so neatly prepackaged. Therefore markers that indicate which aspect of an interpretation is being discussed will also be supplied.

A list of the snapshots is presented here for easy reference throughout the reading of this chapter.

Sadako

- Snapshot #1: Sadako, "The Exotic Other", as Friend
- Snapshot #2: Interpreting the Symbol, "Friend"
- Snapshot #3: Understanding That a Difference in Belief Exists
- Snapshot #4: Stances Towards "Otherness"

The Good Samaritan

- Snapshot #5: Understanding an Illustration of the Utopian Ideal
- Snapshot #6: Student Interpretation of "Love Your Neighbor"
- Snapshot #7: Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Mr. Benson

- Snapshot #8: Student Understanding of Their Own Source of Comfort
- Snapshot #9: Understanding Religious "Others" Nearby
- Snapshot #10: Being a "Good Neighbor" to the Religious "Other" Nearby

Economic "Others"

- Snapshot #11: Student Knowledge of "Others"
- Snapshot #12: Understanding a Different Reality
- Snapshot #14: Revisiting the Role of Good Neighbor
- Snapshot #15: Student Attitudes Towards Being Confronted with Issues of Justice

Cultural "Otherness"

This section looks at how students view "exotic" diversity. As such it fits into the Canadian concept of multiculturalism. It is the explicit or overt elements of culture such as styles of dress and speech that are the focus. There are no issues of inequality. The only issues are cross-cultural understanding and relationship.

These students have very limited experience of cultural "others". Although people of color did settle in this area during the time of slavery in the United States and although there are native Canadian settlements at not too great a distance from here, these people are not strongly visible minorities in the general population of their home town. Only the Mennonites form a notable visible minority. Snapshot 11 shows these students viewing these Mennonites largely as "exotic" tourist attraction.

When they were confronted with "others" vicariously these students displayed the universal tendency to treat faraway people as "blobs" of undifferentiated masses (Zechariah, 1993). Sadako's culture which is Japanese is often referred to as Chinese. Because the girl from Hong Kong is sent to Canada at the age of twelve, the students jump to the conclusion that she is an East Indian child bride and associate this with Mexicans whom they perceive to be married at a young age. Needy victims, representing "others" for these students in an economic sense, are most

often conceptualized as nebulous globalized "everyone in need". A few students specify that this includes everyone "whether you know them or not" and one student makes explicit reference to "different colored people as well."

The subjective "I" stance that the self takes towards the world rather than the objective "me" stance seemed to be the strongest influence on the construction of the interpretation of cultural "otherness". In response to Sadako's cultural "otherness", no one expressed any sense of "ought to" about reaching across cultural differences. The only hint at "ought to" specifically in relationship to cultural "others" was given in response to the Good Samaritan where several students mentioned that we ought to help all "others" whether "we know them or not" and "not only white people."

Ego-centric parallels arising out of the "I" stance were the strongest factor in determining whether or not Sadako could be a friend. In other words, diadically, a friend is someone who likes what I like. It is difficult to tell whether the triadic influence in this case is a monocultural experience or a stage of development.

Snapshot 1 reveals that in considering Sadako as possible friend, the focus of attention rested twice as heavily on her physical characteristics, on her personal likes and dislikes and on situational factors as on cultural

or religious differences. This indicates something about the guidelines that these students generally use in choosing friends. These criteria are the ones that would be available to students in a monocultural setting.

Relatively few students actually considered inherent positive qualities in Sadako. In Snapshot 2 focused on student interpretation of "friend" also relatively few students indicated inherent qualities that a friend should have. Perhaps this is an indication that these students need to mature to a more formal operational stage of development in which they are able to more abstractly identify qualities of a friend.

Idiosyncratic likes and dislikes arising out of the self as "I" also seemed to guide the diadic interpretation of cultural "otherness". Those students who enjoy new situations interpreted cultural "otherness" as exciting and enjoyable. "It is pretty cool because you get to see how Chinese celebrate festivals." Other less adventurous students interpreted cultural "otherness" as strange and threatening. "It might be scary." The stances towards cultural "otherness" described in Snapshot 4 also indicated that some of the "programs" that these students have adopted arise out of personal preferences. Some are very interested in looking beyond home while others refuse to look. These children, like all children, are not born as *tabulae rosae*

but have personalities that affect how they interpret cultural symbols (Charon, 1985).

Snapshot 2 displays a continuum that moves from "Friends should be alike," to "Friends can be any type of people." Drawing a quadadic relationship results in two alternative interpretations of friendship. "I want to learn more, therefore, friends are people who are different," or "I want to be comfortable in my home culture, therefore, friends must be like me." This indicates that decisions about possible cross-cultural friendships would arise out of the "I" stance that the students take rather than out of their social context.

Individual attitudes also affected interpretations of "otherness." Some students posited their own cultural patterns as normal thus rendering cultural "otherness" abnormal. Chizuko is strange because she believes in spiders as good luck. Other students adopted an attitude of disdain towards the abnormal, thus rendering the cultural "otherness" inferior. "Chirpin crickets!!! Siick!!!" It was encouraging to note that in spite of these attitudes, Sadako's positive qualities were almost universally recognized. She can still be regarded as a heroine because of her individual courage and determination. Cultural "otherness" poses no barrier here.

It should be noted that all of the previous examples arise out of the story of Sadako. Interpretation of

cultural "otherness" in the story of Nam seems to be a more triadic process influenced by the cultural experience of the students. Simple fare in the form of rice and a few pieces of duck is transposed into bread and butter. This example, as well as others such as assuming that Nam will have binoculars indicate that some students have difficulty walking with a different cultural view. On the other hand, some students tended to be able to be more objective about their own cultural patterns and to view cultural "otherness" as viable alternative practices. It was suggested that perhaps Nam's father did not wave to his children because his cultural pattern may be different from ours. Again individual differences seem to guide their interpretation of cultural differences.

An interesting point that should be noted here is that the students heard the story of Sadako in January of their grade five year and the story of Nam at the end of September of their grade six year. Aboud (1992) suggests that in the middle childhood years egocentrism in a child tends to decrease as the child becomes a concrete operational thinker able to take a different point of view. At the time of reading Sadako's story, a number of students displayed a definite ability to take on a different perspective. "If I had the same problem I would believe the story about the cranes just for the sake of getting better." "I think making a thousand paper cranes to live would raise my hopes and I

would work like crazy." Later in the reading Nam's story others displayed this ability. Perhaps interpretations of "otherness" will change with maturity.

Religious "Otherness"

Snapshots 3 and 8 show that the students' own source of hope and comfort in life and in death is almost unanimously God, family and friends. The God who reveals Himself in the Bible is clearly accepted as the only true God. In Snapshot 4 about the stances that students take towards cultural "otherness", the Bible is used as grounds for determining who can be a friend and who cannot. In Snapshot 6, the Biblical story of the Good Samaritan is accepted by the students as a pattern for their own behavior in loving their neighbors. Only two students took an ego-centric stance and used the Biblical story as a criteria of how fellow human beings should act towards them rather than a directive for how they themselves should shape their actions.

These beliefs exert a strong triadic influence on student interpretation of religious "otherness". In the case of Mr. Benson, Snapshot 9 shows that there is a tendency to transpose their own understanding onto Mr. Benson even though the story makes no mention at all of Mr. Benson's relationship to God and his understanding of heaven. They seem to make the assumption that Mr. Benson has a similar world and life view to their own. Snapshot 9

also shows that in the case of Mr. Benson only one student made a clear and full diadic connection between the growing trees and Mr. Benson's comfort while many others noticed more generalized connections.

Almost all incidental references to Sadako's religious beliefs represented by Sadako's trust in the folding of a thousand paper cranes were given the label "superstition". The spirit of the ancestor was given the label "ghost". The incidence of ancestor worship reminded the students of their own devotional times, "Sadako is religious". Yet they are hesitant to use the word "prayer" which in their minds is associated with "the true God". When asked to focus specifically on Sadako's hope in Snapshot 3 which compares belief differences between Sadako and the students, the students made a strong diadic connection between Sadako's hope and the folding of a thousand paper cranes. However, they ignored the fact that it would be the gods who would grant her life in response to the folding of the cranes.

These students, therefore, display the common tendency to fit the unknown into one's own reality (Bullard, 1996). They develop an ethnocentric, or in this case religiocentric understanding of religious "otherness" by reducing the foreign to their own concepts and values (Bredella, 1993). The students seem unable to grasp an alternative religious belief clearly.

Yet some of the students seem to understand that their own religious belief comes as a result of being born into a specific family having a specific religious commitment. They make the connection that "If I were Chinese...", I would think differently. Only one student is adamant that even if she were in Japan in Sadako's circumstances, she would still have the same religious belief.

Although both Mr. Benson and Sadako are "other" to these students in terms of religious differences, Sadako is "other" in terms of culture as well as religion while Mr. Benson is only "other" in terms of religion. This fact seems to make a difference in how these students interpret the religious "otherness" in Sadako compared to the religious "otherness" in Mr. Benson. In Snapshot 9 the students make no comment on the fact that Mr. Benson who struggles with great sorrow makes no mention at all of the God who is such a familiar part of the lives of these students. A conclusion that can be drawn from student lack of attention to this omission is that at least this did not shock their sensibilities. When this is juxtaposed with the interpretation of religious "otherness" as a definite barrier to friendship as in the case of the Sadako story in Snapshot 1, the difference seems startling.

In Sadako's story, perceived religious differences were a categorical barrier as to whether or not Sadako could be labelled as "friend". "She believes in good luck signs and

spirits" ergo she cannot be a friend. The problem could be overcome only if Sadako would change to conform to the students' religious beliefs. Sadako cannot be a friend "cause she believes in spirits but you could tell her about Jesus, the real God." In the case of Sadako, they clearly privilege their own religious beliefs as dominant over alternate religious beliefs (Halstead, 1992). The program for Sadako is that she must leave her strange ways and accept the "truth" as defined by these students if she is to be a possible friend.

However, Snapshot 10 about being a "good neighbor" to Mr. Benson indicates that, even when their own Christianity is factored in, their program in relationship to him is that they must make him feel good. Therefore, it is their job to support Mr. Benson and help him to plant trees. Only one student, and it should be noted that this is the same student who understood Mr. Benson's relationship to trees most clearly, intimated that Mr. Benson should change his religious beliefs while a few others felt compelled to share their own source of comfort with Mr. Benson.

The strength of the religious barrier in Sadako's story should not be interpreted as the students blindly prejudging someone who thinks differently than they do. Snapshot 4 shows that almost every student noted, with respect and appreciation, Sadako's courage and determination. A few students looked beyond the surface features, "She doesn't

like praying to her... She just doesn't like doing it because she wants to hurry up and go," and "So she's like us, good and bad." This point is important to note because the ability to perceive positive attributes in "others" is associated with low prejudice towards "others" (Gutman and Hickson, 1996). Aboud also suggests that these skills are associated with a decline in prejudice (Aboud, 1993). Therefore, although these children appear to be biased towards their own religious beliefs, no one should jump to the conclusion that they also view religious "otherness" with blind prejudice.

A tension between the "me" stance and the "I" stance in the students is revealed in the role assigned to God in their lives. Snapshot 8 indicates that God is the most frequently mentioned source of comfort which is associated with times of extreme need and a feeling of security. Therefore, in the "me" stance the students know that God will care for them. Yet the same Snapshot also reveals unreasoned fear of driveby shootings and harassment in the "I" stance. They are not totally socialized by the shaping influence of the role of God in their lives.

Although the Bible is a shaping influence on the "me" stance, the "I" stance is still very present.

- Student A: "In the Bible it says you're only supposed to have christian friends."
 Student B: "Yeah so it can't be.... so it can't be a friend."
 Student A: (Makes noises that indicate an attitude of ha-ha-hu-ha-ha.)

Student C: Be quiet. (With a little laugh)

Student B took the stance of "me" and conformed her thinking towards her understanding of Biblical directives. At the same time Student A who introduced her understanding of the Biblical directive in her first utterance which implied a "me" stance, displayed an attitude that she knew would not conform to Biblical directives in an "I" stance in her second utterance expressing an attitude of disdain. Student C took the "me" stance in telling Student A to "Be quiet," but she could not resist a little laugh in the "I" stance.

Watching these students as they chose their groups for working together in snapshot 7, gave some indication that in terms of care for students on the borders of their own social milieu, some of them are being shaped by Biblical directives. They were willing to actively make sure that everyone was included. Other students, however, did not seem to notice the discrepancy between reading a Biblical story about loving your neighbor and an explicitly ego-centric worry about making sure they themselves were provided for first of all.

Economic "Otherness"

Issues in this section are related to multicultural issues conceptualized as issues of justice. In this view the goal of multicultural education is social transformation

to create more just societies rather than individual psychological changes (King, 1994; Jackson and Solis, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; McCarthy and Willis, 1995). This definitely moves multicultural issues beyond the comfort zone.

Snapshot 14 indicated that students remembered the simulation using the unequal distribution of cake to represent unequal distribution of wealth in the world. Their reactions indicated that they remembered the sense of injustice that they felt during the simulation. The spontaneous comment in Conversation 3 by the classroom teacher about our overuse of resources reminded students of the inequality in wealth as well. The students were also confronted with the stark comparison between the lives of child laborers in South-East Asia and their own lives. However, the basic rationale that the students presented during the discussions of unequal distribution of wealth in Snapshot 14 was "We are rich because we worked hard and got an education so we deserve to be rich." Those students who spoke were unanimous in their response. It seems that these students consider their economic position in the world to be just and fair because they accept as truth the individualism and competitiveness of the free enterprise system.

The Economic "Other" Faraway

It has been said that the type of writing assignments that are given influences the type of knowledge that is learned (Newell and Winograd, 1995). In the same way the

type of response prompt that is given influences what the students note. Yet in spite of this fact, in the case of these stories it was interesting to note that with each prompt, student attention seemed to focus on physical aspects of a problem rather than to feelings of guilt about the unequal distribution of wealth which had been stressed.

The most direct relationship between assigned prompt and what was noted occurred in the response to Hari's story. The students were asked to identify examples of "good neighbours" in the story and to suggest once again how they could be "good neighbors". The focus of attention turned largely to giving help in providing for immediate basic physical needs.

The response prompt for the story of Nam left more freedom for the students who were simply asked to step into one of three possible roles and to write a letter home. Any thing could have been noted. When given this freedom, the main focus of attention once again turned mainly to the physical details of conditions on the boat.

The story about the Chinese doctor who refused to do abortions was used only as a discussion starter. The lengthy discussion which ensued, focused on the issue of whether it was better for the babies to be aborted or to die of hunger later. That the issue of abortion drew attention is not surprising because abortion is an oft quoted example of the wickedness of society in the social milieu of these

students. What was surprising to me was that some of them would even consider abortion as a possible alternative to the physical pain of hunger.

In all three cases, poverty is associated with physical deprivation. Only one student expressed concern about the unequal distribution of wealth. "I don't think it's very nice that all the people there have very little food and we usually have more than we need." In Snapshot 14, the students do express a need and willingness to help provide for physical needs but such help is given by sharing excess bounty.

It should be noted that in the initial discussion of unequal distribution of wealth, I tried to illustrate the problem by indicating that my closet contains more clothes than I can wear and that sometimes I have to bring the excess to a thrift store. My point was that I have too much. However, the students who are familiar with thrift stores heard it as my way of helping the poor. This may also have influenced their responses.

Although the students associated poverty largely with physical deprivation, they had some difficulty envisioning this deprivation. In a diadic sense the most accurate connections made were in the story of Hari as shown in Snapshot 14. Each of the characters identified as "good neighbour" was helpful in relieving Hari's needs in some way. Some "neighbors" gave protection. Others provided for

physical and emotional needs. Finally, help in developing skills was also viewed as "good neighbourliness".

In the case of Nam and Ling, Snapshot 12 presents a somewhat ambiguous picture of the students making diadic connections between the story that is read and the envisionment of the situation. On the one hand are the quite large group of students who seem unable to envision "otherness" in terms of poverty because they transpose their own affluent lifestyle onto the poor. Here the triadic influence of the students' own culture is clearly visible. On the other hand are the also large group of students who are able enter the roles of Nam, Ling and Kon Ki sufficiently to identify their feelings of loneliness. However, even here there is some triadic influence of the home culture. These students have never been away from their families permanently and they are able to imagine the loneliness that such a separation would cause. However, the story also mentions Nam's happy excitement about starting the journey as well as his later loneliness. Not one of the students took note of that. Such a feeling was unimaginable to them.

In the case of the Chinese doctor, the students identified abortion as the issue in the story which it clearly was. The story makes no mention of the problem of over population. When this problem was presented to them, it became part of the discussion in the sense that the

effect of over population is hunger which might justify aborting babies.

The stories of child labor in South-East Asia were consistently related to doing chores by one of the students who could not be budged from this perception. More accurate perceptions were made by another student who expressed concern about the dangerous chemicals that children must use.

Most of the stances towards economic "others" displayed in Snapshot 13, such as normative critic, doctor, spectator and fellow traveller indicate that the students view the problem of poverty as unconnected to their own lives. It is clearly "their" problem which is viewed from a distance. This relates triadically also to their view of themselves as care givers, a point which will be discussed further in the section on "love your neighbor."

Snapshot 15 reveals that in a quadadic sense, the students generally have a more immediate program of having fun in school. This caused them to view a discussion of poverty and stories of the poor far away as boring and a non-story. Even those students who approved of the stories did so because in an "I" stance of personal likes and dislikes, they happened to take an interest in learning something new. Therefore, the stories fit into their program of having fun in school.

The Economic "Other" Nearby

None of the literature selections focused directly on the "poor" nearby. However, the issues of poverty closer to home became the topic of the rather lengthy discussions displayed in Snapshot 11 when I mentioned the example of a Mennonite family. The discussions allow a view of the students at work interpreting their social milieu so they are included in the study.

The mention of Mennonites triggered a number of stories of Mennonites as exotic tourist attractions. No mention of the issue of poverty was made even though poverty had been clearly presented as the topic for the discussion. Even the story of the beer bottle being thrown at a buggy did not raise any discussion of the injustice of such an act.

The majority of causes of poverty suggested by the students were framed diadically as a deficit in the poor who do not save money but spend it unwisely on beer and lottery tickets. Only one student suggested that the poor could be viewed as victims of a vicious cycle of poverty that can trap people. The poor were also viewed as needy. Therefore, we should help them by giving them our cast off clothes and Bibles.

Often people who feel that society is just, tend to blame victims (Kehoe and Mansfield, 1993). This implies once again that these students accept as just a capitalistic society in which those who save their money are rewarded.

At a later point in the discussion they point out explicitly that those who are rich have worked hard and, therefore, deserve to be rich.

The discussions gave clear expression to the "program" that guides some of these students which was mentioned earlier in this section. They want to get an education to get a good job to make a comfortable living. A teacher, therefore, is signified in the role of "someone who shares". A good job is signified as one that is associated with enough monetary rewards to facilitate the acquisition of goods and services.

What happens when there is a perceived barrier to achieving a "program"? A study of attitudes of white students towards aboriginal and Chinese students done by Gutman and Hickson in Australia led to the conclusion that in social contexts where the "out group" was perceived to be in economic competition with the "in group" attitudes of prejudice were expressed but in social contexts where no such competition existed, no attitudes of prejudice were expressed (Gutman and Hickson, 1996). In relationship to the Mennonite "other" in their community, these students displayed a parallel response. Stories that viewed Mennonites as tourist attractions seemed to be noted just as interesting mention of an exotic presence. The only hint of negative emotional response was made in association with the

story of the aunt who was inconvenienced by the young Mennonite family in the middle of the night.

Attitudes changed considerably when students felt challenged about their wealth. While introducing Conversation 3 about the unequal distribution of wealth in Snapshot 11, I was very careful of my language and careful not to point the finger at others but to include myself as part of the category "rich". Yet the explicit mention of unequal distribution of wealth as a cause of poverty produced a strongly defensive response in some students. The atmosphere in the classroom was charged. There may have been those who did not feel defensive in the class but their opinions were not vocalized. Perhaps this was because of fear of differing with peers or perhaps because of agreement with what was being expressed.

Relating to "Others"; "Love Your Neighbor"

The first lesson that was focused on "Love your neighbor" was the lesson on The Good Samaritan. The diadic connection made by the students in the interpretation of this story indicated that "Love" is associated with providing help for the needy. "Love" and "good" are also diadically associated with providing for the needs of "others" in response to Hari's story. This diadic connection stayed constant in all of the references to being a "good neighbour".

In reference to Hari's story "needs" were most often defined in a physical sense. Emotional needs and the need to develop abilities were also mentioned, especially in relation to adult characters in the story. Examples quoted by the students of providing for these needs of "others", show that providing for such needs should not entail great personal sacrifice. Whatever is leftover or extra should be given freely. Although the concluding paragraph of this story, which is quoted in this study on p. 103, implies that it is important to help economic "others" to help themselves, this theme is ignored by the students in relationship to interpreting "needs" for which the students might provide.

The term "neighbour" seemed to shift in its diadic relationships in response to triadic influences of the situations described in the stories. In Snapshot 6 which is focused on the story of the Good Samaritan, "neighbour" was diadically linked to "the person in need". In Snapshot 14 which is focused on the story of Hari, on the other hand, the diadic reference shifted to "neighbors" as care givers rather than care recipients. It should be remembered that Hari is the only child character in the story. Perhaps the students, because they are also children identified with Hari and found it natural to have their needs met by surrounding adults.

Each time the students are asked to imagine themselves in the role of "good neighbour" the large majority of them assume the position of power and advantage. In 50 out of 57 thought units students identified themselves with the Good Samaritan, the care giver. Even the two students who cast themselves in the role of care recipient, do so in terms of having their needs satisfied rather than being in need. "I think my neighbors are my friends, my parents, and my teachers. The way I know is how they act like they are kind, caring and don't fight you to get what they want." A few students are able to conceive of being in a position of need alternated with a position of power in a reciprocal relationship. "Well, I think that means that when someone's in need, you should help that person: just as you would want someone to help you, in a situation like that." In Snapshot 14 in which the students were asked to review again how they could be good neighbours, they identify good neighbourliness with caregiving once more placing themselves in these roles. Because they have just read and responded to the story of Hari, they pattern their acts of neighbourliness on the acts of the adult caregivers in the story. At this point only one student continues to identify with the role of care-recipient. This reflects their privileged position in the world's economic order.

In their position of power, however, their program is that "good neighbours" show attitudes of caring. Attitudes

of disdain were not mentioned in the Biblical story but they were added to the skits in Snapshot 5 by the students leading to the conclusion that they find such attitudes possible. However, disdainful attitudes were consistently portrayed in a negative light.

A discrepancy which seemed to be overlooked by all the students was the emphasis on violence in three of the skits whose theme should have been "Love your neighbor." Although violence is clearly victimizing in the story, its portrayal was thoroughly enjoyed by both audience and players as a form of entertainment. These students are not exempt from the influence of popular T.V. culture (Wagner, 1990).

This glimpse into the world and life views of these students gives some indication of how these students may act towards "others" because people will act towards other people according to role that they expect those people to play. For example, some robbers entered a party intending to intimidate the party goers and so be able to steal what they wanted. However, the party goers thought that the whole thing was a gag and, therefore, showed no fear. The robbers finally left in frustration unable to attain their goal (Karp and Yoels, 1979). This light-hearted illustration once again makes the point that interpretations make a difference. In the next chapter several themes that occur in these world and life views will be discussed.

Chapter 6

Thinking About What Was seen

The study of the photographs brings to the fore a number of themes. Each of these themes brings to mind some questions that ought to be considered. In this section each theme will be stated and the questions that arise out of that theme will be discussed.

Religious "otherness" far away is a barrier to friendship.

In a discussion of cultural pluralism, Boyd dismisses Christian schools as irrelevant to the issue because they do not face up to the diversity of the public arena within their walls (Boyd, 1996). The curriculum in this Christian school does keep "otherness" comfortably "exotic" at a great psychological distance or far away at a great physical distance. Perhaps this is one factor in explaining why these students do display a strongly religiocentric world and life view in that they use their own religious commitment as the universal standard for normalcy (Lee, 1991; Bredella, 1993).

However, a question that needs to be asked is, "Are Christian schools unique in being biased towards one world and life view?" Foster states that no education is neutral and any choice in "leap of faith" creates an environment that privileges some and marginalizes others (Foster, 1997). Boyd's dismissal of Christian education as failing even the

most basic test of democracy, is certainly a clear example of the marginalized position of Christian education within the public forum in his mind (Boyd, 1996).

Boyd suggests that the way to achieve true moral pluralism is to bracket one's own commitment and to recognize the constructivist nature of values (Boyd, 1996). But it is impossible to step outside of one's value system (Gadamer, 1995). Even suggesting that such a possibility exists requires a commitment to the constructed nature of values rather than a commitment to the revelatory nature of values.

Foster, on the other hand, suggests that it is possible for students to participate in communities of memories [Mine: faith] as well as the public forum concurrently. What is needed is not a bracketing of values but a development of attitudes of respect for the sacredness of other beliefs. In this way members of different communities can engage in mutually critical reflections in a public forum. Such reflections will help each community to become critically conscious of themselves and to see their own strengths and weaknesses. In order to achieve this, members of communities must be able to articulate consciously the themes of their existence and ground themselves in their community of memory. This will prepare them for liberative participation in negotiations of ways to live together in the public forum (Foster, 1997).

It should also be noted that since this particular Christian school is not a parochial school, issues of diversity do arise. Although a common commitment to the God of the Bible exists, this commitment can be lived out in a variety of ways. Children from several different denominational backgrounds attend this school. This situation sometimes leads to rather intractable differences of opinions and understandings of how to live the Christian life. No one escapes the issues of diversity.

Religious "otherness" is not a barrier to caring.

In her book, Teaching Tolerance: Raising Open-Minded Empathetic Children, Bullard presents a beautiful definition of tolerance. She begins by identifying intolerance as the self-centered illusion that we are more valuable than others and a fear that the world may not conform to this opinion. In contrast, tolerance is a way of thinking, feeling and acting that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values, and the courage to act upon them. Tolerance, therefore, is more than enduring something we do not like. Tolerance is not moral relativity or indifference. It is not an intellectual position arising out of our politics, religion or culture, but the practical ability to feel connected to a great variety of human characters (Bullard, 1996).

Children who are loved consistently will feel secure. This security is extremely important to how tolerant a child will be because the fear of not being loved causes children to turn to them/us relationships for security. This allows the "them" to be defined as inferior while the "us" are, of course, superior and secure. As long as feelings of superiority can be maintained, a sense of belonging and self-esteem can be maintained. Because such children fear failure, they need a black and white world of certainties with no ambiguities (Bullard, 1996).

The first way of escaping this prison of fear is through self-reflection. When we realize that we ourselves also have deep contradictions of good and evil in our characters, then we take the first step to tolerant behavior towards others (Bullard, 1996). As one student said while grappling with Sadako's worship of ancestral spirits and her respectful love of her grandmother, "So she's like us both good and bad."

The second step is to practice tolerance even when it is not felt because the practice will reform our hearts and minds. To achieve this we need to rely on a power greater than ourselves (Bullard, 1996). This sounds very familiar to Christian ears which are attuned to the command, "Love your neighbour as yourself." A command is not optional but must be followed regardless of circumstances. When confronted with Mr. Benson's need, these students clearly

did not focus on religious differences but on fulfilling Mr. Benson's needs. Also in relationship to Sadako they showed respect and concern.

Once again, the question that needs to be asked is, "Do children learn tolerance by rubbing elbows with difference or by experiencing strong love in an environment that is filled with an ethos of caring?" This is not a new question but one that has been asked many times, especially in Britain with its emphasis on anti-racist education (Leicester and Taylor, 1992). Perhaps the question is repeated often because there are no easy answers.

These students have a capitalistic "program".

Sleeter (1996) suggests that white western students, which includes these students, need to be made aware of the problem of capitalistic oppression to make them open to working towards transforming society into more just patterns. McCarthy and Willis (1995) agree suggesting that the focus of multicultural education should move beyond cultural understanding, cultural competence and cultural emancipation to a relational multicultural education that stresses the zero sum relationship between haves and have-nots. Over consumption in the United States [and Canada: mine] results in Third World deprivation. Ijaz (1989) suggests that this should be done in an age appropriate way.

This theme is included as part of this study because a capitalistic program impacts on our relationship to "others" in a very real way. Capitalism has resulted in a very unequal distribution of wealth globally. How such an uneven distribution is interpreted, determines how we will act towards economic "others". This theme and the ones following it will focus on how students interpret economic "otherness".

The Education Committee of this Christian school has stated that "education at our Christian School is about developing a Christian way of thinking or Christian mind." But what is the Christian mind? There are those both within and without the Christian community who equate the Christian mind with a right-wing capitalistic free enterprise social system (Carlson, 1995). Others limit the Christian mind to only being caring and loving in interpersonal relationships. Christian mind in this case, however, refers to a Christian world and life view that stands in juxtaposition to a capitalistic world and life view.

In a capitalistic world and life view, human beings are divided into two groups, entrepreneurs and workers. Entrepreneurs have the power to name their environment and to act on it in the Freirian sense of being critically conscious and shaping reality (Freire, 1970). Workers, however, are objectified into labor costs and used and discarded like machinery. In a Christian world and life

view all people can name their reality and act on it. Just as Adam named the animals and so interpreted his environment so all human beings were created by God to interpret and shape. No human being may be objectified.

In a capitalistic world and life view the relationship between human beings is characterized by competition. This implies that the only way to achieve success is to make sure that someone else is unsuccessful. The result is something called "survival of the fittest". Christian human relationships are based on the command, "Love your neighbour." This implies that we must help our neighbours to flourish. In such a world and life view everyone uses their gifts for the communal good.

The relationship of humans to their world in a capitalistic world and life view is one of ownership. Ownership in turn implies the absolute right to make decisions about the use of resources that are owned. Perhaps such resources will be shared altruistically or perhaps they will be used selfishly. The owner's right to decide is sacred. In a Christian world and life view the relationship of humans to their world is one of stewardship rather than ownership. A steward is responsible to the owner of the world who will determine how its resources must be used. A steward is required to care for the possessions of the owner rather than use those possessions for personal gratification.

In a capitalistic world and life view justice is interpreted as equal opportunity to become good capitalists (McCarthy and Willis, 1995). However, this leads into a conundrum. A good capitalist is an energetic entrepreneur. If everyone is an entrepreneur who will be the workers? Besides are there enough resources in the world for everyone to be an entrepreneur in the North American style? In a Christian world and life view justice is interpreted as equal opportunity to use God-given talents to earn a reasonable share in the world's resources.

Critical examinations of our world and life views tend to move us far beyond our comfort zone (McCarthy and Willis, 1995). hooks (1993) indicates that this is a difficult task because it may mean that students will feel threatened and uncomfortable. I also know from experience that it is not an easy task to ask students to question their world and life view so deeply. However, in the interest of developing a Christian mind such questions must be addressed. A question that the Christian school community needs to ask itself is, "Are we achieving the goal set by the Education Committee?"

Poverty is interpreted as "their" problem by these children.

Christine Sleeter refers to this phenomenon in very strong terms. She calls for whites to become aware of the advantages they enjoy as a result of white racism and white

oppression (Sleeter, 1995). Miserando also suggests that students in rich white schools as well as students in disadvantaged schools need to confront issues of justice (Miserando, 1994). Just as Jackson and Solis (1995) suggest that American students need to become aware of the United States as transgressor of international law and perpetrator of genocide, so also we Canadians need to be aware of issues of injustice in our country.

A question that needs to be asked is, "How aware are these students of our white western colonizing role in creating the present economic injustice in our world?" Are they aware of how the global resource pie is divided and who largely controls the dividing of that pie? Do they know the place that native Canadians have in our white Canadian society and who has placed them in that position? Are they aware of how the objectification of workers results in conditions of unemployment and how that unemployment affects the lives of economic "others"? The God of the Bible confronted the people of Israel with these kinds of issues constantly.

These students responded defensively when confronted with the relationship between their wealth and poverty of "others".

Within the parameters of this study there was not enough time to explore this reaction more fully. The fact

that the defensiveness exists is important to note but that is all that can be said about these students at this particular time. But since this section of the study sets the themes in a broader social context, I would like to expand the discussion of this theme to include other students whom I have taught in other Christian schools which are part of the same organization as this Christian school.

I have experienced the same defensive attitude in some grade nine Social Studies classes as we discussed the issue of the unequal distribution of wealth and its causes more fully. Some of those students stated explicitly, "Well it's not our fault. We worked hard and we're smart enough to get an education so we can be rich. Why don't they do the same?" Some time later these same students participated in an elaborate simulation of how the unequal distribution of wealth creates a vicious cycle of poverty. Although the roles were assigned randomly, some of the most vocal students played the roles of the poorest of the world. They expressed a lot of frustration because it was not easy to change the conditions of those simulated lives. In the end, they refused to participate in the simulation.

How "others" are defined, determines the actions that will be taken in relationship to those "others". In describing some possible definitions that could be given, I would like to borrow a helpful heuristic from McClaren (1995) who used it to identify attitudes towards "otherness"

that are held under the rubric, multicultural. Conservative multiculturalism identifies differences as deficiencies that must be corrected in order to assimilate "others" into "mainstream" or "normal" culture. In the same way the economic "other" can be defined as having deficiencies that must be corrected in order to assimilate them into a "normal" capitalistic economic system.

Liberal multiculturalism and left-liberal multiculturalism both identify "otherness" in terms of authentic identities associated with being "female" or "African American" or "Latino". In this tradition the "mainstream" culture must be reformed to create equal opportunities for all groups. This would parallel a defining of economic "others" not as deficient but as equals. However, the premises of capitalism are not questioned. Emancipation from poverty consists of giving everyone an equal opportunity to be a capitalist (McCarthy and Willis, 1995).

Critical multiculturalism recognizes the constructed nature of all identities, both "other" and "mainstream". In this tradition, the world must be transformed into a place where all identities recognize their own constructedness and are open to redefinition with no one group having the right to define other groups (McLaren, 1995). In this perspective, economic "others" are defined as equals who may actually have valid alternatives to capitalism. The only

way that alternatives can be considered is to be critically aware of the premises of capitalism and to be willing to assess both the weaknesses and strengths of capitalism.

This does not imply that values must be changed. Values are accepted as part of the "basic leap of faith" and are revelatory in nature. However, identities and economic systems are formed in response to those values and are constructed in nature (Lee, 1991). These can be changed and shaped to be more closely aligned to a value system.

It seems to me that the interpretation of economic "others" implied by critical multiculturalism could lead to healthy attitudes towards "otherness". Students need to become critically conscious of their own view as well as of the views of others. Since no one group has the right to define others, there should be a willingness to listen to authentic voices of "otherness" and so learn about views from different windows on the world. Since all identities should be open to redefinition, there should be an ability to learn from one another. The question that should be asked is, "Are these students open to redefinition?"

These students used entertainment as a criterion by which to judge the experience of learning about economic "others".

Several of the previous sections pointed towards the urgent need for students to be critically aware of their world and life view and of social issues in the world. When

confronted with some of these issues, these students based both their approval and disapproval of the experience on the criteria of what they think is entertaining. This was very surprising because within the school community there is a strong ethos of caring for each other. With very specific programs students are trained to care for each member of the school community. A question that needs to be asked is, "Why does this nurturing into caring not carry over into a broader context?"

Abalos (1996) presents a helpful heuristic of the three stages through which all human beings pass on their way to becoming willing transformative agents working towards democratic multiculturalism or, in this case, more just economic systems. In the first stage, emanation, the status quo into which we have been born is accepted as normal unquestioningly although we may begin to perceive some discrepancies. The second stage, incoherence, begins at the point at which we refuse to accept the discrepancies and rebel against the status quo. In the final stage, transformation, we commit ourselves to discarding the old ways and creating new ways of being that are more just and loving knowing that there will always be the possibility of learning new ways to be more just and more loving. At this point we have become committed to an utopian ideal that must be expressed publicly in day-to-day living.

Initiating the process of moving through these stages, requires three necessary conditions. The first is people who become critically able to name their world (Freire, 1970). Changes in social structures such as working towards a more just society begin with such individuals interpreting their social milieu and acting in it (Wallace and Wolf, 1986). At this point education that promotes the stance of critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy are parallel concepts (Gay, 1995a).

The second condition is that these same people have the will and the ability to act as agents of transformation. Social transformations are made one step at a time by people who have been nurtured into a commitment and have learned how to address social issues.

Finally, the last condition is that these people need to have in mind some conception of how the world should be. Fien (1992) suggests that there can be no peaceful living together on this planet without justice. He quotes Pope Paul VI who says, "If you want peace, work for justice."

These students display a tendency to focus on factual details.

Piaget suggests that children of the age of these children are in the concrete operational stage of development. This means that these children can think in a logically coherent way about objects that exist and have

real properties even when these objects are not physically present but are identified with verbal symbols (Sinclair, 1971). It is not surprising, therefore, that their focus is on factual details which are real properties of the characters and situations that were discussed.

Aboud (1993) suggests that concrete operational thinkers can decenter and take other perspectives because they can think beyond perceptions. They can also understand and evaluate as valid different perspectives. They have the ability to attend to individual differences in groups of "others". Such skills can be taught.

The existence of these skills at this stage of development, indicates that these students are mature enough to begin to understand alternative world and life views. Their ability to reason about the issue of abortion in China also indicated this. Evidence of a developing capitalistic program indicates that they are developing a world and life view. It is imperative that they understand clearly that there are other viable world and life views that may be more closely aligned to Christian values. A question that must be asked is "Does the curriculum of this Christian school promote learning about such alternatives?"

Some of these students interpret the role of teachers as holders of skills and knowledge capital which is needed by the students to achieve their capitalistic program.

Although this theme is not related directly to student interpretations of "others", it is included in this section because it addresses issues of how best to nurture critical consciousness in these students. The discussions of several of the other themes have indicated the importance of critical consciousness in helping students to be open to redefining "otherness". Therefore, indirectly this theme is related to student interpretation of "otherness".

The focus here is on the interpretation of the nature of education and the role of schooling that arises out of a commitment to a capitalistic program. The students want to get an education in order to get a good job. Teachers, therefore, are entrepreneurial holders of skills and knowledge capital which they are altruistically willing to share with their students. In this way students are enabled to become entrepreneurs as well.

Over against this, the Education Committee states that, "education is about developing the skills and abilities which will enable students to serve in Christ's Kingdom." This program seems to require a different understanding of education than the understanding required by a capitalistic program. To clarify the difference, it is first of all

necessary to distinguish clearly between the terms "education", "schooling" and "training".

Our commitment to Descartes' world and life view, "I think, therefore, I am" has given us the hubris of being masters of our own world (Slaughter, 1989). This parallels the capitalistic concept of ownership. Today we are faced with the problems arising out of this world and life view. There is an alienation from natural processes, an overhyping of technology, a marginalization of sustainable futures, a reduction of education to training and a confusing of data with knowledge and wisdom (Slaughter, 1989).

Slaughter (1989) suggests that conceptualizing reality as a hierarchy will help us to reclaim a richer more differentiated world. The lowest level, mineral, indicates mere existence. The second level, the plant kingdom, indicates the first level at which life is present. The third level, the animal kingdom, represents consciousness. The fourth level, humans, represent self-awareness and an emergent quality. Although I find this conceptualization very helpful, I would add a fifth level, deity, which represents the "I am who I am" quality of autonomous defining of reality which Slaughter assigns to humanity. Each higher level includes the qualities of the lower levels but remains occluded to the lower level.

The terms "training" and "education" can be conceptualized in a similar hierarchy. "Training"

represents emerging functionality in existing social structures. It is learning the "how to's" that exist apart from the child and are taken in by the child. "Education", on the other hand, represents emerging interpretations of existing social structures. Such interpretations arise out of each child as active symbolic interactionist. It can be guided but not instilled. Each of these terms represent a separate ontological "whatness". The lower level, "training" is included in but not congruent with "education".

"Schooling" stands apart from these two terms because it refers to the "howness" of the process of training and education. It implies that such training and education will occur with groups of children simultaneously rather than individually. However, "schooling" is not a neutral concept. "Schooling" is much more suitable for "training" because each child needs to take in similar skills than for "education" which involves individual expressions.

Before the twentieth century, education took place in the family, community and church while training in the three R's, which took place at school, was only a minor part of education. Equating education with what happens at school is a twentieth century phenomenon (Martin, 1996). The equation makes sense to us because the Industrial Revolution [Mine: and Technical Revolution] have narrowed our perception to the here and now (Slaughter, 1989). Although

it should not be so, education when equated to schooling becomes for a large part utilitarian training of technologists (Gammage, 1989).

The students seem to be interpreting education as training. It is the role of teachers simply to share data and skills in an entertaining way. As long as the goal is to acquire skills that are marketable in the existing job market, this seems a propos. It is assumed that the teacher knows what the job market requires and will impart knowledge and skills that are in demand in the market place. The students view themselves as becoming efficient cogs in the existing economic machinery which is accepted unquestioningly as normal and immutable.

If, however, the goal that should guide the students is to serve Christ rather than the existing economic machinery, some difficult questions need to be asked. Does Christ require us to be aware of and challenge injustice or does he only require us to develop the talents that are needed in the economy and to use those talents fully? Does Christ require us to live according to the principles of God's kingdom or to adjust pragmatically to world and life views that surround us?

An answer to these questions may be provided by Christ's own example. Christ did not accept the status quo of his day unquestioningly. He critiqued his social environment and applied the criteria of God's kingdom to

the society of his day. He lived according to the principles of God's kingdom in his whole life. In this way He showed us how to be a blessing to others.

To achieve the goal of Christian education as expressed by the Education Committee of this school, therefore, requires an understanding of education truly as "education" or interpretation of reality. Freire suggests that in this style of education, it is the role of the teacher to question the status quo (Shor and Freire, 1987). Such questioning implies a commitment to a set of principles which underlie the criteria that are used in the questioning. This teaches the students the ability to be critically conscious of their social environment and to know in which direction solutions to problems of injustice lie. The skills that are developed should be those that were given to the student by God so that reality will not be limited to economic reality.

Since my teaching experience with these students is limited to the area of reading, I would like to illustrate my meaning by using reading as an example. In the students' view of education, reading consists of efficient information processing using accurate decoding skills. The teacher determines ahead of time what the meaning of the story is so that this interpretation can be used as a measure of student accuracy. Accurate decoding consists of being in line with the teacher's interpretation of the story. Since the

students are accustomed to a computer discourse style, there is little room for individual differences and nuances in interpretation. Freedom and encouragement to construct their own interpretations caused unease.

In terms of "education", however, a reading program should ask students to move beyond decoding to interpreting what they read. The interpretive process requires an active response to the experience of living in the vicarious world temporarily. They should practice "discerning the spirit" of the vicarious world that is presented in the reading. If necessary alternatives based on Biblical principles could be suggested. In this way the reading done by the students will support their ability to interpret and be critically aware of their own society. Some questions that need to be asked are, "Does the curriculum of this Christian school encourage "training" or "education?" and "Are these students ready to articulate the themes of their existence in a public forum?"

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

A rainbow of differences is presented in the snapshots in this study. Students' stances towards "otherness" range from refusing to look beyond their home culture to excitement at the prospect of learning something new. Conceptualizations of friendship move from "people who are alike" to "any type of people". A spectrum of likes and dislikes is displayed. Clearly the monocultural context in which these students live is not a series of deterministic cause and effect relationships which manipulate human beings as though they are objects (Prus, 1996) producing clones with machine-like monotony (Perinbanayagam, 1985). All of these students live in the same monocultural context yet they display a plethora of individual differences. It can be seen that they are active, emergent agents (Charon, 1985) busy making sense of the world.

Although it is important to point towards individual differences to show that no social institution has ultimate power to shape individuals, the ultimate goal of Christian education like that of multicultural education is social transformation rather than individual psychological changes (Jackson and Solis, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; McCarthy and Willis, 1995). The stated aim of this Christian school is that students will serve Christ. This implies building

social structures based on a world and life view that differs from the "mainstream" world and life view.

It is not an easy task to nurture students into a world and life view that is "other" to the "mainstream" world and life view. The "mainstream" world and life view, in this case capitalism, has power to define the structures of society (Carlson, 1995). However, that hegemony is never complete because "minorities", in this case Christians, can refuse to accept these structures as immutable (Freire, 1970). The form that the relationship between the two takes is always the result of a "negotiated settlement" (Carlson, 1995).

An example of this process is the minority voice of the proponents of multicultural education in the United States over against the majority voice of strongly Eurocentric education. In the 1960's and 1970's the "settlement" was to identify minorities as deficient therefore giving multicultural education the form of remediation of deficits in minority students. In the 1980's and early 1990's the "settlement" was to identify minorities as "other" authentic voices therefore giving multicultural education the form of giving a voice and self-esteem to minority cultures (Carlson, 1995). In the late 1990's a "settlement" that is being suggested by some is that minorities are identified as equally valid alternatives. Therefore, "mainstream culture" has to abdicate its favored position and learn to live as

"one among many" (Jackson and Solis, 1995; McLaren, 1995). Each "settlement" is like a new interpretation of the ontological nature of minorities. The accepted interpretation determines the actions that will be taken.

Such settlements are being made constantly about religious "minorities" as well. At one point in our history, religion meant having a conviction that would lead to a specific world and life view. Religious freedom implied the right to give public cultural expression to that world and life view. This resulted in two separate but equal educational systems. Today religion seems to be viewed as a matter of taste (Krauthammer, 1998). Religious freedom, therefore, implies the right to hold any beliefs privately. This results in a merging into one educational system as seen in Quebec and Newfoundland. Today's "settlement" is that those who wish to pay for the privilege of privately expressing their faith may have the freedom to do so.

However, a new and very unsettling "settlement" seems to be arising. Boyd (1996) marginalizes Christian education as irrelevant. Pring (1992) suggests that Protestant fundamentalists are anti-educational because their minds are closed. Peshkin (1986) characterizes the Christian school he studied as a "total institution". While attending the Learned's Conference in June, 1997, I was shocked by my experience of repeatedly hearing Christians portrayed as

close-minded bigots. If any of these statements had been made about a particular cultural or racial group, what would the reaction be?

The same portrayal of private schools as deficient is present in McLaughlin's thought. He points out that both public and private schools may have difficulty preparing children for multicultural citizenship. Yet his solution is to judge each separate school individually thus sorting the good from the bad while no such solution is applied to public institutions of education (McLaughlin, 1992). This puts public education in a privileged position. Members of that educational community will set the criteria by which to judge private schools. As well McLaughlin makes no mention of applying the same critique to institutions of public education. Clearly he does not view public education as one voice among many equals in the educational forum.

McLaughlin also reports that some educators wonder about the inalienable rights of children to receive an education that includes multiple faith communities which a government may have to protect and privilege over against parental rights to make choices for their children (McLaughlin, 1992).

In the face of these developments, it is critical that the students in this Christian school are able to articulate clearly their alternative world and life view in the public arena. It is important for them to know themselves so that they will not be affected by how others define them (Weis,

1992). It is also important that others hear their voice and are reminded that theirs is a voice among many equals.

Within the broader social context outside the walls of the Christian school several questions could also be asked: Are educators in the liberal tradition willing to become critically conscious of their own world and life view? Is there a possibility of open dialogue between differing world and life views as equal alternatives? Is there a willingness among educators in the liberal tradition to also take an honest look at the world and life view their students are developing?

Will students in this Christian school become agents of social change in a culturally diverse world? No one can answer such a question definitively. First of all there are many shaping forces beyond the school walls. Secondly, each student is an agent who interprets and responds individually. Finally, future life circumstances may cause perspectives to change. However, the photographs presented in this study may give some indications.

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Appendix

Since I take the view that everyone is decisionist in that values are held in "a leap faith" or an act of will because the basic assumptions on which we base our lives can never be proven rationally, I would like to make my values as explicit as possible which Foster, Gomm and Hammersley (1996) suggest is the moral commitment of this perspective. Others such as Grant and Tate (1995) as well as May (1994) also suggest that the researcher needs to be explicit about his/her perspective. I would like to present briefly the perspective from which I would view the classroom in which I was a participant-observer.

The God of the Bible is. This is my statement of faith. Others begin from the faith statement that the God of the Bible is not. I used the word "is" because the God of the Bible calls Himself, the Great I Am. This is significant for me because it means that He is not a social construct but He exists whether I or anyone else believes it or not. Therefore, I must not shape Him after my image but must take care to shape myself and my educational enterprise after His image.

I used the phrase "of the Bible" to indicate the unique place that the Bible has because it is revelation. As such it is my hope that my students will commit themselves to God and to following Biblical directives for doing His work in the world. I understand God's work in the world in terms of

Micah 6:8.

"...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

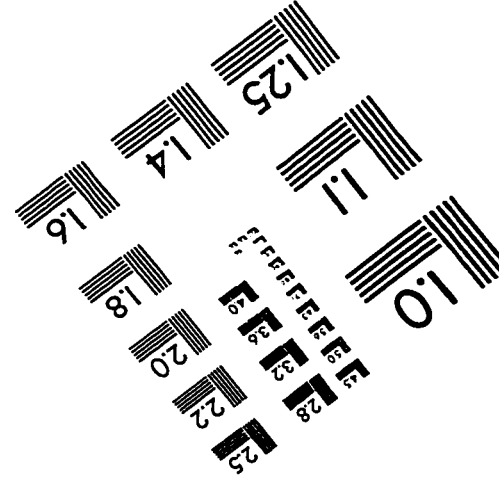
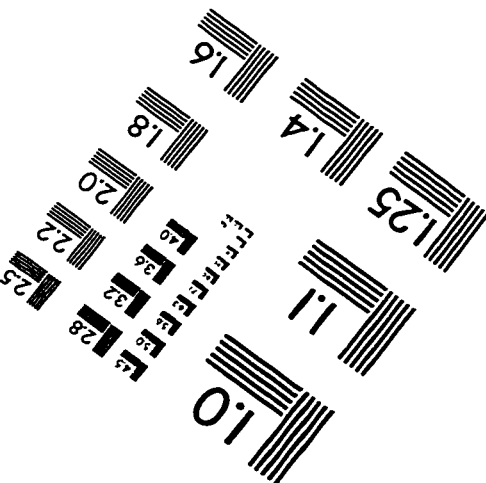
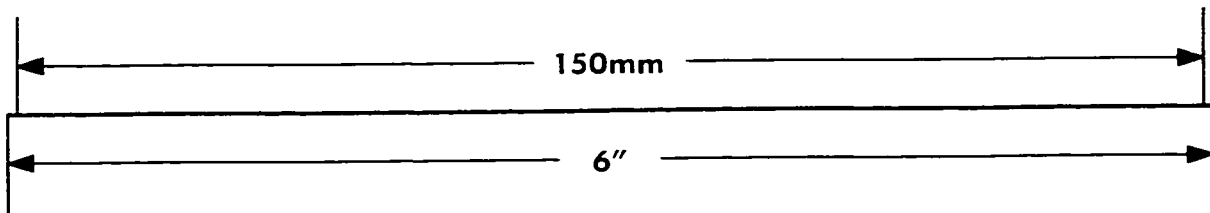
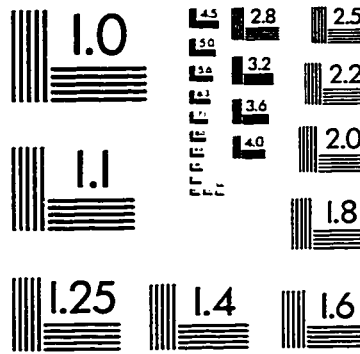
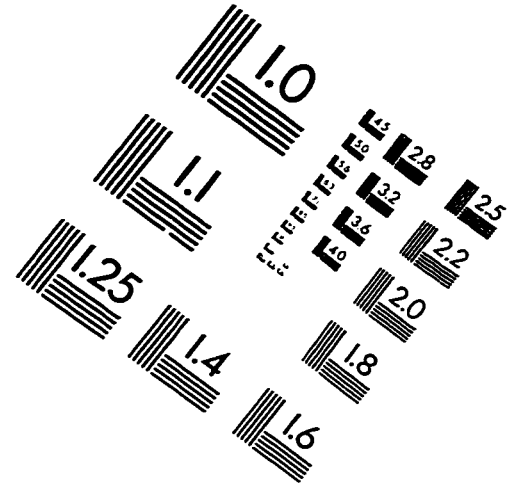
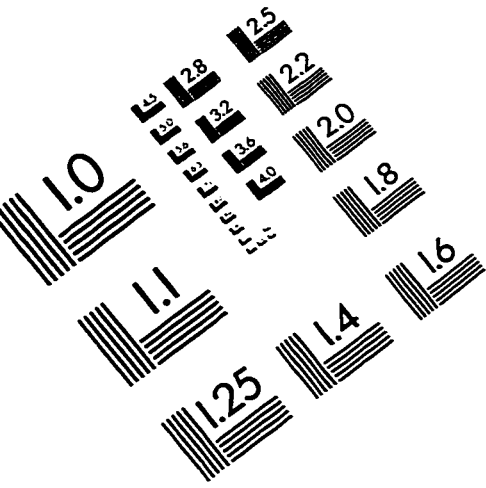
(RSV Bible)

Although Biblical revelation is not an educational handbook, its directives should guide educational practice. My curriculum must not reflect a technologized world under human control. Instead my students should see themselves as stewards of a wonderfully intricate world in which God takes delight (De Graaf, 1974). My methodology must be redemptive rather than violent. Violent teaching is competitive, unilateral and alienating (Nouwen as quoted in Van Dyk, 1986). In this process the teacher tries to coerce the student. Redemptive teaching on the other hand is evocative, bilateral and actualizing (Nouwen as quoted in Van Dyk, 1986). This type of teaching urges the student but allows the student to express his/her own selfhood.

It is also important to note that revelation is communicated in the language of a specific culture. It is received through the lenses of many different cultures. No human being is ever able to transcend culture in order to grasp revealed truth in any absolute sense. We struggle in community within the contexts of our cultures to give our society a shape that is in keeping with God's directives (Lee, 1991). Therefore, although I, as christian educator, begin with a meta-narrative, I do not necessarily fit the Tylerian mode of curriculum building. A response to

revelation needs to be socially constructed in the practical situated contexts of school life.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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