

Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education

Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education Edited by Martin L. Kovacs (University of Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1978)

Martin Kovacs has edited a very diversified collection of papers on Canadian ethnic groups, their interrelationships, and their interaction with the two dominant groups. This volume is the eighth in the series entitled *Canadian Plains Studies*. However, not all of the chapters are about ethnic groups residing in the prairie provinces. Some of the papers concern specific ethnic groups within the Canadian context (for example Buyniak's "The Beginnings of Ukrainian Scholarship in Canada"), others are about specific ethnic groups in central and eastern Canada (for example Sealy's "Language Conflict and Schools in New Brunswick"), while other papers concern general theoretical issues in ethnic studies (for example Manyoni's "Ethnics and Non-Ethnics: Facts and Fads in the Study of Intergroup Relations").

The fact that this book is subtitled *Culture and Education* may mean that it may be of general interest to those teaching in Faculties of Education. However, it seems that this volume may be only considered as a general resource book or as a supplemental text rather than as a prescribed textbook. There are two reasons why this volume may not be appropriate for courses in education. First, only approximately one-third of the papers are concerned with issues in education. And, for the price (approximately 12.00 dollars) students and, possibly, instructors may consider it too expensive. Second, even in the papers which are concerned with education, there is a great diversity in theoretical concerns, perspectives, and methodology. In fact this diversity is so great that the general reader may have a great degree of difficulty relating the papers to each other or to any conceptual framework.

This degree of diversity may not be surprising, considering that the chapters are conference papers and not chapters written expressly for a volume intending to provide a consistent conceptual perspective on *Ethnic Canadians*. In this respect, the editor says: "Views and opinions expressed by individual authors are not necessarily shared by the editor" (p. 495). It only needs to be added that the views and opinions expressed by one author need not necessarily be shared by other authors and some of the views and opinions are questionable to say the least.

For example, in James Frideres' essay "Culture, Education and Ethnicity: A Case Study of the Canadian North" there are a number of gross generalizations which would be difficult, if not impossible, to verify. A couple of examples which, indeed, seem to contradict each other may serve as illustrations:

Only female natives have been able to participate in the educational process with any degree of "success" (p. 263).

Inuits in specific areas of the Arctic have participated in the educational systems with a great deal of vigor and zeal (p. 263).

Gross generalizations, such as these, weaken Frideres' analysis of the education of Native people in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. It is no doubt true that the educational system has assisted in weakening, and perhaps even destroying, the Native people's cultures but a little more evidence and a little less rhetoric would help prove the case.

June Wyatt has presented an interesting essay on Native teachers in British Columbia ("Native Involvement in Curriculum Development: The Native Teacher as Cultural Broker") which supplements her earlier article published in the *Canadian Journal of Education*. In this paper she develops the idea of the native teacher as a "cultural broker", a person who can understand both the culture of the school and the culture of the community and can translate from one to the other. She argues that this is necessary for building a curriculum which is meaningful to native students, and illustrates this in the procedures which are used at Mt. Currie, a native community north of Vancouver. In this way, it seems that the educational system can assist in preserving native cultures rather than destroying them.

Four other essays address the problems of preserving ethnic identities in educational institutions. Nanciellen Sealy ("Language Conflict and Schools in New Brunswick") discusses the problem associated with a dual French-English school system in New Brunswick, and some suggestions are made about future research on sociolinguistics and ethnohistories in Canada. Martin Kovacs ("The Hungarian School Question") discusses the controversial struggle in obtaining Hungarian Catholic priests and teachers in Saskatchewan between 1905 and 1911. Cornelius Jaenen ("The Manitoba

School Question: An Ethnic Interpretation") takes another look at the Manitoba School Question, only this time from the perspective of the ethnic minorities involved. Finally, Michel Laferriere ("The Education of Black Students in Montreal Schools") examines the history of Blacks in Quebec, and the educational facilities provided for Blacks in Montreal at the present time.

In a similar vein, Marilyn Barber ("Canadianization through the Schools of the Prairie Provinces before World War I: The Attitudes and Aims of the English-Speaking Majority") and Raymond Huel ("The Public School as a Guardian of Anglo-Saxon Traditions: The Saskatchewan Experience, 1913-1918") discusses in more detail the past performances of the schools in the prairie provinces in appreciating cultural diversity. Specifically, cultural diversity was to be eliminated through the schools and in its place British-Canadian Values, ideals, and the English language were to be instilled. A similar story is told by Savelia Curnisky ("How to Teach A Ukrainian") only the specific references are to the Ukrainian settlers on the prairies.

The previously mentioned papers give fleeting glimpses of the problems encountered in the education of various ethnic groups in Canada. John Mallea ("Ethnicity and Canadian Education") has attempted to provide a broader theoretical perspective from which scholars may examine the problems of ethnic students. Mallea examines the Canadian national goal of multi-culturalism and its relationship with the educational goal of transmitting important aspects of culture from one generation to the next. This paper presents a lucid, although brief, discussion of the past performances of schools in appreciating cultural diversity and it makes some suggestions about the possible future role in achieving more effective integration of educational and national goals.

Thus, it seems that some of the papers may be loosely related, but generally the relationships are not developed. Undoubtedly, many of the authors could have improved their papers by taking some of the concerns and perspectives noted by others into consideration. The major responsibility for this kind of improvement rests squarely on the shoulders of the editor. It is unfortunate that this was not done because it would have resulted in a much more integrated volume.

Even though this volume presents a diverse collection of conference papers it also presents some important contributions to the literature. As a result, the volume deserves critical reading and evaluation by educators interested in *Ethnic Canadians*.

Rodney A. Clifton
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THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT extends apologies to Mr. Jon Fennell of the Department of Education, State of Idaho and sincerely regrets that typographical errors appeared in the article entitled "Education and Social Integration - Twenty Five Years Later", printed in Vol 12, No 2 (August 1978).

Corrections to be as follows:

	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correction</i>
Page 108	William o. Stanley	William O. Stanley
Page 109	shoudl	should
Page 110	Education and Social Integration	<i>Education and Social Integration</i>
Page 110	disintegrtion	disintegration
Page 111	then	the
Page 111	ethnic	ethic
Page 111	bew	be
Page 111	ust	must
Page 113	problem	problems
Page 114	people like	people be like
Page 114	Note 6 Stanley	Note 6 <i>Ibid</i>
Page 114	Note 13 - mis-alignment	
Page 114	Note 14 "is found" omitted and should read	Note 14 - The speech is found in. . .