MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND: OURSELVES AND OTHERS

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SYNOPSIS

This article attempts to identify the persistence of prejudice, especially about language, at a time when multicultural educational objectives are widely accepted (at least notionally), even in unconscious vocabulary, and to examine the survival of many attitudes that continue this surviving racism and lingering prejudice. It deals with the belief in the 'bilingual deficit', the survival of which has done immense damage, and the views of culture within Scotland, the role of cultural 'markers' in religion and language, and some of the myths about minority populations within Scotland and elsewhere. Changes of identity are also mentioned, religious and other, and how various cultures may change the roles of their children in different contexts, and how minorities may play altered roles (and be differently defined) in different situations. The tasks for Scotland at the present are also looked at, and an agenda for change (hopefully) set forth. The tasks for multicultural education are argued to be urgent and a priority, not only an additional element, both for the minorities and the majority, especially within Scotland at the present time, and a number of practical implications are identified.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE PERSISTENCE OF PREJUDICE

It has become almost a cliché that we are living in a multicultural society in a multicultural world. That, at least, is something; we have been exposed so long to the assumption that countries are normally homogeneous, and that plural societies (whether through immigration or the presence of indigenous minorities) were somehow odd. Even a cursory examination of world demography is enough to make it clear that multiculturalism is the international norm, not the exception, and even countries of the European Union (including our own) — and their record of recognising cultural diversity has rarely been impressive — are beginning to realise that their own populations are pluralist in their composition. The imperial pasts of some European countries, the influx of immigrants and 'guest workers', the tentative efforts to come to terms with the fact that they differ from each other and, usually, last of all, the realisation that minorities are not going to go away — these have brought many states to realise that they are culturally plural, that this is likely to continue, and that there is a need to respond to this in education as in other areas of social activity. Multiculturalism has become familiar as a concept — or, at any rate, as an icon.

In Scotland, the 'ethnic minority' population is about two per cent. Some sources give 1.3%, the same as in the North of England, and give 1.3% for Wales, 4.4% for Yorkshire, 4.6% for the East Midlands, 8.2% for the West Midlands, and even higher — almost 10 per cent — in the South East. The four cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen have a higher 'ethnic' population, from just over 1.3% to 5.4% in Glasgow. The concentration of minority populations in the urban south and their diminution in 'peripheral' areas seems to be in operation here.[1]

Unfortunately, familiarity with a concept does not guarantee understanding of it, let alone its translation into action. There is still a great deal of simplistic thinking on the subject, from governmental circles downwards, and much evasion. The multicultural nature of our societies is difficult to ignore, yet there remains considerable reluctance to face its implications, to think them through, and to act on them.

We are not alone in this. A long time ago, in the summer of 1983, the Comparative Education Society in Europe devoted its biennial conference to this subject; it was held in Würzburg, Bavaria. Some of the contributions were thoughtful, perceptive, even wise; others were less so. For example, an official from the Landsministerium for Education stated bluntly that 'the foreigners' would have to assimilate or go back where they had come from. (The term *Gastarbeiter* — guestworker — was seldom heard; it had been replaced, even in that assembly, with *die Ausländer,* the foreigners.)[2] Expressions like 'we are having many problems with the Turkeys' were common. Again, one distinguished speaker, himself a Turk, in the spoken version of his paper, insisted on dividing languages into two categories: 'world languages' like English, German or French, and 'conflict languages' like Basque, Welsh or Dutch.[3] Two fundamental assumptions kept turning up; firstly, that multicultural education was about and for minorities, and secondly that it — and they — were a problem.

Nearer home, and more recently, similar assumptions continue to surface. When language is discussed, the *deficit* model of bilingualism, the notion that the mind is a vessel of finite capacity with room for only one language, and that bilingualism therefore carries educational disadvantage, is still widely believed and reflected in practice. Multicultural education (often used synonymously with multiracial or 'multiethnic'[4] education) is still widely perceived as having to do with immigrants, not society at large. (The school that replied to a questionnaire on the subject by reporting 'No problem here — no ethnic pupils' was simply typifying common attitudes, even among the well-meaning). The assumption is still common that the desired object is to assimilate minority groups by means of remedial English for Asians and (perhaps) some attempts to teach racial tolerance to the rest (for colour, unlike language, cannot be changed). Even some of the more liberal teachers and administrators see multicultural education as a means of helping the 'problem groups' to 'fit in'.

It might be as well to take this opportunity to lay a few basic myths.

To go by a common view, it might appear that immigration was some kind of imposition on the United Kingdom, with blacks flocking in from all over the world to batten on the welfare state. This is nôt confined to the National Front or Bernard Manning or other racist comedians; when she was still Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher remarked that people were 'afraid of being swamped by an alien culture'. (In fairness, she did not join in the chorus of demands that they should be 'sent back to where they came from', but many of her party did.) For the record (for memories are short), Asian and West Indians came to the UK because they had been colonised in the first place, thus setting up a political and constitutional connection. More recently, the public authorities here have *recruited* Commonwealth immigrants: Glasgow Corporation Transport Department recruited from India and Pakistan, London Transport from the West Indies, and the Ministry of Health (ironically enough, under Enoch Powell, who later became notorious for his racist and anti-immigration views) brought in nurses from poor countries, especially from the Caribbean.

The reasons were obvious: during a period of full employment in the UK, badly-paid services like transport and nursing could not be staffed from the local labour force, hence the classic device of importing cheap labour from elsewhere. (This, of course did little to help community relations, as the Irish discovered in the 19th century.) More recently, successive governments clamped down on immigration, with overtly racist criteria being increasingly applied. There is now more European than non-white immigration; indeed, there is now little non-white immigration at all. Increasingly, most of the Asian and Caribbean populations in

Britain consist of people who were born here — *this* is 'where they come from'. As far as the 'crowded little island' argument is concerned, it may be relevant to point out that there is far more net emigration from Britain than immigration into it. The figures are available, but when prejudice is strong enough, facts tend to be pushed to one side.[5]

Under all the disclaimers, of course, lies the question of 'race'.

'Race' is perhaps the greatest myth of our time — certainly the most pernicious. There is a certain irony in this, since of all the human differences, those classified as 'racial' are probably the least important in any objective sense. As defined in modern times, races are usually characterised by certain physical features, particularly the amount of melanin in the skin. As such, race in this sense is both highly visible and unalterable, but has nothing to do with cultural factors. (I have dealt with this issue already in this journal.)[6] The languages people speak, the beliefs they hold, their observances and customs and family structures — these are important *markers of identity.*

'Race', however, is not, and is objectively as trivial as other sets of inherited characteristics such as eye or hair colour or height; it so happens that our culture, for a variety of historical reasons, has *attached* social and cultural meaning to one set of biological differences rather than others. The confounding of racial and cultural concepts (and people of all 'races' are prone to it) is distressingly common, but it is important that education seek to clarify the differences between acquired and inherited characteristics, between things that matter and things that do not. This is one reason why the common confusion between 'multicultural' and 'multiracial' is unfortunate, as it confuses the fundamental with the incidental.[7]

There are almost as many myths about language as about race, stemming, however, from a similar source, the common foible of assuming that one's own appearance or ways of doing things are normal, and that others are somehow strange or even sinister. That is why it was odd to hear a Turk in Germany talk in his speech of 'world languages' and 'conflict languages', as if the latter were the *cause* of the conflict that often arises concerning their use. That it is still possible to think like that illustrates the power of selectivity; after all, it would be just as reasonable for the Bretons or the Welsh to regard French and English as 'conflict languages' — more so, as it was on behalf of the former that attempts were made to wipe the latter out.[8]

The amount of ethnocentrism that arises over language, even in these days of easier travel and communication, is quite astonishing. Consider, for example, the common observation that some names or words are 'unpronounceable'. This, on reflection, is a contradiction in terms, as they obviously *are* pronounced, and no one has yet demonstrated that racial differences extend to the speech organs. What is meant is that their pronunciation is *unfamiliar*, which is quite a different matter. Even the relatively unprejudiced, however, can fall into the trap of assuming that some languages are 'intrinsically unsuitable' for such purposes as education; how often does one hear that Hindi or Swahili or Gaelic 'lack the vocabulary'?

They may, of course, at any given time; languages develop the vocabulary needed for the environment in which they are used, but not usually until they *are* needed. The vocabulary need be no more static than the environment; languages can and do create new words as new needs arise. They can do this by rebuilding from native word material, a method favoured by Arabic, Chinese and German, or it can borrow and adapt material from other languages, a procedure widely used, notably by Persian, Swahili, Romanian and of course English, which has throughout its history drawn on Norse, French, Latin and a score of others. To answer the question, 'What's the Gaelic for television or telephone?' by asking, 'What's the English?' is not just being flippant, but a perfectly serious observation on the nature of linguistic change and adaptation.[9]

THE 'BILINGUAL DEFICIT'

Finally, we come to the 'bilingual deficit', the notion that knowing (say) Gaelic or Scots or Punjabi or Cantonese will hold back a child's acquisition of English and damage general educational attainment. It was this belief that led teachers to beat Highland children for speaking Gaelic and Lowland children for speaking Scots, and many parents to acquiesce in this; and there are plenty of parents to this day who refrain from speaking Punjabi (or Gaelic) to their children in the same belief. This was for long the conventional wisdom, as late as the 1960s, and there were some studies of bilingual communities that seemed to bear this out.

It happens, though, that many of the communities studied, like those of the Western Isles or French Canada, were socially deprived compared with other parts of the relevant countries; and in any case, these were situations where one language was in the process of being *replaced* by another, with all the strains that that involves. When these factors were corrected for, a rather different picture emerged.

Linguistic studies since then have continued to demolish the notion of the 'bilingual deficit', and some even suggest that bilingualism can confer positive learning advantages, especially in language and language-related skills. Certainly, the experience of French-immersion schools in Ontario and Welsh-medium schools in Wales do not support the notion that any harm whatever is done to the learning of English or general educational attainment. (Examples of advantage have been found, though this could be attributed to the commitment of teachers and learners as much as to bilingualism itself.) At the very least, however, research and experience alike have effectively exploded the notion that bilingualism is a handicap.[10] Perhaps the news will reach the public authorities some day.

For all the glib talk about 'ethnic minorities', what is often overlooked in the attempts to define 'ethnic' is that 'minority' also is not a simple concept. Some groups are minorities only locally, such as the Pakistanis, Indians and Hong Kong Chinese, who of course form majorities elsewhere, which at least ensures that the survival of their cultures *somewhere* is not in doubt. (This is also true, of course, of the English in Scotland.) Others again, though they may be a minority in the country as a whole, may form a majority in some particular area, like the Gaels of the Western Isles. On the one hand, they do have an area where some social support for the culture can be expected in their local environment, but they are open to penetration by the majority culture through external government control, the media and settlement from outside.

Finally, there are minorities dispersed within the majority community, where environmental support is lacking. They may, like the Punjabis (or more tenuously, the Glasgow Gaels) have a corresponding majority area to draw on for cultural sustenance; or, like the Rom or Travellers, may be scattered minorities everywhere, which makes their culture especially precarious. We are all minorities now, whether within the European Union or the international community at large, but minorities within states (like the three categories already referred to) have particular educational needs which differ from one category to another. In this respect, the Gaels of Glasgow have more in common with the Glasgow Sikhs or Pakistanis than with the Gaels of Lewis; as their situations differ, so do their educational needs.[11]

Although total assimilation is not canvassed as seriously as it once was (not openly, at any rate), the assumption that it is either desirable or inevitable is still common enough to warrant a few questions. How far and in what respects should people assimilate? The law bans polygamy and female genital mutilation, but these are very rare, and do not serve as markers of identity for any group. There are many who expect Pakistanis to relinquish Urdu or Punjabi and even their distinctive costume and customs, but are they seriously expected to stop being Muslims? And if not, why are the other characteristics suspect? To what should they assimilate? Should it be to the majority Scottish culture, or that part of Scotland where they happen to live (like Glasgow or Stornoway)? Or, since the Scots are a minority within the UK, should it be to the majority English culture? But, since that is no more homogeneous than the Scottish, which variant should be singled out as a model? It does begin to sound like a *reductio ad absurdum,* but that is the logic of the assimilationist position. It could also be asked why they should assimilate. After all, British colonial governors and settlers very rarely did; on the contrary, they went to often absurd lengths to distance themselves from the cultures of the peoples among whom they lived (and whom they ruled).[12]

Finally in this section, it might be worthwhile clarifying the much-used word 'problem' in this context. It is legitimate up to a point; minority groups *have* problems, and their needs do *pose* problems to the educational services. But it becomes dangerous when they come to be talked about as if they *were* the problem, as often happens, for the descent from that position to racism is no great distance. Admitting that problems exist, is there not too much discussion of multicultural education as if it were a problem in itself? It is also possible to regard it as an opportunity. If we take seriously the rhetoric about equipping young Scots to live in the modern world, and if we realise that that world is inevitably multicultural, then the cultural diversity of our own society becomes a positive asset. The logical corollary of this is that multicultural education is relevant not only to the ethnic minorities, but to the whole community.

THE TASK FOR SCOTLAND

Multicultural education in Scotland, then, is (as the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum has noted) an important matter for all Scots;[13] and since the Scots are themselves a minority within a multinational state as well within the wider international community, it follows that Scottish identity is a legitimate concern along with the identity of the minority groups. Both the CCC and the SOEID have been rather muted about this point, perhaps because the issue is thought by some to be politically sensitive; but it is difficult to see how it can logically be avoided.[14] Multicultural education is *about* identity, and the public authorities have generally (if faintly) conceded that the minority groups have legitimate claims to maintain their own identities.[15]

But what is envisaged is not, presumably, the maintenance of a series of identities in isolation, but in coexistence and cooperation with each other, other minorities and the majority community. To ignore the Scottish dimension, therefore, is to fudge the issue, or to pretend that Britain is culturally homogeneous when manifestly it is not.[16] This can be seen also as an opportunity for Scotland, which stands a much better chance of understanding its own identity if it is considered in the context of the multicultural complexion of our own society and the wider international context, rather than in continuous and constricting obsession with one large and powerful neighbour.

Let us try to arrive at a working definition of 'culture' first. In the sense used by anthropologists, a culture is everything characteristic of any particular group — or, more precisely, the 'cluster' of characteristics identifiable with that group and perceived as part of its identity. In the widest sense, it covers just about everything that human beings do — language, religion, family structures, sex mores, diet, dress, customs and so on. Pakistanis, for example, share Islam with many other peoples, and many of them in Scotland share the Punjabi language (with some variations) with Sikhs and some Hindus. Cultural borrowings are as old as human contact; it must be a rare culture that does not share many of its features with others. It is the *combination* that is important; whatever the shared features might be, or whatever variations exist within the culture, there remains a pattern that enables members of the group to recognise their own membership of it and their differences from others. Alan Davies, the linguist, has put it neatly by remarking that belonging to a culture means not always having to think what to do, just as belonging to a speech community means not always having to think what to say.[17]

Obviously, not all the elements of a culture carry equal weight. Some may be quite trivial and can be relinquished or replaced without damage to the culture's viability, while others, such as religion, family structures and the like (and sometimes language) may assume the status of *markers*[18] — that is, features chosen by the members of the culture as a means of identifying themselves. This becomes additionally important when cultures are in constant contact, and even more so when they are under pressure.

Cultures, nowadays, are rarely static, but are growing, living things, certainly in the cases that we have to consider in this country. *How* they react to the contact and pressure varies enormously, and much research remains to be done on this, but it is possible to hazard a few generalisations.

The range of markers, for instance, tends to dwindle, and at the same time to acquire an added emphasis as a group, consciously or not, fixes on a limited number of features as an irreducible badge of its own identity. Language is often prominent (not always) as with the Flemings and Walloons in Belgium, the Catalans in Spain and to an extent the Welsh. It may be religion; examples are legion, as in Northern Ireland where the conflict differs from the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries in that there is little evidence that anyone is trying to *convert* anyone else, or even that doctrine is prominent in the minds of most of the protagonists. It is, rather, a conflict between two historically identifiable communities, for whom the appellations 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are a useful shorthand for a much more complex set of differences and loyalties.[19] But it is the culture itself that defines the markers, not normally outsiders; what may seem trivial to the observer may not be so to the participant.

One example will serve: strictly speaking, the turban of the Sikh male is not a religious requirement, though the uncut hair and the unshaven face are. Nevertheless, it has become an essential badge of identity, and thus has a quite different status from turbans worn by other peoples. As an English court case some years ago reminded us, much unnecessary conflict can be caused by failure to understand other cultures' ideas of what constitutes their own identity.[20]

Nor are cultures totally separate in membership. Culture-switching is a well-known phenomenon, usually from a minority to the majority mode, and usually a generation or two after contact. It need not be complete, however; cultural intermediates are common, people who have adopted certain markers of the majority culture and retained others of their own. It is not unusual to find language being relinquished but religion being kept and even reinforced, as with the Irish immigration of the 19th century and later. This is found in some of the Pakistani community as well, where Glasgow-born children may grow up monoglot in Glaswegian, but retain the Muslim faith and, frequently, family structures and attitudes. There is a difference between the sexes here; Asian men, in most cases, adopt western dress, while women are more likely to keep their dress and pass the practice on to succeeding generations. The rationale may be religious (with appeals to modesty and the like) but its function as a marker of identity is also strong.

It need not be assumed, however, that the trend is inevitably towards assimilation over the generations. This often happens, of course, especially when public policies and social pressures encourage it, but multiple identity is just as logical a development, and one less likely to alienate the individual from one culture or another. Many of the youngsters speaking impeccable Glaswegian are also fluent in Urdu and/or Punjabi, and can communicate with ease in either environment. (In the Western Isles, some of the Pakistani community learn also to function in Gaelic.)[21] The different identities may dominate in different spheres — one in the home and the other at school or work, for example — or they may overlap and shift according to more complex circumstances.

Once again, religion for some groups seems to be one of the most resilient markers: individuals may be able to move between languages and styles of dress, but they do not behave as (say) Muslims in one context and Christians or Humanists in another (though the intensity and visibility of observance may differ). Family structures may seem resilient too, though they may come under more pressure, as when many young Asians may find the degree of parental control irksome when compared with what is normal for their non-Asian compatriots.

This is partly inevitable, for minority status can affect relationships *within* a culture. This is particularly so when the young acquire necessary knowledge which their parents lack, thus strengthening their position beyond their traditional role. One obvious example is language: if the parents' knowledge is limited, they may have to rely on their children as interpreters, even in discussions of the children's own schooling. By the same token, the existence of educational opportunities can affect the status of girls. This can mean dilution of the culture, but only if it is regarded as static; it certainly *changes* it.

All cultures, of course, are affected by the increasing internationalisation of institutions through travel, trade, information, entertainment and the media; it is hardly an exaggeration to talk of an international culture that has come to particular prominence in the last twenty years or so. But, on examination, this international culture is not uniform. There is some homogeneity in matters as diverse as units of measurement and idioms of popular entertainment, but many cultural peculiarities survive among majorities and minorities alike. It is perhaps too early yet to be sure, but there is the strong possibility that internationalisation may strengthen rather than weaken pluralism. After all, if the majority norms of one nation-state are seen to differ from others yet to coexist with them in the international milieu, it is harder to claim that they are absolutely valid within that state. Certainly, the growth of internationalism seems to have been accompanied by a resurgence of identity among minorities in the form of language revivals, artistic movements and, to varying degrees, assertion of claims to some kind of political autonomy.[22]

It follows, then, that we cannot be concerned only with cultural maintenance, for cultures are in contact and interaction all the time. What they need also is the opportunity to *develop* their own identity in coexistence with the majority community and each other; the same goes for Scottish cultures and Scottish identity with respect to the other cultures within the United Kingdom, within Europe, and beyond.

THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE

What educational needs, then, arise from this? What should the schools be trying to do?

In language, there is an obvious need for access to and use of the majority tongue, in this case English, not only because English is one of the great world languages, but also because without it participation in the life of the larger community is constrained. But if matters stop there, minority groups are denied an important part of their identity, children are likely to have their linguistic development stunted and communication between generations can be impaired.

There is a need, therefore, for the languages of the minority groups to be available for educational use, and to be accorded status and respect within the educational system. Nor should this preclude access to and regard for other languages, whether foreign or used within the community. The extent to which they can be *learned* is limited (though not as limited as we seem to think), but something more could be done in learning *about* them at least.

In matters of religion (and associated questions of dress, diet, customs, etc.) it is not enough to *tolerate* diversity, to accept deviations from majority norms as a necessary nuisance (though that is better than nothing). What is needed is a positive acceptance of diversity and its recognition within the *structure* of the system. For instance, Catholicism (and, more vaguely, some forms of Protestantism) are accorded official recognition in the system — there are 'Catholic' schools and 'non-Catholic' schools with their appropriate religious instruction within the public system — but Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are not. Opinions differ about the desirability of separate Catholic schools or Christian observances in any schools, but as long as these exist, the claims of other faiths — vital identity markers in many cultures — surely need fairer consideration. Further, it is not enough to treat these as concessions to the minorities; if we are serious about the multicultural education of the majority, diversity has to be treated not only as acceptable and normal, but as an asset. Some schools are taking account of this point already, but it would be rash to claim this as a general phenomenon.

Obviously, these objectives imply and require a deliberate attack on prejudice — racial, religious, linguistic and cultural. It is naive to expect a positive attitude towards diversity to arise spontaneously in the schools, given the forces that exist outside them. It may be that there is less racism in Scotland than in England (though it would be foolish to rely on that), but there is plenty of allegedly religious bigotry in many parts of the country, notably in the western Lowlands, and it is by no means confined to football matches. Fostering respect for other cultures and one's own will need to be a deliberate policy rather than a pious slogan.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

So much for the general aims. Let us now turn to the practical implications.

To begin with, we need more and better information. There are, certainly, detailed and elaborate data from the Regions (and from their successor authorities) about the numbers of children whose first language is not English, but hardly any on what languages they *do* speak.[23] Usually, the country of origin is given, but that is not particularly helpful. There are over 100 languages spoken in the UK, obviously too many to be handled at school, especially if European languages are offered as well. There will have to be a degree of selection here. We have to find out which are in most use, and for which there is a demand. It is a reasonable guess that most of the Scottish Pakistanis speak Punjabi, Urdu or both, that Punjabi is also widely current among the Indians (particularly, and obviously, among the Sikhs) and that the Hong Kong Chinese speak Hakka or Cantonese, but it is little more than that.[24] Again, identifying Italy or Spain as the country of origin does not necessarily mean that they speak standard Italian or Spanish (or in the latter case, that they speak Castilian Spanish at all as a first language — their first language could be Catalan, Galician or even Basque). As for African countries, it is of no help at all, as hardly any have even a majority language. It is a fair bet, for instance, that about half the Nigerians speak Hausa, Yoruba or Ibo (all unrelated), but the rest speak one or more of over a hundred other languages. And so on: we still lack the information on which to base any policy that takes account of the children's actual languages. In Scotland, there is clearly a requirement for Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese (Cantonese or Putonghua), and possibly for Polish and Italian, Hindi and Bengali, but we lack adequate information on the numbers and demand. Indeed, some Regions (and their successors) did not even list the countries of origin, but classified only on the level of competence in English. So far, the minority groups have been defined negatively, by their *lack* of mother-tongue English. We need to know much more about the linguistic facts — how many speak which languages, what use they make of them and in what circumstances, what their attitudes and expectations are. At the risk of seeming to indulge in special pleading, the need for adequate research needs to be pressed.

There is a need for research into racism too. It is widely believed that this is less prevalent in Scotland than south of the Border, but this is little more than an impression. It would be useful to know how much substance there is in this. Assuming for the moment that there is something in this, there remain two questions of great importance: why is this so, and under what circumstances might it change? On the first, there are plenty of suggestions: that the Scots are too busy hating each other for being of the wrong religion to bother about trivialities like race or colour; that the Scots are more tolerant from having been so long in a minority position themselves; or that since the more visible minorities tend to be Asian rather than Caribbean they are less often seen as an economic threat, as they are so often self-employed.

Some doubts come to mind immediately. There are some indications that the overtly racist are also the most bigoted; history gives little support to the notion that minorities or suppressed peoples refrain from treating others in the same way when they get the chance;[25] and if economic considerations are the key, that could change as circumstances change. But these are all speculations; we do not *know*. And we had better find out, to see what we are up against and devise effective ways of fighting it. We have not, so far, had gangs of white youths invading school playgrounds to beat up Asian children, or evidence of systematic racism that affects the police in some parts of the UK, but to assume that it could not happen here is sheer complacency.[26]

In language, much excellent work is already being done in the teaching of English as a second language. But it follows from the previous argument that mother-tongue teaching is also important — not just as a learning-prop until enough English has been acquired, but a natural part of the pupil's cultural identity. This implies, of course, full educational status for the minority languages throughout the school system — not just as a stopgap, not just as a teaching medium at the elementary stage, but including serious study of (say) Urdu, Punjabi and Chinese up to and including SCE examinations (if there are ever SCE examinations) and, ideally, beyond. Without that, the minority languages will not be sufficiently valued by the majority community, and perhaps not even by the minorities themselves.

Nor is there any good reason why such study should be confined to members of the relevant ethnic groups; it could well be that some native Glaswegians and Stornowegians might want to learn Urdu and Punjabi as well, and some Glaswegians are studying Chinese now. There are unlikely to be many of them, but unless the opportunity is there, the languages will have second-class status. This used to be the case with Gaelic which, although it did have examination status, was virtually confined to native speakers; yet it was not used as a teaching medium, thus labouring under a double disadvantage. The first of these has been corrected,[27] however patchily, but the second so far only in the Isles and a few schools elsewhere, such as Glasgow; there is a case for its availability and use more widely throughout Scotland.

All this may seem a tall order, but unless the minority languages, whether Gaelic, Punjabi, Urdu or whatever, are promoted from their present (at best) fringe status, their validity, and that of the cultures they represent, will be reduced in the eyes of the educational system and society at large.[28] Obviously, there are serious staffing implications and very real organisational difficulties, and the scale on which anything can be done is bound to be limited for some time. But unless a policy is clarified and significant steps are taken towards implementing it, we will still be operating, in effect, a modified assimilationist system.

As far as the other cultural features are concerned, the clearest need is for input into the educational mainstream in several senses. Firstly, it requires a presence on the core curriculum, not just relegation to the fringe or optional subject areas. Secondly, multicultural input is needed at all stages of the school, not just the Primary 6 to Secondary 2 range to which the International and Multicultural Education Programme (IMEP, a research project funded by the then SED) was confined by its remit. (One of the general problems of Scottish education is our habit of tackling the system in bits, like Munn and Dunning or the 16-18 Action Plan, with little coordination overall.) Most important of all, perhaps, is the need to act on the principle that multicultural education is relevant to the majority as well as the minorities, for we all have to live in an interdependent multicultural world.

Admittedly, the tasks are enormous, but they cannot be avoided. We are short of information, ideas, experience, resources and skilled personnel; we are also short of policy. Several Regions (and now their successor authorities) are said to be formulating policies for multicultural equation in their own areas, and SOEID is said to be turning its mind to the matter. A national policy is needed, for without this the issues are tackled piecemeal and *ad hoc,* if at all, and are at the mercy of cuts and restraints in the absence of a clear place in the scale of priorities.

No one can deny that there are and will be severe problems, but unless they are addressed we are condemning thousands of our fellow-citizens to damaging their identity at best, alienation and discrimination at worst; and we are also depriving the majority of young Scots of the opportunity of learning to live in a world of diverse nations and cultures, with confidence in their own identity as well as respect for that of others. There is a chance — just a chance — that a multicultural Scottish educational system can help Scotland discover itself, and escape from the twin dangers of inferiority complex and truculent jingoism, the oscillation between bombast and cringing that is our national curse, the outcome of centuries of preoccupation with the culture (or at least the power and prestige) of one neighbour rather than looking more clearly at itself and the world beyond the Channel and the North Sea. Looked at in this way, multicultural education is an opportunity rather than a problem for Scotland itself, an opportunity that our country cannot afford to let pass.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. EOC (1993), *Women and Men in Britain,* pp. 1718; Peter Fryer (1995), *Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain,* London: Pluto Press; Dilip Hiro (1995), *Black British, White British — a History of Race Relations in Britain,* London: Harper Collins.
2. Personal observation, Würzburg, July 1983. *Ausländer* appears to be official usage now; at any rate *Bildung und Erziehung* (Inter Nationes, Bonn) uses 'foreigners' consistently.
3. Professor Nermi Uygur, *Sprache, Kultur und Bildung.* Comparative Education Society in Europe, 11th Conference, Würzburg, July 1983. Many of his remarks were in debate with the author at the time.
4. Purists might prefer 'polyethnic', to avoid mixing Latin and Greek roots in the same word, though others might regard this as pedantic.
5. For a useful survey, see Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion (1983), *Multicultural Classrooms,* London: Croom Helm.
6. Nigel Grant (1992), 'Scientific' racism: what price objectivity?' *Scottish Educational Review,* 21: 1, pp. 24–31.
7. *Ibid.*
8. For a fuller treatment of this point, see N. Grant, 'Education and language'' in J. Lowe, Grant and T. D. Williams (Eds.), (1971), *Education and Nation-Building in the Third World,* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, pp. 179–209.

9. Kenneth MacKinnon (1976), *The Lion's Tongue* (Inverness: Club Leabhar); Kenneth MacKinnon (1992), *Gaelic: a Past and Future Prospect,* Edinburgh: Saltire.
10. There is now an extensive literature on this issue, but see Hugo Baetens Beardsmore (1982), *Bilingualism: Basic Principles,* Cleveland: Tieto; J. Cummins (1981), *Bilingualism and Minority Language Children,* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Harlech TV (1983), *Another Window on the World,* Cardiff: HTV Wales; Peter Hornby (Ed.) (1977), *Bilingualism: Psychological, Social and Educational* Implications, New York: Academic Press; E. Glyn Lewis (1982), *Bilingualism and Bilingual* Education, Oxford: Pergamon Press; E. Price and C. Dodson (1982), *Bilingual Education in Wales,* 5-15, London: Methuen International; Derrick Sharp (1973), *Language in Bilingual Communities,* London: Edward Arnold; Antonio Simoes (Ed.) (1976), *The Bilingual Child: Research and Analysis of Existing Educational Thernes,* New York: Academic Press; J. M. Wijnstra, 'Attainment in the schools of Wales', *International Journal of Applied Psychology,* 1980, 29, pp. 60-74.
11. According to the 1981 Census, there were 23,589 Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles and 17,098 in Highland Region, of whom 5,166 were on Skye and Lochalsh (the only other area then with any Gaelic-medium education). The total for Scotland was about 80,000, of whom 24,100 were in Strathclyde (9,427 in Glasgow alone) and 5,924 in Lothian. Thus, a total of 28,755 lived in areas where some kind of bilingual education was available, but 53,651 had no such access. (This point is further elaborated in N. Grant, 'Multicultural education in Scotland', *Comparative Education,* 19: 2, 1983, pp. 133-153). This was before any Gaelic school units had started up in Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere. The 1991 Census showed a drop from 80,000 to 65,000, a drop so big in ten years that it raises doubts about accuracy of the figures at some point.
12. See Salman Rushdie, *New Society,* 18 December 1982.
13. Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, (1983) *International and Multicultural Education Programme Working Paper No. 1,* January.
14. There was a CCC Scottish Resources in Education Project, but little sign that there has been any coordination between this and IMEP (the International Multicultural Education Programme).
15. See R. E. Bell and N. Grant (1977), *Patterns of Education in the British Isles,* London: Allen and Unwin.
16. Robert Bell and Nigel Grant, *Patterns of Education in the British Isles* (Allen and Unwin, 1977).
17. Alan Davies, in T. E. Corner (Ed.) (1983), *Education in Multicultural Societies,* London: Croom Helm.
18. 'Marker' is my own term; Smolicz, who uses a similar concept, prefers 'core values'. See J. J. Smolicz (1981), 'Core values and cultural identity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 4: 1.
19. See Liam de Paor (1971), *Divided Ulster,* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
20. G. R. Barrell and J. A. Partington (1985), *Teachers and the Law,* London: Methuen, Chs. 1-2. E. Krausz, *Ethnic Minorities in Britain,* London: Paladin; B. Maan (1993), *The New Scots,* Edinburgh: John Donald.

21 A high standard is often achieved; they are less likely to sprinkle their speech with intrusive anglicisms, and at least one girl from the Pakistani community in Stornoway has been a prizewinner at the Mod, for which a language test is required.

22. Robert Bell and Nigel Grant (1977), *Patterns of Education in the British Isles,* London: Allen and Unwin, Ch. 5.
23. For details of children whose mother tongue is not English, see N. Grant, 'Multicultural education in Scotland' *Comparative Education,* 19: 2, 1983, pp. 133-153. Most gave the countries of origin, but there were some oddities; one gave China and Hong Kong as separate countries, but gave no indication what Chinese they spoke, and the Western Isles return let out the native Gaelic speakers. There were many other peculiarities of this kind.
24. Attitudes to particular languages can affect self-reporting. Punjabi enjoys high status among Sikhs as their literary and sacred language, but not among Muslims, many of whom prefer to be regarded as Urdu-speaking, even if their knowledge is slight. Similarly, Hakka, which many Hong Kong Chinese probably speak, is not highly regarded, and is not normally written; Cantonese is highly esteemed, and is written, and may therefore be claimed as the mother-tongue, justifiably or not.
25. When Hungary attained a measure of autonomy within the Habsburg Empire, it set about attempting to Magyarise the Croats, Slovaks, Romanians and other minorities that came within its part of the Empire (the Crown of St Steven, Hungary), thus denying to others the very rights that it had so long struggled to obtain for itself. This is a well-known example of a depressingly familiar phenomenon. It surfaced again recently in Bulgaria, with demonstrations against less discriminating laws on the Turks.
26. National Front leaflets have been circulating in Glasgow and Edinburgh since 1982 at least, and although there is little overt support for that party, there are plenty of instances of its general ideology being expressed in some Scottish schools.
27. There have long been separate papers in the SCE for native Gaelic speakers and learners; the late Sorley MacLean was one of the advocates of this. (Personal communication, Portree, 1986).

28. Glasgow has offered classes in Urdu, Punjabi and Chinese from August 1984, but since there is no SCE in these, they have to use English Boards for GC(S)E. There are now about half-a-dozen schools teaching Urdu and one Punjabi. The form of Chinese taught is not Cantonese, but Putonghua (Mandarin), the official language of China, largely because of its greater currency, and most of the pupils of Chinese are not of Chinese origin.