Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
RECONSTITUTING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AT WORK.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education at Massey University.

STEPHEN ANDREW MAY.

To Jim Laughton, whom I never met, but would have liked to:

_He pokeke uenuku i tu ai._
Against a dark cloud the rainbow stands out brightly.
Abstract

In the debates surrounding minority education, the demise of the previous policies of assimilation and integration has led, in their stead, to an advocacy for multicultural education. The promotion of multicultural education has been heralded as the means by which 'cultural pluralism' in schools can be fostered and the educational performance of minority children improved. It is argued here, however, that the rhetoric of cultural pluralism - most often associated with multicultural education - is not sufficient to change the position of minority groups within education. Indeed, it may serve simply to reinforce the disadvantages that such groups face. Rather, what is required of multicultural education, if it is to make a difference for minority children, is that it be guided by an 'informing theory' which links it to wider processes of social and cultural reproduction. When multicultural education is framed in this way - with an understanding of the wider reproductive processes that contribute to the structural disadvantaging of minority groups within schooling - it becomes clear that what is necessary in schools is significant structural reform at school level; that cultural pluralism needs to be tied to structural pluralism.

In the following account, Richmond Road Primary School in Auckland, New Zealand will be discussed, using the approach of critical ethnography, as an example of a school which has embarked on such structural reform. By reconstituting school organisation, along with the traditional school 'message systems' (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment) that serve to disadvantage minority groups, Richmond Road demonstrates how an informed theory of multicultural education can be successfully realised in practice for the benefit of minority children.
Acknowledgements

Theses, I suppose, can vary in interest - both for those who read them, and for those who write them. While I cannot guarantee the outcome of the former, I can say that I have personally found the subject of this thesis - Richmond Road School, and particularly, Jim Laughton's role within it - both fascinating and significant. I hope the reader might find this also (at least to some degree), despite the limitations of my account.

In making this account of the school possible, I am indebted to the following people:

Dr. David Corson, my supervisor, for his considerable scholarship and consistent support of my work. While he has since taken up a professorship at OISE, I hope that this might not be the end of our association;

Assoc. Prof. Richard Harker and Dr. Peter Lineham for reading and commenting on the final draft (and for doing so in the limited time my deadline allowed them);

The Richmond Road School Board of Trustees for allowing me to undertake this study of the school in the first place. And to Pita Taouma and Graeme Page, in particular, for their cooperation and support. Thanks also Pita for the memorable meal;

Lionel Pedersen for his interest and support of the project throughout. Thanks for the many long hours of discussion and the free reign you gave me;

The current staff at Richmond Road who had to put up with me over a period of two years. Those whom I interviewed are found in the following pages. Those whom I couldn't persuade onto tape (Jacqui and Shona, in particular), thanks for the many informal (and informative) discussions we had;

The various past staff members and friends of the school who willingly gave of their time to talk about their association with Richmond Road and about Jim Laughton in particular. Wally and Courtney, especially, I hope this might contribute in some way to your own goal of recording what Jim has done;

And finally, my wife, Janet, whose love and support has kept me these last two years from emotional and financial ruin (at some cost to her own!), and who now faces the prospect of a PhD...
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. iii

Acknowledgements ......................................................... iv

Glossary of Maori Terms ................................................ ix

INTRODUCTION: RECONSTITUTING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION ....................... 1

1. CONSENSUS, CONFLICT AND RESISTANCE: THEORIES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION .............................................................. 5

   - The 'Liberal-Democratic' View of Education ............................................. 5
   - Structural-Functionalism ........................................................................... 7
     - *Durkheim* ......................................................................................... 7
     - *Parsons* ............................................................................................ 8
   - Conflict Theories of Education: The New Sociology of Education ............... 10
   - Theories of Social Reproduction: Base and Superstructure ....................... 11
     - *Althusser* ....................................................................................... 11
     - *Bowles and Gintis* .......................................................................... 13
   - Theories of Cultural Reproduction: The Social Construction of Knowledge ... 14
     - *Weber* ............................................................................................ 14
     - *Gramsci* .......................................................................................... 15
     - *Bourdieu* .......................................................................................... 16
     - *Bernstein* ......................................................................................... 22
   - Resistance Theories ....................................................................................
     - *Giroux* ............................................................................................. 26

2. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE RHETORIC OF PLURALISM ..................... 30

   - From Assimilation to Multicultural Education: Solutions to the Ethnic Minority 'Crisis' in Education ................................................................. 30
   - The Multicultural Panacea: Claims and Counter Claims ............................ 32
   - 'Benevolent Multiculturalism' ................................................................ 35
   - Beyond Benevolent Multiculturalism: Effecting Structural Change at School Level .......................................................... 38

3. METHODOLOGY: A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY .................................................. 41

   - School Ethnographies ............................................................................... 41
   - A Critical Ethnography ............................................................................ 44
4. RICHMOND ROAD SCHOOL: AN OVERVIEW
   The Historical Background ........................................ 48
   The Present Context: An Informed Approach to Multicultural Education 49

5. SCHOOL ORGANISATION: EFFECTING STRUCTURAL CHANGE
   Current School Organisational Structures .......................... 54
   Jim Laughton: Principal as Educational Visionary .................. 57
     'He had a very powerful presence and a fine mind' ............... 57
     'I think ... conflict theory was what interested him' .......... 63
   The Process of Change: Principal as Director, Strategist and Facilitator 65
     'Jim said ... there are features of the ideal family that could be emulated in the school' 69
     'People have been known to stay until morning tea and disappear' .......... 73
     'He was totally uncompromising. But by the same token I think the vision became a shared vision or it wouldn't have worked' 76
     Ko te hunga hanga whare na te whare ano ratou i hanga: 'They who build the house are built by the house' 78
     'Every time they changed the rules, he took advantage of them' .......... 83
   The School and its Community: Fostering Reciprocal Relationships 86

6. PEDAGOGY: KNOWLEDGE, RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PROCESS OF LEARNING
   Provisional Authority: 'Whoever has knowledge [at Richmond Road] teaches' 96
     '[If you had an ability you were recognised' ....................... 97
   Child Centred and Process Learning: 'The kids always come first' ........ 105
     '[The process was underlined all the time' ....................... 106
   A Multilingual Environment: The Role of Languages and Cultures at Richmond Road 111
     Fostering First Languages ....................................... 111
     'We are concerned ... that children express their ideas in real situations' 118
   Timetabling Children's Learning: 'The kids are used to the routines, like we are' 120

7. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT: RESOURCING AND MONITORING
   CHILDREN'S LEARNING ........................................... 124
   Resourcing Children's Learning .................................. 125
     'Most of our curriculum is based on our children' ............... 126
     '...you had to tie it to developmental age, as well as concept, as well as your curriculum area' 129
   Assessment: Monitoring Children's Progress ........................ 131
List of Figures

Figure 5.1: Richmond Road Primary School Organisation, 1991 .......................... 68
Figure 7.1: Three Year Focus Plan ................................................................. 127
Figure 9.1: The Multicultural School Environment ............................................. 161

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Ethnic composition of Richmond Road Primary School .................... 48
### Glossary of Maori Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hangi</td>
<td>traditional feast; literally, earth oven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hui</td>
<td>meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaiarahi reo</td>
<td>Maori language assistant; literally, language leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaiwhakahaere</td>
<td>coordinator; director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karakia</td>
<td>prayer; chant. [In Maori protocol, a karakia always opens a formal meeting].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Kohanga Reo</td>
<td>Maori language pre-school; literally, language nest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mana</td>
<td>power; influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>ordinary; indigenous people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mauri</td>
<td>life force; the beginning; life principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>not Maori; European.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritimana</td>
<td>[a transliteration of] 'Richmond'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ropu</td>
<td>group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taha Maori</td>
<td>things Maori; literally, the Maori side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangata whenua</td>
<td>Maori; the local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangi</td>
<td>funeral; literally, to cry; weep; mourn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tapu</td>
<td>sacred; forbidden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawhirimatea</td>
<td>God of the winds and the storms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuakana-teina</td>
<td>older sibling - younger sibling; literally, older brother - younger brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whakatauki</td>
<td>proverb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whanau</td>
<td>family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Unlike English, Maori nouns do not take the plural 's', although in popular New Zealand usage (as reflected in some of the interview transcripts) the 's' is sometimes added.

** Maori words are not differentiated in the following text.

---

1 Literal translations are taken from Ryan (1989).