

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE INCORPORATION OF A  
MULTICULTURAL APPROACH IN CONTEMPORARY  
TEXTBOOKS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **Abstract**

During the past few decades a substantial body of research has emerged in western as well as the developing nations studying the racial bias in children's texts. However, it is only recently in South Africa, with the ascendance of the ANC government, that interest has been focused on eliminating apartheid values and on promoting multicultural tenets in the school curriculum. It is undeniable that the concept of multiculturalism has been severely stigmatised in the South African educational context. Anxieties have been expressed about embracing the discourse of multicultural education within the educational system based on fears that, like the previous educational system, it too will perpetuate group differences. Nevertheless, in recent years, a clear consensus view has emerged that the implementation of multicultural education is imperative if the goal of a rainbow South Africa is to be realised.

Against this background, the present study attempts to study the incorporation of a multicultural approach into contemporary textbooks. To realise this aim I selected a sample of four textbooks, one from each of the major disciplines (science, English, geography and history), and subjected the texts and pictures from each to content analysis.

The findings of this study suggest that a multicultural approach shall at least for the foreseeable future remain a central feature of learning materials produced for the new South African curricula. The findings indicate that multicultural aspects predominate in the texts as compared to other ideologies. This applies to both text content and illustrations. Contrary to the researcher's initial expectation, however, the texts also reveal a strong tendency towards Eurocentric and patriarchal approaches.

This research does not conform to traditional, 'scientific' criteria of validity and reliability; it seeks only to investigate textbook material in more depth and thereby contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the texts

subscribe to a multicultural approach. Such understanding may help both educationalists and authors in their evaluation of existing textbook material, and in the production of new texts which reflect the reality of South Africa as a multicultural society.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Over the last few years the concept of multicultural education has gained considerable currency in South Africa (Alexander, 1986; Mc Gurk, 1990; Coutts, 1992). In the past South African society was characterised by racial domination and a lack of national unity. The ideology of race that was carefully implemented by the Nationalist government from 1948, and developed over four decades by a formidable array of apartheid legislation not only promoted educational segregation but also conclusively affected the nature of schooling provided to black students in South Africa. The educational dispensation was based in cultural identities with each cultural group placed into a schooling structure designed to affirm and transmit such culture. This culture differentiation eventually resulted in cultural discrimination. Further, the whole curriculum had been conditioned to privilege, to accepting separation as a natural order, and to undue respect for authority. It resulted in the erosion of learning as a social process, the impoverishment of inter-group relations, the suppression of national unity, the protection of white privilege and a lack of real participation by the black community in education (Samuel, 1990; Davey, 1994). Apart from this, the educational system did not promote appropriate qualities and skills which would enable the youths successfully to enter the labour market. Many decades of global isolation have also seriously impaired the process of development of global awareness among students. Multicultural education, consequently, has been posited as a viable alternative in order to combat historical forces that propagated the ideology of segregation in education (Lynch, 1983).

These concerns clearly point to the need for a systematic educational programme designed to promote core values such as national unity, non-racialism and democratic participation that form an integral part of national reconstruction. Multicultural education is a welcome corrective. It recognises what is common and diverse and allows people to have greater freedom to follow their heritage, while at the same time evolving a greater unity by promoting fundamental principles of common South Africanism. Moreover, a multicultural approach with an emphasis on national rather than ethnic and regional

interests, can contribute significantly to helping to achieve national reconciliation in South Africa (Eyber & Versfeld, 1997). It ultimately aims at developing a responsible, compassionate, and humane individual, capable of adjusting and adapting to a changing South African society. It does not separate education from training, but recognises that personal growth in a democracy cannot be separated from an understanding of work and the economy (Young, 1990). Thus it assists in developing competent knowledgeable people capable of coping with the modern political economy of South Africa, and elsewhere. It explores the “necessary and complex interplay between unity and diversity, between national culture and cultural pluralism” (Alexander, 1986: 85). It expects individuals to be aware of their cultures and to have an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and to participate in one or more culture while assuming some responsibility for maintaining a shared national culture (Suzuki, 1984). Thus, ethnic diversity is seen as an instrument for enriching national culture (Coutts, 1992). At the same time, the cultural heritages of constituent minorities are consciously valued and supported. Multicultural education can therefore empower people in their specific and diverse struggles. It can accomplish a cultural transformation as students acquire the cultural competencies to function effectively in the networks and institutions of power (Mc Gurk, 1990). Some have defined it as the political analysis of culture. They feel the necessity to develop students as potential critics of the concept of culture (Muller & Christie, cited in Moore, 1994:259). The fact that it is also a multi-disciplinary approach means that multiculturalism encompasses multiple language environments, matching the academic, social and linguistic needs of the students. In the international arena it promotes the development of attitudes and values such as international interdependence, global solidarity, tolerance, social justice and environmental awareness (Fountain, 1995).

The idea of multiculturalism has been tempting to those wanting to create institutions that respect differences without fixing or naturalising any culture over another. But as Moore (1994) pointed out in a review of multicultural education in South Africa, the idea of culture itself is highly problematic in a context still reeling from separate development. Muller (cited in Moore, 1994:240) explained the problem as follows:

Since apartheid education used cultural difference as its ideological foundation it is not at all surprising that South Africans are both at home in talking about education and cultural differences and repelled by it.

Prominent writers and educationalists have attacked multiculturalism in education pointing out four major limitations (Mncwabe, 1993; Banks, 1994; Eyber & Versfeld, 1997; Mc Allister, 1997; Moodley, 1997). They are: first, formal multiculturalism with its institutional boundaries leads to categorisation and polarisation of people with greater ethnic stereotyping and mobilisation along ethnic lines. Second, it does not explore how culture and ethnicity change and develop, and how and why some cultures are more powerful than others are. Students learn cultures as static sets of behaviour and the assumption is that if they know about them they will be more tolerant. Third, it also overlooks fundamental differences between an immigrant society with cultural pluralism as its reason of state and the South African racially ordered society that displays structural pluralism. Fourth, the wide differences in cultural backgrounds between various groups and the fact that whites form a numerical minority makes the process of implementation of multicultural education arduous.

In post-apartheid South Africa a movement for the promotion of multiculturalism in education has already been initiated. An overview of current educational policy documents (The Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), The White Paper on Education and Training (1995), The Interim Core Curriculum, (1995), Outcomes-Based Education (1996), National Qualification Framework, (1996) and Curriculum 2005 (1997)) clearly indicates that it has been accepted that the curriculum content should “promote unity in diversity through a flexible framework which allows the accommodation of cultural differences and needs” (Policy Framework for Education and Training 1994:3, cited in Greenstein, 1995). Accordingly, The Interim Core Curriculum, (1995), National Qualification Framework, (1996) and Curriculum 2005 (1997) incorporated various features of multicultural education while relating general and specific aims and general content of curriculum concerning diverse subject areas. The multicultural aspects include issues such as non-racialism, shared national identities,

democratic participation, inter-disciplinary and global approaches, acknowledgement of diversity, development of attitudes and skills for effective participation in political and economic management, interdependence of man and nature and, finally, eradication of gender stereotypes and bias.

In this study an attempt has been made to explore the extent to which current school textbooks prescribed for secondary classes in four major curriculum areas, namely history, geography, general science and English, incorporate multicultural elements subscribed to by the above-mentioned education policy documents. The focus is on textbooks published between the years 1996 and 1998 as it is assumed that more recent school textbooks are more likely to reflect the multicultural orientation incorporated in the selected educational reports. Keeping this point in mind I have selected three Longman publications, namely, *All that glitters: An integrated approach to South African history* by Emilia Potenza (1996), *Web of Life: An integrated approach to natural sciences* by Fiona Clitheroe (1998) and *Living geography* by J Barnard, A Clacherty, S. Cohen and M. Potterton (1996) and one Oxford Press publication, *New Successful English* by M.B Mosala, D. Paizee and M.L Peires (1997).

## **1.2 Aims and assumptions of the study**

The chief goal of this study is to explore to what extent liberal, critical and radical multicultural approaches inform the text content and visual representations in the texts.

From this, several sub-goals arise:

- To establish to what extent eurocentricism, patriarchal and feminist orientations are incorporated in the visual representations in the selected publications.
- To scrutinise the extent to which the texts depict awareness of global environmental concerns including both natural and human induced ones. In addition, special emphasis is given to issues concerning wild life extinction and preservation.
- To discern to what extent the texts have incorporated a global perspective while dealing with environmental concerns and other geographical, social and historical issues.

- To investigate how far text-based activities and exercises promote critical thinking, decision-making skills, and social action skills.
- To examine whether the texts depict diverse ethnic groups as making a positive contribution to their community and avoid stereotypes and demeaning and distorting characterisation.
- To ascertain to what extent the texts subscribe to a patriarchal viewpoint by approving of economic and emotional dependence of women on menfolk by under-representing them in higher positions and by promoting stereotypical thinking by equating domestic tasks as the part of feminine role.
- To establish to what extent the content in the texts is presented from a mainstream perspective primarily, by reinforcing existing political and economic structures; and second, by glossing over controversial issues such as victimisation and oppression of disadvantaged ethnic groups and their struggle to transform discriminatory power relations and to provide equal access to economic resources.
- To probe whether the developing countries are visualised in the texts in terms of problems i.e. over-population, hunger, poverty arising from climatic changes, lack of efficient agricultural techniques and lack of application of appropriate technology.

Furthermore, this study explores how far both visual representations and text contents:

- Promote a sympathetic understanding of the diverse ethnic groups that comprise the South African society and promote nation building in the face of diversity.
- Enable students to conceptualise mechanisms used by dominant groups in the past as well as in present times to restrict the life chances of disadvantaged groups in terms of their access to economic resources, power and social resources and the strategies of exclusion adopted by them to serve their vested interests.
- Depict the subordinate position of women in contemporary South African society because of unequal access to power, unequal power relationships between men and women in the domestic situation, the discrimination against and exploitation of women in the job situation and women's strengths and their struggles and triumphs in a male dominated society.

- Discuss life experiences of people of colour in contemporary South Africa and their predicaments concerning the living conditions in both drab townships and depleted rural areas.

This study is based on two major assumptions. The first assumption relates to the research question itself. The researcher assumes that in the present educational scenario there is ample scope for the incorporation of multicultural elements in all curriculum areas. The second assumption relates to the selection of textbooks for the study. It is assumed that a small sample of four textbooks from four subject areas will be sufficient to obtain valid findings.

### **1.3 Research methodology**

The research approaches used in this study qualitative content analysis. The research relies on content analysis to examine multicultural elements in the texts, and to unearth diverse orientations of multiculturalism embodied in the texts. The investigation is essentially descriptive in that the procedure is less formalised than might be the case in quantitative research, the scope is not initially rigidly defined and the mode of operation is influenced by the personality of the researcher. A more detailed description follows in Chapter 4.

### **1.4 Organisation of the research**

The second chapter traces the evolution of the concept of multicultural education in South Africa in the post-apartheid era. It also briefly discusses the concept of multicultural education as perceived by prominent educationalists in contemporary South Africa.

The third chapter discusses the evolution of a multicultural approach in educational development in South Africa.

Chapter 4 details the research methodology applied in the research project.

The fifth chapter presents the analyses of the text and picture content of four selected texts, in terms of the extent to which each incorporates diverse multicultural elements.

Chapter six is a descriptive, interpretive and evaluative account of the findings of the analyses of the texts presented in Chapter 5. Here I present an assessment of the incorporation of multicultural orientation and other rival ideologies in the visual representation in the texts.

The concluding chapter takes a critical look at diverse aspects of this study including its aims and assumptions, research methodology and content and results presented. It further details the study's limitations and formulates recommendations for future research in this domain.

## **Chapter 2: The concept of multiculturalism**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter an endeavour is made to examine the concept of multiculturalism with its multiple perspectives and varied traditions, including feminism and afrocentrism. This examination will prove useful in developing a better comprehension of the ensuing chapter, which examines the incorporation of diverse aspects of the multicultural approach in the educational initiatives undertaken by both the Nationalist government as well as the present ANC government. Furthermore, this examination will also provide a foundation for the formulation of a number of multicultural themes. These themes shall inform the exploration of the extent to which text content and illustrations in the texts have incorporated the multicultural approach.

### **2.2 The concept of multiculturalism**

Multicultural education as an interdisciplinary perspective is grounded in the works of African American scholars such as Dubois (1968), Cooper (1988), and Woodson (1991). Their works helped to spell out the educational implications of African Americans' challenge to the dominant group's hegemony and the institutionalised stereotypes of blacks (Woodson & Wisely, 1962). However, in spite of such an impressive beginning the concept of multiculturalism is still struggling for legitimacy. Frequently the terminology, research and writings in these fields are ignored, and writers and practitioners often create their own particularist definitions and views of multicultural education (D'Souza, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991). They use multicultural education interchangeably with ethnic studies or global education, which have different, often ambiguous meanings (Banks, 1997). Practitioners and writers who lack a clear understanding of multiculturalism tend to conceptualise it as the study of ethnic heroes or the participation of students in superficial activities such as ethnic singing, eating and dancing. This superficial image does not embrace the essence of multiculturalism, which includes social action and transformation (Sleeter, 1991; Grant, 1992; Neito, 1992). Both transformation and social action have been key components of the multicultural approach. They emphasise that curriculum reform should counteract the mis-education

caused by a curriculum that perpetuates feelings of inferiority and powerlessness and often promotes a white supremacist ideology, by teaching that the oppressor had accomplished everything worthwhile, while blacks had achieved nothing (Woodson, 1991).

However, the concept of multiculturalism is not the only issue on which multiculturalists are deeply divided. They also differ sharply on the question of its goals. The aims of early advocates of multiculturalism were the tolerance of inter-group differences and the promotion of cultural heritage, not the realisation of equal educational opportunities (Webster, 1997). More recent advocates of a multicultural approach in education insist that its major aim is to restructure schools and colleges so that students from diverse ethnic groups will experience equal opportunities to learn (Gay, 1992; Grant, 1992; Banks, 1994). Multicultural education aims at developing basic capacities in individuals, such as curiosity, self-criticism, the capacity for reflection, the ability to form independent judgements, as well as sensitivity to and a respect for other perspectives. Multiculturalism does not simply operate on the principle of substituting one perspective for another; rather, it reflects on multiple and contradictory perspectives in order to understand reality more fully (Banks & Banks, 1995). In addition, it uses the understanding gained from reflection to make social changes. A multicultural approach values diversity and encourages critical thinking, reflection and action. Through this process students can be empowered, as it encourages them to ask questions, to take risks and to question and recognise their rights and take responsibility for their actions (Neito, 1992).

### **2.3 Diverse orientations in multicultural approach**

Against this background I now explore a range of positions held within the debate on multiculturalism. I shall concentrate on three major positions, namely, liberal multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism and radical multiculturalism; and on two traditions - feminism and afrocentrism - that are closely related to critical and radical multicultural approaches. The latter form the theoretical framework for the analysis of text content and visual representations in the texts in the subsequent chapters. Here my

aim shall be, apart from elaborating on the specificity and limitations of these perspectives, to discern how the concepts of cultural and gender difference, power and oppression have been conceptualised within these theoretical frameworks. I shall conclude with a statement signalling the indispensability of a multicultural approach in education, despite the prevailing criticism of its conceptual framework, goals and practical viability.

### 2.3.1 Liberal multiculturalism

Liberal multiculturalism has gained wide currency in both Western and developing nations. The educational models of Great Britain, Canada and Australia are to a large extent informed by the liberal multicultural approach. Liberal multiculturalism is a democratic policy response for coping with cultural and social diversity in society. It attaches considerable importance to ensuring that educational, economic and cultural relationships develop amicably, and that ethnic differences in cultural patterns, customs and expectations do not become a hindrance in the development of these relationships. Put differently, it claims that the values of all cultures should be respected. Culture, in liberal multiculturalism, has an instrumental value, but it is also important to recognise the expressive function of parts of a social group's survival programme (Bullivant, 1986). Social groups maintain their culture to give quality to their lives or to express important values, in addition to assisting in the basic task of survival.

Liberal multiculturalism emphasises that acknowledging the existence of ethnic diversity and ensuring the rights of individuals to retain their culture should go hand in hand with enjoying full access to society. In brief, it acknowledges the legitimacy and need for equality by varied ethnic groups as the expression of their diverse cultures (Ramsay, 1987). This approach does not deal with the contradictions and tensions attendant on the issues of culture and race. Nor does it take into consideration the historical experiences of other races that are incompatible with the image of any free and democratic nation. Hence it conveniently remains aloof from the experiences and sensibilities of a multicultural nation such as the USA (McCarthy & Willis, 1995).

According to the Australian Council of Education and Ethnic Studies (1982:18) the primary educational ideals of liberal multiculturalism are to:

- Promote inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural patterns other than their own;
- Improve communication between members of one cultural group and those of others;
- Maintain and nurture the cultural and linguistic heritages within the society;
- Give children a more authentic view of the nature of the society;
- Promote a selection of curriculum that encourages children from various ethnic backgrounds to learn about their culture, history, customs and other aspects of their lifestyles.

Liberal multicultural education goes beyond the transfer of basic skills. It includes those attitudes and critical skills that empower students for a meaningful life in a democratic society. It is essentially an attempt to release a child from the confines of an ethnocentric straitjacket and awaken him/her to the existence of other cultures, societies and ways of life and thought (Jaffcoate, 1984). It is intended to de-condition the child as much as possible in order to free him/her from biases and prejudices and make him/her willing to explore rich diversity. Multicultural education is then an education in freedom – freedom from inherited biases and narrow feelings and sentiments, as well as freedom to explore other cultures and perspectives and make one's own choice in full awareness of available and practicable alternatives. Thus while not cutting a child off from his/her culture it enables him/her to enrich, refine and take a broader view of it. The inspiring principle of liberal multiculturalism is to sensitise the child to the inherent plurality of the world – the plurality of systems, ways of life, cultures, modes of analysing familiar experiences, ways of looking at historical events, and so on (Bullivant, 1997).

Liberal multiculturalism also implies the cultivation of a global view of human affairs because of increasing global interdependence. There is a need for students to know more about world culture, world history and world literature which shall help them to develop global awareness and take them beyond national, cultural and racial experiences. Lynch (1983) advocates a global multicultural curriculum as a remedy for the parochialism in

the contemporary curriculum that breeds not only geographical illiteracy but also an indifferent attitude towards the fate of others in the world. In short, multicultural education is a process that goes beyond the demographic in a particular country and touches the changing world.

Liberal multiculturalism rejects the view that schools should melt away cultural differences, or the view that schools should tolerate cultural pluralism. It maintains rather that schooling should be oriented towards the cultural enrichment of all children. It affirms that cultural diversity is an important resource and should be preserved. It further asserts that multicultural literacy is as indispensable for living in today's world as any other skill. Some of the essential conditions, according to liberal multiculturalism, for the development of multicultural literacy are: first, students should be fluent in languages other than their own; second, they should be aware of the literature and art of many different peoples; and finally, they should be conversant not only with the history of their own people but also with that of other regions of the world. Thus this multicultural approach is all pervasive. It is a philosophy, a way of looking at the world, and not simply a programme to reduce educational failures (Neito, 1992).

A final feature of the liberal multicultural model is its ability to address issues democratically. In doing so it counters the pessimistic assumption that the majority is inherently opposed to the rights of minority groups. The multicultural model envisages that individuals and groups can be fully incorporated into society without either losing their distinctiveness or being denied full participation. In this process, the state plays an active role in sponsoring institutional changes which may extend from the restructuring of mainstream institutional change to the support of parallel institutions (Inglis, 1999).

One of the greatest contributions of this approach is that it ensures that cultural understanding is not merely the acknowledgement of racial diversity. It goes beyond acceptance and tolerance. It demands that students should learn to acknowledge the full humanness of other people; their right to be who they are and their right to be treated with respect. Moreover, liberal multiculturalism is a dynamic approach to school

knowledge that emphasises heterogeneity of perspective, multi-disciplinary, intellectual challenge and debate, and the vigorous interrogation of received knowledge and tradition.

### 2.3.2 Critical multiculturalism

In opposition to liberalism, critical multiculturalism involves more than recognising and respecting differences. It means understanding, engaging with and transforming the various histories, cultural narratives, representations and institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination.

Critical multiculturalists have criticised liberal multiculturalism on the following grounds:

- Liberal multiculturalism suggests that the remedy for prejudice is more favourable information about racial and ethnic groups, rather than the development of reasoning abilities that process the information.
- Liberal multiculturalism assigns students to gender, racial and ethnic categories without considering their wishes and expectations. It also intensifies racial awareness as a part of its efforts to liberate students from oppression.
- Liberal multiculturalism is grounded on an educational model which gives students information about their culture and their past rather than teaches them how to reason about conceptions of history, differences and similarities. In liberal multiculturalism, culture is not treated as the site of power and contestation in which differential resources and capacities determine the manoeuvrability of competing racial groups and the possibility and pace of change.
- Liberal multiculturalism fails to take into account the differential structure of opportunities that helps to define race relations in a social system. This multicultural strategy of adding diversity to the existing white-oriented school curriculum serves to legitimise the dominance of western culture in the educational system.
- Liberal multiculturalism simply fails to provide a systematic critique of the ethnocentric ideology that is accommodated in curriculum and pedagogical practices in education; instead it articulates a language of inclusion (Jackson and Solis, 1995).

Finally, liberal multiculturalism is criticised for ignoring the element of power. It is dismissed as a superficial attempt to correct the prevailing Eurocentric hegemony in education. It does not explain the structural base or worldviews that undergird the extant socio-political system. It is a model operating within a paradigm of accommodation and adaptation rather than social reform (Jackson & Solis, 1995).

These views are shared by a number of critical multiculturalists. Sonia Neito, Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn treat multiculturalism as a socio-educational movement (Webster, 1997). They observe that the conventional curriculum and its attendant ethnocentric structures have to be comprehended in the light of the politics of identity, history and struggle. They stress that educational reforms should challenge the existing dominant-subordinate structure. Social hegemony perpetuates the myth of Euro-American superiority at the expense of indigenous people, their culture, and their contribution to modern society and our sophisticated, traditional knowledge base. Critical multiculturalism offers a new language for students and others to travel within zones of cultural difference. This is a language that challenges the boundaries of cultural and racial differences as sites of exclusion and discrimination (Jackson & Solis, 1995).

Critical multiculturalism also highlights how inter-ethnic relations are associated with considerable differentials in the access to power and material resources. It assumes that multicultural education can only be implemented when there is a political and social transition leading to a society in which no ethnic group is in a dominant position. Further, it demands that apart from emphasising the religious and cultural practices of certain ethnic groups there is a need to acknowledge their history of suffering from prejudice and discrimination. Central to the goals of the pedagogy of critical multicultural education are emancipation, justice, and equal educational opportunities for all students. One important aspect of this pedagogy is that it utilises cultural diversity in order to challenge basic notions and principles common to dominant and minority cultures alike, so as to construct a more vital democratic common culture (Turner, 1994).

Critical multiculturalism, rather than being concerned about how races differ, enters the field of race relation from a different position, a position that emanates from the margin rather than the centre. It seeks to demonstrate how the particular cultural experiences and values of certain people have been marginalised to varying degrees by the repeated assertions of dominance by people of European ancestry. It further emphasises how a major section of the white population remains committed to its position of dominance, willing to defend it and legitimise it in the face of overwhelming evidence of its complicity in atrocities and oppression. Thus, a primary aim of critical multiculturalism is to understand prejudices and racial attitudes in order to prevent their future development.

This critical approach to multiculturalism explores not only the cultural diversity of school knowledge but also its inherent rationality. It claims that school knowledge is socially produced, imbued with human interest and deeply implicated in unequal social relations outside the school. It concludes that efforts to redefine the curriculum in the name of multiculturalism should go beyond the narrow prescription of incremental addition and replacement, and make salient connections between knowledge and power (Jackson & Solis, 1995:83).

Critical multiculturalism does not consider culture as non-conflictual, harmonious and consensual; neither does it perceive cultural diversity as a goal; rather it agrees that diversity must be affirmed within the politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice (Mc Laren, 1994).

It is also attentive to the notion of differences. For the critical multiculturalist, differences within cultures are political differences and not just formal, textual or linguistic ones. They are always the product of history, culture, power and ideology. Differences occur between and among groups and must be understood in terms of the specificity of their production. As a critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism appeals for social justice, an end to oppression and a recognition of the humanity of women, people of colour, the gay and the handicapped (Lynch, 1983). It is also an exploder of

myths. It helps to expose and demystify some of the truths that we have learnt to take for granted rather than analyse critically and carefully. Justice for all and equal opportunity in education, although certainly ideals worth believing in and striving for, are not always a reality (Neito, 1992).

In the field of education, in the critical paradigm, Banks & Banks (1997) argues for a transformative approach, which brings content about cultural, ethnic and racial groups – and about women – from the margins to the centre of the curriculum. It helps students to understand how knowledge is constructed and reflects the values, experiences and perspectives of a range of groups. Transformative knowledge provides the basis for social action. It assumes that all knowledge reflects the social, economic and political relationships within society, and an important purpose of transformative knowledge is to help citizens to improve society. It invalidates the idea that Africans are inferior to whites, challenges the legitimacy of blaming low income blacks for their social and economic problems, and illustrates how these problems are symptoms of societal inequality (DuBois, 1968). It challenges the meta-narratives, encourages perspective-taking and acknowledges life in the borderlands. Further, critical pedagogy is based on the experiences and the viewpoint of the students rather than the ‘official’ culture (Neito, 1992).

Critical multiculturalism, though very critical of liberal multiculturalism, does share similar commitments. For instance, its commitment to social justice is identical to the liberal multiculturalist objective – the liberation of women and people of colour. Further, it shares certain core classifications with liberal multiculturalism. Its observation of cultural difference is used to identify groups, e.g. blacks, Latinos and white students. The cultural differences within each group are ignored. There are two further problems with this orientation. First, critical multiculturalism, in its attempt to deconstruct differences, tends to expose their volatility and historical pliability, and at the same time to forge their connection with power and political struggles, thus constituting a legitimisation and further cultivation of specific differences (Webster, 1997). Second, there is a need for a shift in critical multiculturalism from its exclusive focus on black groups (since such an

approach tends to highlight their deficits) to one that examines how racism in its various forms is produced historically and institutionally at various levels of society. It should address racial issues not as a dilemma of black people alone but as a problem endemic to a legacy rooted in historical inequalities and long-standing cultural stereotypes (Giroux, 1994).

### 2.3.3 Radical multiculturalism

Radical multiculturalism differs from critical multiculturalism in that it does not limit itself to analysing the racist representations and practices of the dominant culture, but concerns itself with developing cultural spaces marked by the formation of new identities and pedagogical practices that will offer a powerful challenge to existing racist and patriarchal principles.

Radical multiculturalists, like critical multiculturalists, are critical of liberal multiculturalism. They argue that liberal multiculturalism does not deal with the real reasons for ethnic and racial groups being oppressed and victimised. It does not promote an analysis of the institutional structures that keep disadvantaged ethnic groups powerless and victimised. It avoids a serious analysis of class, institutionalised racism, power, capitalism and other systems that keep excluded groups powerless. In fact, it diverts attention from the real problem and issues. Instead it identifies the characteristics of powerless groups which supposedly caused these problems, such as low self-concept, confused identities and linguistic deficiencies (Banks, 1986). Radical multiculturalists demand that multicultural education should help students to become more aware of the inconsistencies between democratic ideals and societal practices and to develop a commitment to reflective and humane social change and the acquisition of the skills needed to become efficacious in promoting social reforms (Bank, 1986).

Radical multiculturalism promotes pedagogical practices that offer the possibility for schools to become places where students and teachers can engage in critical and ethical reflection on what it means to bring a wide variety of cultures into dialogue with each other in a plural society within rather than outside social relations characterised by

domination and subordination (Carby, 1992). Radical (or insurgent) multiculturalism also must address issues regarding group differences and how power relations function to structure racial and ethnic identities. Multiculturalism must become more than a critical referent for interrogating the racist representations and practices of the dominant culture (Giroux, 1994).

Radical multiculturalism also makes whiteness visible as a racial category. As a radical cultural politics it attempts to provide white students with a self-definition in terms of which they can recognise their own complicity with or resistance to operations of power, within and across differences, to legitimate some voices and dismantle others. It also provides a space in which the criticism of cultural practices is closely linked to the production of cultural spaces for the formation of new identities and pedagogical practices that offer a powerful challenge to the racist and sexist principles incorporated in the educational system.

Radical multiculturalism demands that multicultural education be politicised and made more power-sensitive, because it is through the curriculum and schooling that children from minority ethno-cultural backgrounds are being deprived of their much needed share of survival knowledge (Bullivant, 1986). The multicultural curriculum should articulate the relationship between unity and differences in a way that moves beyond simplistic binarisms, that is to develop a unity-in-difference position in which new, hybrid forms of democratic representations, participation and citizenship provide a forum for creating unity without denying the particular, the multiple and the specific (Giroux, 1994).

Finally, the radical approach utilises the concept of culture to wage war against hegemonic perspectives. In conceiving of culture as a form of empowerment, insurgent multiculturalists argue that the appreciation of difference cannot be an end in itself but is rather a starting point for challenging cultural hegemony and attaining group solidarity, social justice and social reconstruction. Further, while it does see diversity as a goal, it argues that diversity must be affirmed within the politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice (Webster, 1997).

At this junction it may be useful to point out the similarities and differences between the critical and radical multicultural approaches. Proponents of the critical perspective on multicultural education regard it as an ideology that protests against all forms of cultural and political domination. What is distinct about this view is its rejection of a mere celebration of differences and of multiculturalism as a project for cultural plurality in schools. The critical multiculturalists believe that multicultural education challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities and teachers represent. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection and action as the basis for social change, multiculturalism promotes the democratic principle of social justice.

Radical multiculturalism, however, believes in the radical transformation of society rather than its amelioration. The radical multiculturalists believe that education in a multicultural society should confront the inequalities in the society. They (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990; Gracia 1991; Banks, 1992) conceptualise multiculturalism more broadly to include race, class and gender – and the interaction of these variables is considered important. Radical multiculturalists further regard multicultural education as an education for social activism and egalitarian social reconstruction. Nevertheless, both radical and critical approaches recommend a pedagogy for students to enable them to de-essentialise their identities and contextualise them in power politics and theory. This recommendation radically deviates from a multicultural education that involves mere diversity affirmation and respect for differences (Webster, 1997).

To sum up, both critical and radical multicultural approaches have tried to develop a conviction that multiculturalism is not limited to a fascination with the construction of identities, to communicative competence and a celebration of tolerance. Instead it constructs an educational politics that aims to reveal the structures of power relations at work in the racialisation of social order (Carby, 1980). One of the signal achievements of these versions of multiculturalism has been to challenge the belief that blackness,

femaleness or African-ness are essential and unchanging qualities. In this sense, multiculturalism does not mean a numerical plurality of different cultures but rather a community which is creating and encouraging spaces within which different communities are able to grow at their own pace and create a consensual culture in which they recognise a reflection of their own identity (Goldberg, 1994: 337).

#### **2.4 Incorporation of afrocentrism and feminist orientations in multiculturalism**

In the previous sections I have explored the concept, application in the educational arena and limitations of three selected multicultural approaches. In this section I shall be considering two major traditions closely associated with the multicultural approach namely, afrocentrism and feminism. In this study, afrocentrism has been treated as a part of the radical multicultural approach. Radical multiculturalism demands that educators should develop a curriculum in which the histories and voices of various subordinate groups are represented. One of the main purposes of the afrocentric approach is also to redress the Eurocentric imbalance in the curriculum and demonstrate that the black race is indeed creative and that its accomplishments are central to the development of all civilisations. Thus afrocentrism, in a way, is devoted to the pursuit of black cultural regeneration and liberation through reconstruction of the past (Webster, 1997). Afrocentrism demands a radical transformation of the educational curriculum, as it assumes that white culture has penetrated and poisoned the black mind to such an extent that any strategy for black liberation must be grounded in African-centred educational inputs (Asante, 1991).

The other tradition that I have incorporated in my study is feminism. Feminism here is treated as an integral constituent of critical multiculturalism. Feminism and critical multiculturalism share common viewpoints on issues concerning women's oppression and the methods to combat it. In the first instance, critical multiculturalism tends to explore and study explanations of female oppression, which include sexist beliefs held by both men and women, man's nature, patterns of sexual repression, sexual discrimination, scarcity of resources and a patriarchal culture. Further, critical multiculturalism rejects the essentialisation of gender differences and uses the concept of social reconstruction to

focus on the gendering of experiences, that is, on gender identities and women's situation as a consequence of sexual power differences, which lead to the imposition of biologically-based identities, coercive role allocation, and discrimination (Webster, 1997). In this regard critical multiculturalism hints at the need for refocusing on structural oppression within the forms of patriarchy (McLaren, 1994). What is needed, according to critical multiculturalism, is an intervention in the system of patriarchal oppression 'at both the macro-political level of the structural organisation of domination and the micro-political level of different and contradictory manifestations of oppression' (Ebert, 1996:23).

#### 2.4.1 Afrocentrism

Many mainstream multiculturalists (Asante, 1987; Gollnick & Chinn, 1990; Diop, 1991; Mc Diarmid, 1992) perceived afrocentric ideas as compatible with the goals of multicultural education, which aim at reforming the entire educational system to realise equal educational opportunities for people of colour. Afrocentricism similarly aims at countering eurocentricism in schools by infusing specifically black interpretations of the past and present. Furthermore, various features of the multicultural approach are reflected in the afrocentric approach. In the first instance, the afrocentric approach prioritises culture by emphasising educational efforts to liberate Africans through the accurate depiction of African history. Second, it assumes that African values are marginalised and excluded from the popular and academic culture of the West, thus reinforcing the public invisibility and devaluation of African centred ideas (Cornel West, 1993). Third, it associates the distorted portrayal of the blacks with the low-self esteem and under-achievement of blacks. Finally, it also contemplates the issue of the equal treatment of races. From the afrocentric viewpoint, US society is conceived as dominated by a particular group – the white race. This domination is manifested in the virulent racism that has led to the marginalisation and victimisation of black Americans in social life and education. Afrocentrism maintains that multicultural education can remedy this situation by breaking away from a superficial pluralism that connotes the mere celebration of differences, and by pursuing socio-political goals that are not related to cultural freedom but centred on empowering people of colour (Asante, 1987).

The only point where afrocentrism and multiculturalism differ is that afrocentrism seeks to incorporate the contribution of black cultural groups only in the curriculum, whereas multiculturalism aspires to include positive contributions made by other disadvantaged cultural groups also. Both ideologies unanimously support the view that within Eurocentric studies certain falsifications of history have taken place. History texts have assumed that western culture and institutions are superior or represent a movement of social progress; non-western experiences and paradigms of knowledge are either ignored or interpreted as 'socially backward' or 'primitive' (Seidman, 1998: 275).

However, radical multiculturalism and afrocentricism differ in the method by which they recommend the Eurocentric imbalance be redressed. According to the afrocentric approach this imbalance could be redressed if the African perspective on world history and civilisation is introduced in all phases of education (Lemert, 1993). Conversely, multiculturalism argues that the promotion of cultural diversity rather than any specific culture in the curriculum will help children to attain a balanced perspective on all cultures.

Apart from this, there is one more point of disagreement between multiculturalism and the afrocentric approach. Afrocentricity is rooted in the cultural image and interests of people of African ancestry, and presents the life experiences, history and tradition of people of African ancestry as the centre of analysis. Afrocentricity thus acts as an intellectual and philosophical foundation upon which people of African ancestry should create their own scientific and moral criteria for authenticating the reality of African human processes (Madhubuti, 1994). To sum up, one of the explicit purposes of the afrocentric approach is the restoration of the black race to the eminence that it enjoyed in the ancient world (Banks & Banks, 1995). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, promotes a very different viewpoint. It affirms the cultural differences between the white and African cultural groups but is not in favour of essentialising these cultural differences. It is willing to approve the demands of the Africans to empower themselves and to some extent promote their cultural practices, but it has serious reservations first, concerning the

afrocentric approach's commitment to centring the study of African phenomena, events and persons in the particular cultural voice of composite African people; and second, its demand that African culture be placed at the centre of the curriculum in order to motivate African students to learn the important role that Africa has played in the development of Western civilisation (Roger, 1996). Multiculturalism further disagrees with the afrocentric belief that the social and psychological development of an African child is possible if he/she concentrates on studying ancient African civilisation

In essence then, afrocentricity represents the view that as human beings people of African ancestry have the right and responsibility to centre themselves in their own subjective possibilities and potential and refine the best in themselves (Madhubuti, 1994). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, supports the view that Africans should appreciate the ideological framework and complexities of other existing cultures including the European culture. If the afrocentric approach is concerned with African people being the subjects of historical and social experience rather than objects in the margins of European experiences (Roger, 1996), multiculturalism tends to conceptualise minority cultural groups including blacks in relation to the dominant white group, and to characterise them as marginalised or disadvantaged groups.

Finally, the afrocentric approach is criticised by the multiculturalists for promoting a black version of eurocentricism. There are five major aspects to this:

- Afrocentrism ignores the vicissitudes in African culture. There is an attempt to homogenise Africa's multiplicity of cultures (Webster, 1997). Asante (1987), for example, a prominent afro-American afrocentricist, argues that even though thousands of ethnicities prevail in Africa all black people share a single culture.
- It attempts to forge historical linkages between African Americans and African culture and thus reproduces the Eurocentric homogenising of African culture, which is in fact a combination of many cultures.
- It accepts the Eurocentric-construction of races by endorsing, but not clarifying the terms 'black people' and 'white people.'

- It reinforces a narrow discussion about race, remaining silent on the issues of class, gender, and sexual orientations.

#### 2.4.2 Incorporation of feminist traditions in multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is an ideological project informed by gender concerns as well as those of race and ethnicity. The feminist tradition within multicultural education insists that society operates not only on Eurocentric and racist but also class and sexist principles. Women are the main victims of these societal norms. Feminism continues the pursuit of justice for women of colour, who are regarded as belonging to the oppressed culture. Feminism challenges the infrastructure of oppression and aspires to a harmonious social system where all social groups are positively represented and empowered. The primary goals of feminism are equal pay for equal work, the elimination of laws that discriminate against women, hiring of women and greater participation of men in household works (Elshtain, 1981).

Feminist multiculturalism demands that students be taught to appreciate women's struggle against socio-economic conditions created by those who have power and privileges. It also demands that educational institution acts should eliminate sex discrimination and should provide opportunities for women to actualise their talents and realize their ambitions.

In the sphere of education a key assumption of the multicultural approach is that it is the educational institution and not the economy that represents the key to the struggle for a sexually egalitarian social order, as it is in the schools that the experiences of women are caricatured and girls disempowered. Therefore, a non-sexist education is essential to enable women to reach their full potential and function effectively. Anti-sexist education aspires to empower women and eradicate oppression. It is based on the core, radical feminist tenet that women are disempowered and victimised by men. One of its immediate goals is curriculum transformation so as positively to revamp the images of women in history and society. Thus a multicultural curriculum should provide students with the skills to analyse how standard representations serve to reinforce dominant

political and moral vocabularies that promote stereotypes and degrade people by depriving them of their identity. To sum up, an anti-sexist education seeks the abolition of the oppression of women and the construction of a sexually egalitarian social order (Sedkar & Long, 1997).

The question here is how far a uniform anti-sexist education can be successful in satisfying the demands concerning the empowerment of women formulated by conflicting positions within the feminist ideology. Feminism is by no means a unified ideology, and there are enormous differences of opinion as to the nature and causes of, and the cure for women's inequality, subordination and oppression. For instance, liberal feminism insists that men and women should enjoy equal rights. It asserts that women are rational beings like men and that they should have the same legal and political rights and opportunities to compete equally with men in politics and paid employment. Radical feminists hold that the society is based upon a system of sexual inequality and oppression. They use the concept of 'Patriarchy' to show how male domination operates at different level and in all social institutions. According to them male domination is evident in the structure of the traditional family and the process of conditioning that takes place within it, in cultural stereotypes of women as mothers, housewives or as objects of sex, in under representation of women in senior positions in professions and public life and the physical intimidation and violence employed by men to control women (Heywood, 1992). They call for abolition of all social distinction derived from sex including the abolition of conjugal family life and full emancipation of women from a subordinate relationship that property entails in a society where men control property.

The radical feminists maintain that liberal feminist arguments become patronising for women and hence disastrous to the cause of feminism. They criticise liberal feminism for not providing a strategy for women's liberation and for assuming the state to be a natural institution that can be used to promote gender equality. They see the oppression of women as the most universal and fundamental form of domination, and stress that male power is not confined to the public sphere but it extends to the personal sphere, particular to the family and sexual relationships.

#### *2.4.2.1 Liberal feminism*

A strong commonality is evident in the aims of liberal feminism and multiculturalism. In the first place, they both promise to deliver to women a sense of independence and fulfilment along with the right of self-expression. Neither ideology seeks to overturn the economic, social and political system. Both approaches demand the radical equalising of opportunities for men and women to acquire the resources necessary for meeting their basic needs, including that of self-development. They agree that the achievement of women's rights is essential to the achievement of racial justice and sexual equality. They also support the divergent trend of women's increasing participation in the world of work outside the home and in higher education. Multiculturalism further endorses the claim of liberal feminism that women are potentially more than sexual beings and have the same capacity and need for freedom as men. In order to be free and equal persons they must have the rights of a person, and that means equal civil and political rights with men.

Finally, both ideologies assert that the strongest reason for giving women all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of their faculties, for complete emancipation from all forms of bondage to custom, dependence and superstitions, and from all the crippling influences of fear, is a women's right as an individual to assume personal responsibility for her own life.

However, there are two issues that make multiculturalism and liberal feminism uncomfortable bedfellows. First, liberal feminism gives due respect to the traditional functions of women. It assumes that a woman's nature as a free self-forming being could be adequately realised within her traditional roles in the family. Multiculturalism rejects such a view as perpetuating one-dimensional, stereotyped and simplistic images of women promoting passivity and inferiority among women, confirming their marginalisation and the patriarchal assumption that they can at best play a peripheral role in the social and economic development process. Second, multiculturalism does not comply with the liberal feminist notion of the welfare state in which the state assumes part responsibility for child care, provides maternity benefits and promotes a flexible

pattern of employment so that women as a depressed group can have an opportunity to develop their talents. The role of the state as far as multiculturalism is concerned is related to promoting equal educational opportunities, developing a truly pluralist environment to give sustained attention to the ugly realities of systematic discrimination against some groups and, lastly, to work affirmatively to combat racism.

#### *2.4.2.2 Radical feminism*

Multiculturalism incorporates several tenets of radical feminism. It emphasises that men are the dominant gender and that their domination produces pervasive socio-economic disproportion between the sexes. In the male-dominated world women are especially victimised by an unequal distribution of power and wealth. The gender order is a hierarchical one. Men are consistently placed in a position of dominance over women, and women are expected to be wives and mothers. Hence women are socialised to nurture and be responsive to the needs of others. The ideology of natural gender differences tends to conceal the social and political formation of an unequal male-dominated order. Moreover, women are socialised and coerced into a subordinate role. The ideology of 'natural' social norms pressurising women to conform to care taking, servicing roles while allocating superior political, economic and cultural resources to men, has succeeded in perpetuating male dominance. Radical feminists are convinced that women are victimised by the idea of their femaleness, which has destined them to a life organised around the role of wife and mother. Women are defined as destined by nature to lives revolving around men and domesticity. Society has relegated them to second-class citizenship and denied them equal rights and opportunities (Seidman, 1998). Thus they attempt to develop a counter-culture and to expose male bias and assert female knowledge at all levels, ranging from the discovery of women's history to the development of gender-neutral language (Wright & Eatwell, 1993). Radical feminism supports women's struggle against male victimisation and their community-building efforts. Finally, it argues that the basis of women's oppression lies not in social organisation or physical domination but in male control of culture, language and knowledge. This, it claims, limits the way in which women can think and causes patriarchal assumptions to be internalised by women as well as by men.

However, the multicultural approach has reservations concerning several aspects of radical feminism. First, it refutes the demands of radical feminism for a radical change in society and its insistence that within the framework of the family it is necessary to eradicate the effects of women's traditional inferiority and submissiveness by dismantling the existing male dominated social system which perpetuates the oppression of females by means of economic control, religious and cultural sanctions and violence. Second, the multicultural approach is not interested in the issue of male domination in the domain of intimate relationships. Hence it is silent on the view perpetuated by radical feminists that male power is embedded in the family, in reproduction and sexuality, as women are expected to seek the approval of men in intimate relationships. Finally, since multiculturalism aspires to an egalitarian and harmonious social system it shows little interest in the radical feminists' demand for broad cultural and institutional changes, beyond altering attitudes and laws. Multiculturalists advocate non-traditional families based on choice and equality. They envision a beautiful life for women free from restrictive gender norms.

#### *2.4.2.3 Black feminism*

Among the manifold forms of multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism particularly support black feminism. Critical multiculturalism stresses that the primacy and validity of black women's experiences should be accepted. It approves of the black feminist view that women of colour not only face gender oppression but also class and racial oppression. It also argues that black women are excluded from or marginalised in public life. Black women's exclusion from positions of power within mainstream institutions has led to the elevation of the white elite and their ideas and interests, and the corresponding suppression of black women's ideas and interests in popular culture (Higginbotham, 1989).

Furthermore, multiculturalism and black feminism hold common ground on the issue of urging black women to be self-reliant and independent. They call for replacing denigrated images of black womanhood with self-defined images. They aspire to black

women's self-determination and activism. Multiculturalism supports black feminism, seeing itself as an intellectual basis for self-conscious struggle that empowers women to actualise the humanist vision of society (Redford-Hill, 1986). Multiculturalism further advocates the black feminist viewpoint that the dominant groups, by portraying black women as passive, unfortunate recipients of racial and sexual abuse, have suppressed the notion that black women can actively work to change their circumstances and can bring about changes in their lives.

Multiculturalism further identifies with the black feminists' standpoint on the importance of education, self-definition and economic self-reliance. Black feminism believes that it will help African women to understand how their personal lives have been fundamentally shaped by the interlocking systems of race, gender and class oppression. It stresses the importance of self-definition as part of a journey from victimisation to freeing the mind, which will help black women in resisting controlling images of black womanhood. Economic self-reliance will help black women to change the conditions of their lives. Black feminism thus links economic self-sufficiency with the demand for respect and assertiveness. It stresses that women should assume responsibility for strengthening their self-esteem by learning to love and appreciate themselves, as it allows them to choose their relationships (Gwaltney, 1980). It appreciates all group actions which directly challenge the legal and customary laws governing black women's subordination.

However, on two points multiculturalism fails to accommodate black feminism. It disagrees with the Marxist tendencies in black feminist thought. It disapproves of the view promoted by black feminists that class solidarity among black women will eliminate racism and sexism, and that it is only through joint action and co-operation that they will be able to organise a variety of labour actions to improve working conditions, wages and occupational mobility, and end the segregation of black women in private domestic work. Second, multiculturalists, unlike black feminists tend to take a common view of female identity. They do not see that a common female identity varies along the axes of race.

Similarly, multiculturalism does not accept the black feminist viewpoint that the black woman's experiences with both racial and gender oppression has resulted in needs and problems distinct from those of other women. Multiculturalism does not promote exclusivity. It does not recognise that black women's oppression in a male- as well as white-dominated society is in any way different from the oppression faced by women of other marginalised cultural groups. Further, it does not feel that black women should be given priority over women of other cultural groups or even white women in the process of empowerment on the grounds that they are comparatively more suppressed than white women or women of other cultural groups.

In conclusion, the multicultural approach supports feminist ideologies' aspiration for women's distinctiveness and the complementarity of the sexes, and agrees that the sharp sexual division of labour within the family and society has in the past been co-opted by those hostile to women's emancipation. Reintegrating individualistic claims for women's self-realisation and choices with its emphasis on rights, multiculturalism can work together with the feminists for an equitable world, a world in which men and women can be equal and different, a world free of male hierarchy and privileges and authority over women (Bock & James, 1992).

So far, I have concentrated on studying points of commonality and difference between different classes of feminism and multiculturalism. In the following discussion I would like to explore some points of commonality between feminism in general, and multiculturalism. In the first place, both ideologies recognise the validity of women's own interpretation of their lived experiences and needs. Second, they exhibit a consciousness of institutionalised injustice towards women as a social group in a given society. Third, both ideologies advocate the elimination of sexual exploitation and the elimination of injustice against women by challenging social institutions and practices that uphold male prerogatives in that particular culture. Fourth, on the positive side, both ideologies demand the readjustment of inequitable sexual mores; first, by promoting equal educational opportunities and opportunities for economic self-reliance; second, by

ending the maligning of women in all forms of representations; and finally, by valuing women's unpaid labour.

To sum up, multiculturalism explicitly aims at egalitarian social reconstruction. It defines women and people of colour as oppressed cultural groups that are being excluded from power. Thus in its afrocentric and anti-sexist versions it stresses that non-mainstream cultures are marginalised in education and institutional life generally. Therefore, it is essential to transform the entire social system to equalise opportunities for those classified as 'women' and 'people of colour'. It demands a new power sharing and the reallocation of resources necessary for the social development of those who have been systematically excluded and denied rightly deserved social benefits. Further, like the demand of the afrocentric approach, it emphasises producing positive images of subordinate groups by recovering their suppressed history. Here I would like to stress that multiculturalism promotes the cause of women from any social grouping in so far as their sex limits their opportunities and cheats them of their just rewards. It challenges social hierarchies and aims at empowering such individuals. Similarly, its commitment to afrocentricity depicts its concern for the empowerment of the oppressed blacks while at the same time abjuring white elitism, with the hope of balancing diversity with commonality.

However, there are points where multiculturalism diverges from these doctrines. For instance, it is against undue favouritism towards a particular social group, which is the key feature of these doctrines. Multiculturalism acknowledges the unique identity of each group. It believes that withholding of recognition is a form of oppression. It stresses that each group has a right to cherish and maintain its distinctiveness in a way that does not prove disadvantageous to other groups, including the previously dominant groups. Thus it offers every social group "grounds for self affirmation and liberation provided they feel that they are a part of the solidarity of humanity" (Collins 1990:54). Second, it is against the essentialisation of differences that afrocentric and anti-sexist doctrines advocate. It believes that the inclusion of differences will not necessarily lead to the empowerment of these groups.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The study and practice of multiculturalism in the future will continue to face challenges from both within and without. The concept of multiculturalism is undergoing a period of introspection and reflection. Its ideological basis, utility and practice have been variously attacked. Critics from both the right and the left are highly suspicious of its nature. The right claims that multiculturalism promotes divisiveness and ethnic polarisation rather than national unity. The radical critics believe that multiculturalism reinforces the status quo because it fails to challenge the current social structure that oppresses the poor, people of colour, women and people of different sexual orientation. They also treat it as a mushy movement that is only concerned with raising children's self-concept, making their racial attitudes more positive and helping them to learn basic skills hence it fails to address the problems of minority students emerging from extreme lack of resources, racial distinction and hostile inter-racial relationships (Banks, 1986).

Some critics such as Ken Wilber (1996) are also of the view that multiculturalism promotes what it aims to undermine – ethnocentric prejudices. For instance, multiculturalism aims at treating all cultures as being completely equal since it believes that no one culture is superior to one another. Yet it vehemently opposes certain doctrines such as those of the Nazi and the Ku Klux Klan doctrines claiming they are based on the mythology of race superiority (Wilber, 1996). Interestingly, it accommodates and promotes the afrocentric approach which is determined to promote black cultural greatness over the western ones. Hence, one can conclude that multiculturalism is keen to accept the extreme viewpoints concerning the positioning of race and culture in the wider society provided these have their roots in so-called oppressed, non-Western, cultures. Similarly, some have argued that multicultural education endorses the traditional anthropologist conception of single group culture and thus facilitates the construction of innumerable regional racial, generational and sexual cultures. Some of these offer arbitrary moral judgments on certain other cultures as oppressed, dominant and Eurocentric. Above all, certain approaches to multicultural education introduce highly disputable views on the existence of racism, sexism and

eurocentricism as fact, rather than as argument mired in controversies in the social sciences (Webster, 1997).

Despite these highly publicised criticisms, the multicultural approach has received grass-root support from prominent educationalists. They regard multicultural education as a populist movement which can help people in their struggle to overcome inequality and address the ethnically and culturally diverse world of the present times, assisting in actualising democratic ideals. The multicultural approach in education, they believe, will bring significant educational benefits – socio-economic mobility, genuine democratic structures, and a decolonisation of social thought for women, for the handicapped and for people of colour. In part, multiculturalism is an intellectual agent of this empowerment (Webster, 1997).

In conclusion, some personal observations are in order. Multiculturalism is one way of appreciating the deep reservoirs of humanity in all races. Multiculturalism is committed to the simultaneous advance of autonomy and community, of institutional differentiation and cultural pluralism, and making of a common value system that unifies a diversified pluralistic society. It addresses the issues of identity formation, social solidarity and the importance of ritualistic and symbolic behaviour in social life. It aspires to meaningful political action in the quest for quality of life, individual self-realisation and equal participation and rights.

It recognises the need to reconceptualise society with the aim of empowering women. It recognises patterns of sexism that impinge on women's everyday lives. It celebrates the development of consciousness among women of their own psychological space, and the need to harness the resources that may protect the sanctity of the inner aspects of their lives. It insists that the patriarchal viewpoint should give way to the new ideal of equal intimate conjugal bonding. It appreciates the fortitude, inner wisdom and sheer ability of women to survive the male-dominated world. It perceives women as agents of knowledge. It delineates women as self-defined, self-reliant persons confronting race and gender oppression. Multicultural education is not, as is generally assumed, concerned

with the task of being sensitive to cultural differences or superficially appreciating or exploring the common ground of different people; rather, it is concerned with recognising and altering the true social circumstances of previously excluded and oppressed people, and helping them to understand and define themselves and their experiences in a new and a positive way.

## **Chapter 3: Development of multicultural education in South Africa**

### **3.1 Evolution of multicultural approach in educational policies in apartheid era**

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

From the accession to power of the National Party in 1948 until the early 1990 education in South Africa has been unavoidably and inextricably bound up with the politics of apartheid. The fundamental premise of this ideology was self-development through the separation and segregation of the various races on ethnic, cultural and language grounds. The state exploited existing cultural differences to legitimise differential educational and other opportunities, with a view to entrenching white minority hegemony. The specificity of this ideology in education can clearly be seen in the official state discourse on black education. In 1949, the Eiselen Commission was set up to produce a blueprint for education of the natives as a separate race. The Eiselen Report (1951) suggested that a planned, centrally controlled schooling system for blacks should be an important element for the overall development of South Africa and, in particular, for ensuring that labour needs were met. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, clearly stated that “there is no place for him (black South African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour” (H.F. Verwoerd speech to the senate on 7.6.54, quoted in Kallaway, 1984: 93).

The National Party’s educational policies have thus tried to produce a rigidly segregated occupation structure in which a black person is virtually excluded from all job categories except that of unskilled or semi-skilled labourer. At the same time, African customs and culture were neglected in the school system and African students were ashamed to be heard speaking their mother tongue (Frederikse, 1992).

Against this background, I intend to discuss several characteristics of the apartheid educational system that intensified racism by encouraging the politics of cultural difference.

### 3.1.2 Incorporation of apartheid ideology in the educational system

Apartheid policies defined population groups in racial and ethnic terms – as whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians - and the Nationalist government envisaged different education and schooling systems for different groups. Separate schools with the pupils' mother tongue as the medium of instruction were justified on religious, social and cultural grounds, with the primary aim of perpetuating cultural differences among diverse ethnic communities. It was also believed that the Bantu Education system, by stressing the cultural differences between black and white and promoting the development of separate black communities in which black aspirations could be realised, would thus be able to prepare blacks to accept differences as part of an unchanging, and unchallengeable order. The following statement from the Eiselen Commission (1951) is a clear example of the use of cultural difference to establish the need for separation and implies cultural maintenance

The schools must also give due regard to the fact that out of school hours the young Bantu child develops and live in a Bantu community, and when he reaches maturity he will be concerned with sharing and developing the life and culture of that community (South Africa, 1951 quoted in Kallaway 1984:36).

Education was fragmented along racial lines into four school systems for whites, coloureds, Indians and Africans respectively (Nasson & Samuel, 1990). The apartheid system further established patterns of educational inequality, in that these education systems did not provide equal education for the different population groups (Christie, 1986). Educational institutions for different population groups were allocated different resources, which determined the quality of teachers, teacher-pupil ratios and even matters such as access to basic school texts (Moodley, 1997). Thus schooling attempted to naturalise an abnormal racial and ethnic consciousness (Cross & Chisholm, 1990).

Black schools typically displayed the characteristics of disadvantage. These included: minimal levels of resources, inadequately trained staff, poor quality learning material, a shortage of classrooms and the absence of libraries. Thus the apartheid education policy provided a mass-based system for blacks geared towards schooling on a lower level than

for whites. This becomes clear when one conducts a comparative study of apartheid government expenditure on the education of an African and a white child. In 1980 the government spent R139 on the education of black child as compared to R 913 on the education of a white child per annum (Blignaut, 1981). Thus there were enormous differences in the amount of money spent on both groups.

The Black schools also had to cope with an overtly biased syllabus. Much of the information in the textbooks portrayed white men as superior and always helping black people. In contrast, blacks were represented as dutiful and respectful, their chief concern in life being to serve their masters (*The Star*, 14 January 1976). In the apartheid era no attempt was made to establish a curriculum that would apply to all ethnic groups. In fact there were different curricula for black and white students. It was compulsory for black children to learn through English and Afrikaans at school but it was not compulsory for white students to learn through African languages. Further, the subject areas selected for black and white students were different. According to the school syllabus black children were supposed to learn English, Afrikaans and some Maths. They would also learn religious instructions singing and gardening. The white children, apart from English Afrikaans and Maths would also study history, geography science and biology, as well as other subjects (Christie, 1986). The segregated educational system only served to emphasise differences (Bot, 1990). By the 1990s the government was conceding the shortcomings of its educational system, with Minister Viljoen criticising the then existing syllabus for having a predominantly eurocentric and white oriented content (*The Star*, 11 January 1990).

### 3.1.3 Conclusion

To sum up, the history of schooling in South Africa during the Nationalist government rule reflects an on-going attempt to establish and maintain white minority power and privileges. Statutory provisions further ensured minority domination of the governance of education and curriculum development. The substantial inequality promoted by the apartheid rule among white and black people in the provisions of education in the form of differential financial provisions, poor infrastructure facilities and inferior curriculum

continue to have, till present times, a strong implication on the endeavours of disadvantaged communities to achieve a situation of parity.

### **3.2 Incorporation of multicultural aspects in the post-1976 educational policy initiatives**

In the later 1970s the education system was plunged into crisis. On June 16, 1976, pivotal and tragic events took place in the streets of Soweto. The enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in specific subject areas on February 24 of that year proved a final trigger to trouble in Soweto schools. No doubt, the issue of Afrikaans-based tuition was a real grievance, but it was by no means the only grievance the children had. Apart from the language issue the protest was also directed against the appalling conditions of overcrowding, poorly qualified staff, shortage of books and the poor quality buildings existing in most African schools. More than this, it was an expression of the accumulated frustration of decades of domination. The student unrest continued into the 1980s. In the mid-1980s another massive students revolt flared up. This time it was in the form of school boycotts in the eastern Cape, which soon spread across the country. Students and progressive educationalists were demanding a democratic, free and united system of education in South Africa, which included democratically elected students representative councils, and democratic and humane teaching methods including free education, free books and free transport to school (Education Co-ordination Committee Report, 1984).

The student resistance movements outlined above clearly demonstrated the conspicuous failure of traditional apartheid education to legitimate a social order. It was recognised that schools were key sites of political struggle. The black community, especially, felt that there was a need to end apartheid schooling. There was general consensus that the black education system could not be effectively transformed without undermining the central pillars of discriminatory practices such as the Group Areas Act, which prescribed the need for a separate education structure.

In an attempt to resolve these crises, the state formulated reforms that sought to reshape yet retain Bantu education. The Nationalist government, by putting forward a wide array of education reforms, tried to reassure the oppressed communities that the state was genuinely interested in removing the causes of stagnation and crisis in the educational system.

In the following section, I shall firstly examine one major liberal multicultural aspect of the proposed reforms: equality of educational opportunity as envisaged in state-sponsored educational policy documents, including the so-called De Lange Report (1981) and the White Paper on Education (1983). These documents aimed at linking the educational system with the broad goals of a united, democratic society by achieving a high level of education for every one. Both documents recognized the value of affirmative action as a positive mechanism to redress existing imbalances in the educational system and social life. Second, I shall examine how the open school system and the People's Education movement led to the empowerment of black people in two different ways. I shall show how private Catholic schools responded to the needs of the wider black South African community by reconstituting themselves into multicultural, multi-faith institutions. I shall demonstrate how the conceptual framework of the People's Education movement promoted black, disadvantaged people's empowerment by striving to create a more democratic educational system.

### 3.2.1 De Lange Report: Moving towards equal educational opportunity

In the wake of student protest in June 1976 against the existing Bantu educational system, a landmark state announcement was made concerning the establishment of a commission of enquiry that would produce guidelines for a practicable education policy that would realise the optimum potentials of all inhabitants, promote economic growth and improve the quality of life for everyone. The De Lange Report tabled in 1981 recommended the abolition of Bantu education and its replacement with a system that would work towards the equalisation of the provision of education, eventually resulting in equal access to occupational opportunities. It made two recommendations in this regard:

- The educational system of the RSA should offer every citizen equal education and equal opportunities for personal development in education, and government should assume the responsibility for such education up to the 16th year within a flexible system of formal and non-formal education
- The principle of equal education and equal opportunities in education shall be inextricably bound up with the positive acknowledgement of the commonality as well as diversity of the philosophies of life and cultures in the RSA. (HSRC, 1981:23).

The White Paper on Education (1983) similarly reiterated that government should ensure equal quality of education for all population groups. The principles incorporated in the White Paper (1983) placed strong emphasis on equal educational opportunities:

- That equal opportunities for education, including equal standards of education shall be strived after for every inhabitant of the Republic irrespective of race, colour and sex;
- That recognition shall be granted both to that which is common and to that which is diverse in the religious and cultural way of life of the inhabitants of the Republic, and to their languages; and
- That the provision of education shall be directed in an educationally responsible manner at the needs of the individual and those of society, and the demands of economic development, and shall take into account the manpower needs of the country (South Africa, 1983: Paragraph-2 [i], [ii], [iv], [vi]).

### 3.2.2 Opposition to racial segregation – the open school ideology

The opening of private schools to all races in 1976 following the 1976 Soweto riots was a momentous event as these schools initiated the process of desegregating schooling in South Africa. For the first time in the history of the nation, legislated racial segregation in the state schools began to crumble and the erosion of apartheid education became a reality. Private Catholic schools were amongst the first educational institutions to react against the separate and unequal educational dispensation when the Roman Catholic

Church introduced a non-racial, non-discriminatory policy. The Catholic schools were soon joined by Anglicans, Methodist as well as other church and independent schools who called on the government to allow them to admit black students. The private school sector and its supporters were able to pressurise the government into making a series of concessions on the question of racial integration. In 1976 the Roman Catholic Church took a firm stand against apartheid education and admitted pupils from all race groups. The primary aim was to provide better educational opportunities for black pupils. In 1986, at the height of the unrest, Sacred Heart College was called upon to make a statement of principle as to where it stood in relation to educational crises as a result of student protest in the mid-1980s in South Africa. It responded with a Credo. This Credo was drawn up a few months before the declaration of state emergency in June 1986. It stated that:

We believe in equal opportunity for education, including equal standards for all, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex. We also believe that this can be assured only in an open institution that affords positive recognition to what is diverse in the religious and the cultural way of life and the languages of our people, and which at the same time seeks a unity in diversity based on the command of love (cited in Mc Gurk, 1990:32).

The initiative taken by the private schools was followed by other religious institutions and private organisations, and during the ensuing years desegregated private schools increased in number. By the mid-1980s desegregation had become an established feature of the open school system, with more than 80 percent of private schools desegregated (Muller, 1992). Since 1986 the number of black pupils in these schools has increased considerably. Some schools that had had virtually no black pupils had by the end of 1980s over 30 percent black enrolment (Christie, 1990). However, it has to be remembered that private schools constituted then only 2% of the total number of schools. They provided a limited but sustained alternative to apartheid education. Apart from ensuring equal educational opportunities to black students, substantial efforts were made to meet the curriculum challenges faced by the open schools. In 1977 Sr. Brigid Flanagan of the Catholic Department of Schools envisaged the introduction of a

completely new education policy and programme that would incorporate the cultural values of both white and black students into the existing curriculum (Christie, 1986).

### 3.2.3 Education for people empowerment – The People’s Education movement

People’s Education differed from the earlier phases of the education struggle in several ways. First, it articulated not only a demand for better conditions in black education, but simultaneously a demand for a different form of education; an education rooted in the liberation struggle (Levin, 1991). Second, the People’s Education movement also aimed at setting up a democratic system of education. It allowed students, parents, teachers and workers to participate actively in the initiation and management of People’s Education in all its forms (Kruss, 1988). The NECC (National Education Crisis Committee, later the National Education Co-ordinating Committee) conference in 1985 also laid the foundation for the organisation of student, teacher and community action aimed at the immediate construction of alternative education programmes that would displace structures of apartheid education (National Education Crises Committee, 1989). The NECC conference recognised that in order to construct an alternative education system, what was required was a conception of education which served the people as a whole - one which liberated and put people in command of their lives; one which would be determined by the people and remain accountable to them (Sisulu, 1986). As Vusi Khanyale of NECC put it: "The real struggle is to replace an undemocratic, coercive, ineffective and irrelevant education system with a democratic, participatory and relevant one" (cited in Van den Heever, 1987: 4).

One of the main aims of People’s Education was to create ‘people’s power’. It stressed that people’s power could be created in education if the oppressed and exploited layer of society were allowed to be intimately involved in the planning and implementation of educational policies. In the keynote address at a National Consultative Conference on the Crises in Education in Johannesburg, in December 1985, Father Smangaliso Mkatshwa stressed that:

When we speak of alternative or People's Education we mean one which prepares people for total human liberation: one which helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind, one that prepares people for full participation in all social, cultural and political spheres of society (cited in Van den Heever, 1987:1).

People's Education aimed at altering power relations so as to empower the powerless to destroy the privileged minority's monopoly on knowledge and technical skills. It demanded the transfer of power or control from one sector of society to another, from the minority to the majority. It stressed the empowerment of the poor and oppressed: once the oppressed people acquired self-confidence, which comes with education and training, they would begin to make demands and their voices would be heard (Cape Teachers' Professional Association, 1988). People's education sought to develop a consciousness among people that the solutions to their problems had to be sought by the people themselves. Vusi Khanyile, one of the key NECC figures, stressed that the local community had to assume the local educational responsibility and be integrally involved in decisions affecting the running of the schools. For instance, the local community had to decide "who teaches where, who goes to which school and what should be taught" (Khanyile's speech to ASP conference, Pietermaritzburg, Nov 1986, quoted in Kruss, 1988:6).

#### 3.2.4 An appraisal of educational policy initiatives in the apartheid era

The discussion so far suggests that the educational principles incorporated in state-sponsored reforms and anti-apartheid educational movements entailed a shift away from orthodox Verwoerdian apartheid. They aimed unanimously at realising a quantitative expansion of black education, combating the pervasiveness of dominant class ideology in the existing educational arrangement, and democratising institutional structures.

In reality, though, the task of the various state-sponsored reports was to devise a series of mechanisms for modernising apartheid education in order to make it more acceptable to (sections of) the South African community and also the international community (Kallaway, 1984). For instance, the De Lange Report gives a false impression of moving significantly from the tenets of segregation and racial oppression that had characterised

the rule of the Nationalist government by visualising an educational system based on social justice and equality (Collins & Gillespie, 1984). But other diverse features of the De Lange Report clearly indicate that it was largely “a part of a state-sanctioned (sic) configuration of unequal class and race relationships” (Collins & Gillespie, 1984: 34). In the first instance, the commission report recommended that after 6 years of schooling pupils would be channelled into one of the three basic systems: academic, technical or the non-formal system. It needs no great insight to realise the implication of this canalisation for black and white pupils in South Africa given the historical and contemporary viewpoints of the Nationalist government towards their education. Pupils from white middle class backgrounds would be channelled into academic schools, universities and finally into professional jobs. The black, working-class children would be forced to follow technical education, or would be pushed out of schools into the job market after the initial period of literacy and numeracy training. Moreover, the Report made it explicit that the proposed two non-academic phases of schooling were primarily meant for children from the black, coloured and Indian communities (Collins & Gillespie, 1984).

Similarly, the policies of open Catholic schools also indicated a shift from the old-fashioned racism embodied in the racial segregation to a more modern form of racism which Hall (1981) has called ‘inferential racism’. There are diverse examples of inferential racism in the workings of the open school system. First, the opening of these schools attempted to de-radicalise the schools but did not structurally desegregate them. As a result, Africans were forced to become part of a school culture that had nothing in common with their impoverished cultural background. Second, the admissions policies of these schools were racially discriminatory. They required black students to pass selection tests, while the whites students were not subjected to these tests and gained admission automatically (Carrim & Mkwanazi, 1992).

The People’s Education movement has been strongly criticised on several grounds. In the first place, some subject commissions incorporated by the People’s Education movement were imbued with the idea that an alternative system of education could have substantial effects on empowering and skilling disadvantaged people in social conditions dominated

by the old order. It failed to realise that there is a close connection between educational practices and the existing social order. Second, People's Education was not an independent ideology, but an element of the national liberation struggle. Education was seen less as a strategy for black empowerment than as a means of mobilising and organising teachers, students and parents for the political struggle (Unterhalter & Wolpe, 1991). Third, it was based on the assumption that by reforming education, social systems could be significantly altered; hence no consideration was given to conditions external to education controlled by white political and economic power. Kallaway (1987) observed that if the People's Education were to contribute to a more just society, it would have to move beyond the common formula for mass education to an understanding of how reform in education is related to the fundamental redistribution of power, wealth and privilege in society.

Despite these shortcomings, People's Education was a pioneering movement in promoting multicultural practices. In the first place, it allowed oppressed people to make their input into the control, content and methods of teaching and learning. It advanced a balanced educational system that would benefit the black working class. Lastly, it anticipated that far reaching democracy in both education and society would enable black people's political emancipation. In short, it acted as a counter-hegemonic force against the differentiated effects of apartheid education.

### 3.2.5 Conclusion

Commentators have concluded that the developments described above should not be seen as having been a fundamental challenge to power relations existing in the apartheid system but as a movement of reform within them. Nevertheless, if one recalls a context in which education and other aspects of social life were entirely segregated by race, the move of open schools to admit students from all races ran counter to hegemonic racial assumptions as well as to apartheid laws. Both the People's Education movement and the open school strategy addressed racial, cultural and gender inequalities in an endeavour to create a just educational dispensation (Coutts, 1992). Open schools were able to achieve a limited but sustained alternative to the prevalent segregated education system.

Similarly, the De Lange Report's aims were not unlike those of multicultural education: it aimed at reducing inequalities; it believed that education ought to improve the quality of life of all individuals; and its special feature was that it sought to deal with the provision of schooling for all the inhabitants of South Africa rather than for just one group. Further, in the De Lange Report there was an underlying ideological context which emphasised equal standards, freedom of choice and cultural pluralism, within which educational reform was to be negotiated (Nasson & Samuel, 1990). For the first time liberal educational values became a part of South African educational discourse as the De Lange Report stressed that the distribution of resources and opportunities in education would be organised in such a way that everyone would receive a rightful share regardless of race, ethnic context or geographical location (Nasson & Samuel, 1990).

Moreover, the People's Education movement had for the first time conceptualised people as national rather than ethnic subjects, as belonging to a unitary South Africa and not fragmented ethnic units (Cross & Chisholm, 1990). But People's Education rejected Bantu education and propounded a non-racial educational system which focused on the interests of the oppressed groups in the society. This stands in sharp contrast to the educational principles contained in the De Lange Report, which proposed solutions to narrowly defined problems and needs as determined by the state, the private sector and industry and technology.

However, it is clear in retrospect that the lofty aims enshrined in these educational reforms failed to deliver any significant changes in the apartheid educational system. Problems were simply recast in a different discourse by both De Lange Report and the programme of People's Education. The De Lange Report's insistence on taking into consideration the requirements of the different cultural groups revealed its acceptance of prevailing racially differentiated education. With the provision of segregated state educational facilities set to continue as the primary feature of National Party policies, the immediate prospects for education desegregation remained as bleak as ever (Nasson & Samuel, 1990). By the same token, if one examines the NECC (1989) document, the dominant concern of People's Education in establishing an alternative education model

was to work towards black people's empowerment. As it turned out, the People's Education movement forced a violent confrontation with the state machinery that led to the breakdown of the black schools. The movement was primarily concerned with attaining political control over the educational system rather than changing the system to benefit disadvantaged black people.

Finally, the state-sponsored educational reforms in general reflected the overall state political strategy: the 'separate but equal' ethos framed in the refurbished apartheid philosophy of 'own affairs' or multiculturalism structured state intervention in education so as to privilege and skill some strata within the black communities through increased expenditure on target areas (Cross & Chisholm, 1990). Moreover, we see that government legislation both underpinned and defined the activity – as a sectional, bureaucratically centralised and non-inclusive process. The delivered curriculum reflected the existing government's viewpoint as to both the content and the aims of education. No spaces existed to negotiate the basic principles of the curriculum, for it was seen as something operating essentially outside the public domain (King & Van der Berg, 1991).

### **3.3 Development of multicultural education during the period of transition in the early 1990s.**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

During the 1980s the educational scenario in South Africa was marked by political resistance to the regime, ranging from strikes to school boycotts and armed attacks. The regime's ability to contain the opposition was hampered by internal dissension within the National party and international pressure, particularly in the form of financial sanctions. The Nationalist government responded with a strategy effecting both repression and reform. Some of the reforms taken had much in common with multicultural ideology. For instance, the educational policies adopted by the Nationalist government in the Educational Renewal Strategy in the early 1990s aimed at transforming the authoritarian, non-democratic and racial educational system through commitment to a system of

education “in which race shall not feature at all and justice in opportunities is ensured” (South Africa, 1992:47). The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) and the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) were the prime policy initiatives undertaken during this period. Here it is essential to point out that while the ERS was the Nationalist government's attempt to redress educational imbalances, the NEPI was initiated by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee. This committee was a national body representing various interest groups, including teachers, academics, policy analysts, trade unionists, community leaders and parents and students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The body was formed in 1985 to oppose the racist and inferior black educational system then in place (NECC, 1993). In the following section I shall concentrate on these policy documents, the ERS (1992) and NECC (1993). These documents, following the liberal multicultural perspective, openly rejected both the racial system of schooling and the concomitant inequity of provisions. I shall conclude the discussion by pointing out how the initiatives of both NEPI and the ERS have, despite their good intentions, proved inadequate in resolving the problems of deprivation and injustice confronted by black communities in the educational sphere.

### 3.3.2 Development of democratic education in the Nationalist regime

The outlines of National Party strategy began to emerge in sharper focus in the years following the unbanning of the ANC on February 2 1990. This event initiated a process of restructuring in which political confrontation, backed by coercion and armed intervention, gradually began to be displaced by dialogue and negotiation. Against the backdrop of international and regional scenarios of change and the attendant declining political and material support for 'low risk road' to social transformation, the only option left to the Nationalist regime was to negotiate with its opponents to de-racialise the political system.

At this point, it is essential to note that the transformation in National Party governance from a despotic form of rule to a democratic one had not emerged out of the kindness of its heart but as a result of pressures from other social forces that were dissatisfied with the manner in which the ruling party governed. Undoubtedly the National Party was not

interested in retaining the original character of the racially ordered apartheid system. Yet, in repealing this system, it was inclined to preserve the racial imbalance which it had served to create. It was National Party strategy to recast and re-articulate apartheid education within the parameters of reform and modernisation, so as to create conditions in which a less overtly racial discourse might prevail. Conversely, with the continuing fragmentation of the apartheid system, the Nationalist government also felt the need to introduce far-reaching educational reforms that might satisfy the educational aspirations of black people in South Africa. Thus it claimed that the ERS was initiated to prevent the country from ending up in a never-ending spiral of poverty and unfulfilled expectations (Mncwabe, 1993). It was designed to realise an educational dispensation to promote the realisation of equal opportunities, national unity, the elimination of discrimination in education, and the provision of human resources for national needs (Van Aardt, 1994).

The ERS was a wide-ranging plan to renew and restructure the South African education system in order to rectify existing deficiencies; make education more affordable, and create education and training opportunities for an ever-growing population. The ERS recommended that a new education model should “visibly promote and express national unity,” that race should not feature in the structural provisions of the model, but also that freedom of association and diversity of language, religion or culture should be accommodated and secured (South Africa, 1992).

The ERS aimed at the following multicultural goals:

- Education up to the highest level will be available to everyone who has the ability to profit by it within a non-racial education system;
- Education will contribute substantially to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic society which will promote national unity and will at the same time provide for diversity with regard to religion, language and culture; and
- Equal educational opportunities will be promoted on a national basis.

The ERS intended to eliminate the backlogs in education by creating one non-racial education system and by the setting of common education goals for all learners in the financing of education (South Africa, 1992).

The National Education Policy Investigation initiative (NEPI) was another attempt to reconceptualise the education system in the early 1990s. NEPI was launched in interesting circumstances. Nationalist Party leader, F.W. de Klerk, in his inaugural speech on 2 February 1990, agreed to negotiate with opposition organisations such as the PAC, the NECC and the ANC on the issue of developing viable educational policy options which would take into account the socio-economic interests of the broad South African populace. For bodies such as the NECC this meant an opportunity to move beyond oppositional politics and to engage in the politics of reconstruction.

The NECC formally launched NEPI, as an instrument of policy options, in 1990. Its primary aim was to develop an awareness of the illegitimacy of the current educational system and to conceive a new vision of education for the emerging democratic South Africa. Its central component was non-racism. Its curriculum report interpreted non-racism as a move away from racially based practices towards policies for common citizenship. The standpoint of the analysis in the report was the need to counter the legacy of the past, in which the apartheid curriculum focussed on diversity at the expense of commonality, by putting a strong emphasis on cultural differences. The NEPI report argued that both commonality and diversity needed to be accommodated in a manner based on respect for the equal rights and responsibilities of a common citizenship as well as tolerance and understanding of social differences (NECC, 1993:78).

Despite these worthy sentiments both documents proved ineffectual in meeting the educational requirements of the black, disadvantaged population. Even though the National Party Government, through the ERS, committed itself to equality in education and a single central education authority, this was hardly ever translated into action to redress the legacy of inequalities generated by apartheid. It is interesting to note that while NEPI was considered a progressive document by contemporary South African

educationalists the ERS was subjected to vehement criticism (Mc Gregor and Mc Gregor, 1997). In the first instance, it was assumed that the loopholes in the document itself led to the non-realisation of its democratic vision. The ERS was a transitional measure taken by the Nationalist government to ensure the smooth running of the education system. The ERS was silent on the concrete specifics of reconstruction and the transformation of apartheid education. A second reason for its failure was that it operated on the basis of assumed needs and overlooked the fact that needs and aspirations are conditioned by ideological and political factors. In this policy making exercise, working groups of senior educational specialists became arbiters of the needs of the masses, and progressive organisations – such as teacher unions - were not invited to participate at all. Finally, the ERS integrating committee consisted of white men, nearly all of whom were Afrikaans-speaking. Hence this authoritarian policy making process reduced significant mass constituencies to the status of passive observers (Mncwabe, 1993).

Moreover, the very aim of the ERS contributed to its failure. It aimed at meeting the manpower needs of the country, rather than address the concerns of social justice or equity. Second, the ERS indicated government's commitment to reform South African education, but it fell short of expectations for radical restructuring. For instance, in the ERS, race was abandoned as the cornerstone of the education system, but the new decentralised model allowed the classroom composition to be determined by "cultural and language diversity". Therefore, if parents wanted whites-only education, it remained a possibility. The ERS proposals did not provide a plan to address the historical imbalances in the provision and distribution of textbooks and teachers and the racial budgetary allocations to white schools and private schools (*Weekly Mail & Guardian*, June 1991). Finally, though the principle of equal access to education was formally acknowledged, the policy did not reflect any shift which would support new policy directions such as the right of all to basic education. Far from being simply a technical exercise, the policy was underpinned by a set of principles and defined a basis for a new department which entrenched the status quo. The ERS was instrumental in entrenching existing privileges and controls over the process of restructuring the education system (Kallaway & Kruss, 1997).

It became evident that the long-term responsibility for renovating and restructuring an education system for people who had been disadvantaged came as a challenge to the new ruling ANC government. Since its advent to power in 1994 its prime agenda was to envisage a new educational system that would target the most vulnerable groups of society. The ANC government produced a series of policy proposals which spelled out its vision for such restructuring based on the broad goal of a democratic society in which there would be political and social justice for all. An investigation into the various educational initiatives undertaken during the last 6 years by the ANC government reveals that a shift has taken place from prioritising the interests of whites to considering the viewpoints of all South Africans. These ANC initiatives attempt to offer a comprehensive new vision for education, and outline strategies for transforming the existing system. Curriculum issues have received attention in a number of policy documents. For instance, the ANC's Policy Framework lists curriculum changes as one of the major challenges. It envisages a curriculum which will promote unity and a common citizenship and destiny for all South Africans irrespective of race, class, gender, or ethnic background (South Africa, 1994(a): 12). It is to these developments that I now turn.

### **3.4 Multicultural perspectives in post-apartheid education policy documents**

The following discussion reviews the current government's educational policy documents from the mid-1990s to the late 1990s aimed at promoting an understanding of the reality of different cultures within South Africa's national boundaries. In the discussion that follows, an endeavour has been made to explore the multicultural elements in the educational provisions in these policy documents. Since it is not in this context practically viable to undertake a comprehensive scrutiny of all policy initiatives, four major educational policy statements have been consulted: the Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994a), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994b), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995b), and the Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training (1996a). It is assumed that they express the core of the ANC's educational goals and strategies.

The primary aim of this discussion is to explore to what extent the text content and the underlying principles embodied in these documents embody the central tenets of a multicultural approach. Five prominent multicultural themes have been selected for detailed consideration these policy documents. They constitute non-racialism, skills development, equal access to education, promotion of a feminist perspective and promotion of a common national identity. Here I must point out that it is not possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of these documents within a liberal multicultural approach, despite the fact that some of the major themes under consideration are important constituents of liberal multiculturalism as some provisions in the policy documents incorporate some strong aspects of critical multiculturalism also. For instance, one of the significant principles of the education policy documents has been the promotion of a feminist perspective, a tradition associated with critical multiculturalism (section 2.4). Hence I will use an approach which is a synthesis of the liberal and critical multicultural approaches to study the educational policy documents and to explore the notions of multicultural education and curriculum as perceived by South African educationalists and political activists.

An overview of the educational policy initiatives and programmes indicates their emphasis on two major concerns: first, to develop an educational system that focuses forcefully on the forms of learning that relate directly to South Africa's societal diversity and to its democratic commitments and aspirations; and second, to get rid of the prison of content, the treadmill of chasing the syllabus. The latter is enabled by emphasising skills rather than content, as these will better equip the learner to cope with different kinds of knowledge. It becomes imperative for the new post-apartheid educational programme to assume a heightened responsibility to promote respect for cultural diversity, to show commitment to democratic values and competencies (such as independent and critical thought processes and the capacity to question, enquire, reason and communicate clearly), and, finally, to enhance a shared common South African identity among students.

An overarching aim of the educational policies is to enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society to take root and prosper in South Africa, on the basis that all South Africans without exception have the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship and a common national destiny.

#### 3.4.1 Promotion of non-racism

In the early 1990s educational and social reconstruction policies gained a new lease on life in South Africa. South Africa had negotiated a compromise to move from an authoritarian, racially discriminatory society towards a democratic society. The socio-political conditions were still fluid, dynamic and interactive. During this period the ANC party took the responsibility of initiating the process of socio-economic transformation and also formulating educational changes in keeping with social-democratic principles that have been fundamental features of the liberation movement through open social and political processes. In the early 1990s when many ANC policy documents were put together, the ANC was working in opposition and mobilised its constituencies by demanding radical changes in the apartheid regime's policies. As a result, the pre-election documents, drawn up after wide consultation with key ANC supporters, represented visionary policies committing the ANC to development, equity and redress. The ANC declared in its policy framework that its primary task was

the establishment of a just and equitable education and training system which provides a relevant, high quality education which is accessible to all irrespective of race, colour, gender, age, religion and ability (South Africa, 1994a: 47).

In tackling issues of commonality and diversity the Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994a) stated that the curriculum should promote unity in diversity through a flexible framework which would allow for the accommodation of cultural, provincial and local differences and needs. At the same time the Policy framework stated that "the new curriculum should promote unity and a common citizenship and destiny for all South Africans irrespective of race, class, gender or ethnic background" (South Africa, 1994a: 17). The government's Reconstruction and Development Plan similarly aimed at

developing an integrated system of education and training that provides equal opportunity to all irrespective of race, colour, sex, class, language, age and religion. According to the RDP education should be directed to the full development and strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It must promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all South Africans.

The White Paper on education and training (1995b: 18) confirmed that:

- An integrated system of education and training would be developed that would promote equal opportunities to all irrespective of race, colour, sex, class, language, age, religion, geographical location, political or other opinion. It should address the development of knowledge and skills that can be used to produce high quality goods and services in such a way as to enable South Africans to develop their cultures, their society and their economy; and that
- Education should be directed to the full development of the individual and the community, and to strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It should promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all South Africans.

A current ANC document, the National Qualification Framework (NQF), (1996b) also echoes and extends this perspective. It stipulates that learning opportunities shall be provided to all learners regardless of age, circumstances, gender and level of education and training. It further states that the curriculum shall foster learning that encompasses a culture of human rights, multilingualism and multiculturalism, and sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building (Education Information Centre, 1996).

#### 3.4.2 Enhancement of access to quality education

All the major policy documents in education since the advent of the ANC government in 1994 have been committed to providing life-long learning and education for all. Current educational policies accept the fundamental premise that every person should have access to basic education because basic education is a universal right. Access and quality, for example, have been seen as twin imperatives within a broader framework for the

achievement of equity, redress and democratisation. From the policy perspective, one of the earliest ANC government's educational initiatives, the Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994a), in the mid-1990's calls for the establishment of a just and equitable education and training system which should be relevant, of high quality and accessible to all learners irrespective of race, colour, gender, age, religion, ability or language. The White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) commits the state to providing 10 years of compulsory general education. According to the WPET, access to schooling should be firmly located within the ambit of a general commitment by the state to redress imbalances generated by historical inequalities. It observes that:

- Education and training are basic human rights. The state has an obligation to protect and promote these rights so that all citizens have the opportunity to develop their full potential and make a full contribution to society.
- All individuals, including street children, out of school youths, disabled citizens, rural communities and squatter communities should have access to and succeed in life-long education and training of good quality.
- All forms of bias, especially racial, ethnic and gender should be abolished.
- The state's resources must be deployed in accordance with the principle of equity (South Africa, 1995b: 21).

The WPET advanced an affirmative action philosophy as a means of addressing the racial inequalities in education. In this regard the WPET stated that "to achieve equity, it may be necessary to pursue policies that treat different groups of people in somewhat different ways" (quoted in Kallaway & Kruss, 1997: 132).

Apart from the WPET, the Policy Framework for Education and Training and the Reconstruction and Development plan also treated provision of access to quality-based education as a central issue in their recommendations. In order to realise this expanded and improved educational dispensation, The Policy Framework for Education and Training and the RDP opted-for the incorporation of life-skills training programmes in the educational system. They argued that the people of South Africa are uneducated,

under-skilled and unprepared for participation in social and economic life. The National Qualification Programme was posited as the most advanced contemporary mechanism for ensuring horizontal and vertical mobility and flexibility of access to general education and training in the formal and non-formal sectors (South Africa, 1994a). It is intended to promote: better linkages between different areas of education, training and development; better quality of learning which is more relevant to the lives of individual and the needs of the country; and opportunities for redress for people who have been systematically discriminated against in the past (Education Africa, 1997).

### 3.4.3 Development of life skills

The apartheid system in South Africa denied many people access to opportunities to gain the information, skills and experience necessary to develop themselves and to make South Africa's economy grow (Unterhalter, Botha & Wolpe, 1991). The state with special interest groups promoted a distorted culture in order to accommodate the apartheid ideology and needs, with a bias towards eurocentric high art. In these circumstances, the challenge was to create an education and training system that would ensure that people were able to realise their full potential in South African society. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) (1997c) is a curriculum practice that is currently being adopted in South Africa to meet this requirement. This educational approach is considered as a prerequisite for successful human resource development and is assumed as capable of making a significant contribution to the reconstruction and the development of South African society and economy (South Africa, 1995a 15).

Skills requirements are the focus of OBE (Education Africa, 1998). As its philosophical basis OBE believes that all learners can learn and succeed, but not in the same way and at the same pace. Since every learner has talent, it is the responsibility of every school to nurture that talent. The outcomes based education also believes in promoting equality of opportunity along with skill training. It aims at:

- Developing a single system of education that will accommodate the needs of all learners;

- Ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed for the success after exit from educational system;
- Structuring and operating schools so that all students can demonstrate the outcomes.

OBE moves beyond content, as content is not studied for its own sake, but rather to be applied and critically thought about (Van Der Horst & McDonald, 1997). In Outcomes-Based learning the support materials are used to facilitate the learning process. The new Outcomes-Based curriculum (Curriculum 2005) in South Africa aims at developing a thinking and problem-solving citizen who will be empowered to participate in the development of the country in an active and productive way. OBE is a flexible empowerment-oriented approach to learning. It aims at equipping learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success in their lives. This approach not only aims at increasing the specific contextualised knowledge of the learners, but also to develop their life skills, critical capacity and understanding (South Africa, 1997c). It instils in the learners an understanding of the value of independent learning and reflection, and discourages them from relying on outside influences to tell them whether they are right or wrong. This approach encourages self-discovery, enquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving rather than the chalk and talk approach. It gives priority to the higher-level competencies such as critical thinking and problem-solving rather than particular kinds of knowledge and information (Lubisi & Parker, 1997).

In OBE two types of outcomes are highlighted, namely critical outcomes and specific outcomes. Critical outcomes focus on the capacity of applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way in learning and work situations, as well as life in general. The specific outcomes are demonstrated knowledge, skills and attitudes in a particular field or at a given level. The specific outcomes of these learning areas clearly reflect, as mentioned earlier in this discussion, the importance of the development of core skills, which also form an essential ingredient of the multicultural curriculum. For example, the learning area of Numeracy and Mathematics defines the following as some of the learning area outcomes. The ability to:

- Develop, building on prior learning, accuracy, confidence and competence in estimating, calculating and using technology in a variety of mathematical activities.
- Collect, organise, display and interpret data represented in charts tables and graphs: to analyse such information from different political and socio-economic contexts critically for prediction, decision-making and informed judgement.
- Use mathematical approaches, language, symbols and notation confidently, to handle problems and develop the ability to think abstractly and practically, to represent and communicate mathematical relationships, concepts and generalisations (South Africa, 1996b).

OBE recognises that teaching is not an end in itself, that the purpose of teaching is to instruct and inform students in such a way that the learner may have a thorough understanding of the fundamental elements of the learning programmes, and the way learning impacts on related issues at the end of the course. In this context, the learner is at the centre of things, and the teacher's role is of a facilitator. The teacher's role is to stimulate and enrich such talents as learners may have in any area, such as spatial, linguistic, inter-personal, and so on (Naicker, 1999). The learning programmes are seen as guides, and the educators are encouraged to be innovative and creative in designing effective courses for the learners entrusted to their care. It is expected that the overall outcomes will be that the learner learns things that matter in the context of building a meaningful and productive life in contemporary society, and that values that are instilled in the education process will continue to hold sway throughout the life of that individual (South Africa, 1997b).

Generic guidelines for the production of learning -support materials are as follows:

- Material should encourage the projection of the diverse cultural heritage of the society.
- Material should encourage hands-on experiences.
- Elements that promote emotional, moral and social development should be embedded in the material.
- Material should promote critical thinking and problem solving as essential life skills.

- Material should be gender appropriate and sensitive.

Material needs to take account of multi-perspectivity, and the linking of content/concept to skills (South Africa, 1997c: 50).

The new education and training system, initiated by OBE, is people-centred. It is also success-oriented (Van Der Horst & Macdonald, 1997). The learning that will take place under the umbrella of Curriculum 2005 will encourage students to become active learners, not only at school, but also throughout their lives. Assessment will take place on an ongoing basis. Credits will be awarded in terms of the criteria of the National Qualifications Framework. Critical thinking will be encouraged at all times, in terms of reasoning, consideration and reflection, and action (South Africa, 1997b).

Along with Outcomes-Based Education the National Qualification Framework was also initiated in 1996. It is designed to promote an integrated approach to education and training. It is grounded in the principles of non-racism, non-sexism and focused on learning experiences designed to develop individuals who are adept in both the practical and the theoretical domain. It aims at improving both the quality and relevance of educational knowledge and skills for the world of work and to bring about greater equity and redress; and making it possible to accommodate an integrated approach to education and training, to empower individuals and to develop a culture of learning as well as to promote appropriate skills needed by an educated and trained population to contribute to their land's economic welfare (Morrow, 1998).

The objectives of the NQF are to create an integrated national framework for learning achievements and to enhance access to education and training. The NQF is based on following principles.

The Framework must:

- Be, and remain responsive to national, economic, social and political development needs;

- Provide for learning at different rates by learners with specialised educational needs, by adults, and by children, both inside and outside mainstream schooling;
- Provide ease of entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective learners in a manner which facilitates progression (South Africa 1997: 14).

The changes envisaged by the NQF approach are multicultural in two ways. First, they attempt to avoid the traditional divide within post-compulsory education between a vocational and academic track. By doing so, they dilute the processes of social formation which are associated with highly divisive educational institutions, by eradicating the division between the elite academic and lower status vocational track. Second, the changes envisaged are radical because they open up access to tertiary institutions far beyond that which is currently possible. The integrated system makes more equitable the distribution of publicly owned tertiary resources to the vast majority of the people (Jansen & Christie, 1999).

Complementarily, the ANC's most recent educational programme, Curriculum 2005, (1997) was released by the Department of education in March 1997. It is grounded in an Outcomes-Based approach to education and training and its key facet is that it is learner-centred. The emphasis is on what the learner should know, understand, do and can become, rather on what the teacher aims to achieve (International Geographical Union, 1997). It includes aspects of knowledge previously ignored in the curriculum (such as technology), and emphasises the importance of other areas that were previously marginalised (such as art and culture) or ignored in the primary and junior phases (such as economic and management sciences) (South Africa, 1997b).

#### 3.4.4 Promotion of non-sexism in education

Almost all official ANC policy documents espouse the belief that women and men should be equal and that all the contours of inequalities between them must be removed, including those operative in the educational sphere. The Reconstruction and Development Plan (1995) declared women to comprise a special category requiring

special attention. A key focus throughout the RDP was on “ensuring a full and equal role for women in every aspect of economy and society” (South Africa, 1994b: 9). The RDP in its section on 'Education' pointed out that education and training were frequently denied to girls and women, and where educated, they were trained to fulfil traditional roles which perpetuated their oppression (South Africa 1995a: 61). A call was made for campaigns and information to raise women’s awareness of a wide range of learning opportunities and income-generating activities and to encourage them to pursue non-traditional subjects (South Africa, 1994b: 62). Similarly, the Policy Framework for Education and Training was no less committed to the equality of women. In a section headed 'Targets and priorities' the document stated that

The ANC in government will prioritise those most neglected and disadvantaged under apartheid. The historical marginalisation of women will be corrected through curriculum reconstruction, mechanisms for redress in enrolment through the education and training system and the reviewing of gender representation in positions of responsibility and leadership (South Africa, 1994a: 13).

Moreover, another prominent ANC educational policy document, the WPET, was particularly interested in addressing the issue of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. It provided a mechanism for dealing with this through the establishment of a Gender Equity task team which was to liaise with the National Commission on Gender Equality. In co-operation with the provincial Departments of Education, the Gender Equity Unit would study and advise the Director General on all aspects of gender equity in the educational system, and in particular would:

- Identify means of correcting gender imbalances in enrolment, dropout, subject choices, career path and performances;
- Propose guidelines to address sexism in curricula, text books and teaching practices; and
- Propose a complete strategy, including legislation to counter and eliminate sexism, sexual harassment and violence throughout the education system (South Africa, 1995b: 46).

According to the WPET (1995b: 46) the Gender Equity task team should utilise the following guidelines in its strategies for the achievement of gender equality in education:

- Setting of quantitative targets for access, enrolment, attainment and performances;
- Drafting of legislation which shall consider appropriate penalties for addressing gender discrimination and sexual harassment in education and training;
- Exploring strategies and guidelines to address sexism and the patriarchal learning environment (this would apply to curriculum choices, career guidance and teacher education); and
- Identifying instruments and incentives for increasing access and participation of girls and women at all levels of education and training systems.

Thus, it is quite apparent that all the ANC's educational policies have been informed by egalitarianism reflecting a liberal tradition. The policy documents' identification of problem areas within the education system represents an important step forward. These areas include structures within the educational system itself (e.g. hierarchical nature of women's employment), processes within the educational system (e.g. subject choices), issues on sexuality (e.g. sexual harassment), the relationship between education and work, and the ideology surrounding women's role in society (i.e. the patriarchal nature of South African society) (Wolpe, 1994).

#### 3.4.5 Advancement of a common South African identity

The demise of apartheid and the introduction of a new political dispensation produced a democratic government that was committed to educational transformation by building an education system based on a national culture which was accommodating, dynamic, and capable of use in mass mobilisation for liberation and development. After its advent to power in 1994, the ANC government clearly recognised that education extends beyond the development of skills, and can also contribute in a most meaningful way to nation-building and reconciliation. Its chief spokesperson and the president of the new state, Nelson Mandela, promised to introduce "an educational system that enables children to

exploit their similarities and common goals, while appreciating the strength of their diversity” (quoted in Education Africa, 1997:5). Subsequently, this statement found expression in the Policy Framework for Education and Training, which reaffirmed that the “educational system should aim at the development of a national democratic culture, with respect for the value of people's diverse cultural and linguistic traditions, and should encourage peace, justice, tolerance and stability in our communities and nation” (South Africa, 1994a: 4). However it was only through the WPET that for the first time an educational system was envisaged in which all individuals have access to and succeed in life long education and training of good quality in order to meet the social and economic challenges facing South Africa. The WPET addressed the demand for equity by promoting access for all to education of quality and met the country’s human resource development need by promoting a new form of high quality education and training which shall prepare learners more directly to the world of work.

In the WPET (1995b) the Minister of Education reiterated the central problem facing education and training in South Africa, namely, that South Africa had never had a truly national system of education and training. This was due to the fact that the previous dispensation promoted a racially and culturally segregated and differentiated education system based on a philosophy of Christian National Education. The White Paper reiterated that the structure of the education and training system and its governance would aim at nation building and the eradication of racialism, tribalism, ethnicity and gender considerations as the basis of educational organisation. Every person should have the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, including academic freedom in institutions of higher learning, speech and expression, artistic creativity and scientific research. The letter and spirit of these rights and freedoms should inform the intellectual culture of all schools and educational institutions (South Africa, 1995b). The underlying principle of the White Paper in respect of non-racialism was that all South Africans, without exception, share the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship and common national destiny, and that all forms of bias are dehumanising. The Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education (1996b), in similar vein, claimed that education and training programmes should promote the development of a

national identity and an awareness of South Africa's role and responsibility with regard to Africa and the rest of the world. Learning programmes should therefore encourage the development of:

- Mutual respect for diverse religious and value systems, cultural and language traditions;
- Multilingualism and informed choices regarding the languages of learning;
- Co-operation, civic responsibility and the ability to participate in all aspects of society (South Africa, 1996a: 14).

The Curriculum for General and Further Education (1996) further stated that the curriculum should promote the values underlying the democratic process and the declaration of fundamental rights in the constitution, the unity of the nation, the common citizenship and the common destiny of South Africans irrespective of race, ethnicity, culture, class or gender; encourage the sustainable development and care of our common environment, mutual co-operation and civic responsibility; and should equip citizens to participate confidently in social and civic life.

One of the most recent educational policy documents, Curriculum 2005, claims that it will change education in South Africa radically because it:

- Enables life-long learning for all South Africans;
- Encompasses a culture of human rights, multiculturalism and a sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building; and
- Is geared towards developing thinking and competent citizens for the future (Adapted from tutorial letter UNISA, 1997: 3).

#### 3.4.6 Critical appraisal of post-apartheid educational policies

From the above discussion it is apparent that the new policy documents on education display a novel vision by incorporating various multicultural aspects such as intolerance to racism, the equalisation of educational opportunities and the production of skilled manpower. Further, they stress overcoming fragmentation and division and building new

structures organically linked and designed to facilitate greater access to education. Fragmentation and divisions are not conceptualised as racial categories but as structural and systemic. The policies stress that integral to the concept of an integrated education and training system is not only the dissolution of the distinction between academic and vocational education but also a simultaneous focus on basic education in all sectors and compulsory schooling in the formal sector.

At first sight it appears that the policy documents clearly reflect a multicultural tendency. However, a closer examination reveals that they have not only embraced the liberal and social democratic tradition but have also incorporated certain elements of the black consciousness ideology and feminist doctrine. A critical analysis of these policy documents needs to be undertaken before a conclusive statement can be made concerning their compliance with the multicultural precept.

In the discussion that follows, my primary concern will be to explore how far the policy documents have attempted to accommodate critical and liberal multicultural approaches. I shall also point out other multicultural perspectives adopted by these policy documents along with the liberal multicultural approach such as critical multiculturalism which demands alteration in socio-economic structures in favour of oppressed black majority. For instance, from a critical multicultural perspective, apartheid South Africa lacked equality not because of black cultural deprivation but because the social and educational opportunities that permit everyone to compete equally in the educational arena simply did not exist. Moreover, critical multiculturalism holds, as do the policy documents under consideration, that social and economic factors can be modified or reformed in order to realise racial equality (Goldberg, 1994).

A liberal multiculturalist orientation is evident in the documents' recognition of the existence of socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged black people who have not been allowed to enjoy similar rights and privileges which the white dominant minority has been enjoying for decades. These documents acknowledge that blacks are entitled to full membership of the South African national community. Furthermore, they

stress that cultural pluralism is not possible without an assault on the prejudices, discrimination, sexism and inequalities that have hitherto permeated educational policies and institutions. Thus it is essential to develop an alternative multicultural educational programme which shall redress past injustices by emphasising equality of educational opportunities and reflecting the pluralist and diverse South African identity not merely in cultural terms but along gender lines in its learning programmes.

Turning to the issue of education specifically, one striking feature of the policy documents is that there is a marked absence of special educational measures for black disadvantaged groups. Till present times even in the most advanced of countries such as Canada and USA, government policies, in the name of affirmative action, have promoted group-specific policies which may help in the attainment of equality of opportunity within the existing educational system. They included allocation of school places particularly in the secondary schools, specific teaching programs to combat racism, teaching of English as a second language at basic levels and provision of courses at examination levels in minority languages. This patronising attitude on the part of the government has only assisted in enhancing already existing cultural differences rather than empowering minority groups. However, the policy initiatives such as the ANC policy documents and the White Paper on Education and Training have developed unique educational measures such as the NQF and OBE to contribute to the fulfilment of the educational aspirations and requirements of the disadvantaged black sections. These documents for the first time give formal recognition to non-formal and distance education. Furthermore, they stress that learning can take place in informal situations, such as churches and the work place. They also allow for a flexible time-frame that allows a learner to work at his/her own pace and finally, they eliminate the fear of permanent failure by allowing learners who have not achieved the required standards to do so. These educational provisions, if effectively implemented, will go a long way towards catering for the educational needs of black children, out of school youths and adult learners, as well as people who want to upgrade their skills (South Africa, 1996b).

What is striking about the post-apartheid educational policy documents is that they eschew gender stereotyping of skills. They assume that both male and female students possess similar potential to develop proficiency in technical skills.

Let me close this section by registering how impressed I am with the selected policy documents' close conformity to critical aspects of a critical multicultural approach, namely an appreciation of socio-cultural specificities. The recommendations in these documents have, throughout, given a careful consideration to the social, structural and cultural specificity of South African society while formulating educational policies. The policy documents have introduced far-reaching educational proposals in the form Curriculum 2005 to meet the challenge of uplifting and empowering the disadvantaged black section of the population. This approach is very different from prevailing Western versions of multiculturalism, where only the assimilationist multicultural approach finds expression in educational reforms. It attempts to accommodate the multicultural doctrine within the existing mainstream, white-dominated educational system by incorporating ethnic content related to ethnic events and celebrations in the curriculum without changing its basic structure. South Africa's policy-makers also display a critical multicultural awareness in ensuring that mere acknowledgement of South African diversity is not the primary and final goal: they also insist that such recognition be accompanied by an agenda of social justice and the eradication of racial discrimination from all spheres of life.

However, a close study of these documents does lead to some powerful criticisms. In what follows, I shall be presenting a critique of the policy documents. The main points of the critique will revolve around issues of the gender-specific nature of skills, the dichotomy between the aims of equalisation of educational opportunity and the development of a highly trained, multi-skilled workforce, and the secondary status and ambiguous treatment being given to multicultural concerns in these documents.

At the outset, I would like to assert that even though the policy documents have incorporated a multicultural discourse, it has been given sketchy treatment; the meaning

of terms and their relation to the question of diversity are not elaborated. For instance, the Implementation Plan (South Africa, 1994c) and the Curriculum Framework (South Africa, 1996a) demands the 'Africanisation' of the curriculum, but no effort is made to define the concept of Africanisation in the context of South African education or to incorporate a discussion of its implications for social change despite the fact that the term poses a great challenge to South African educational policies in general and curriculum policies in particular. The Curriculum Framework, for example, argues for a curriculum with a South African distinctiveness that takes into account developments in Africa and the rest of the world. However, no attempt is made to explicate what that might mean and how learning materials in different areas would be affected by these considerations. Furthermore, in the White Paper on Education and Training, issues of race and gender in both official curricula and curricula in practice have tended to be assumed rather than addressed (Greenstein, 1995). This casual attitude towards these serious issues forces one to suspect the authenticity of their oft-stated commitment to the implementation of race and gender concerns. Another critical point that emerges from a close study of these policy documents is that multicultural issues, such as respect for diversity, are given a status secondary to that of national pride. For instance, the WPET recognises diversity but subordinates it to the imperative of the unity of South African people. The liberal multicultural approach aims at promoting global identification by celebrating cultural diversity, while the WPET tends rather to work towards developing a common national South African identity.

Another dilemma in the educational policies is that they aim to develop an educational system capable of creating the skills and understanding necessary for a democratic as well as an economically competitive state. In the first place, in order to develop a globally competitive economy an overall high level of skills development is necessary. To achieve this purpose, it is necessary to develop a highly individualistic and highly trained workforce (Kruss, 1994). But, in order to fulfil the demands of a democratic state the educational system has to promote equality of opportunity in its strongest form. One can easily discern a serious complication in the simultaneous promotion of these goals, as

the demand for highly, technical skilled workforce runs counter to answering to the rising educational aspirations of the large black disadvantaged population.

Finally, a few other criticisms of a different sort are in order. First, a prevalent stance evident in these policy documents has been to provide access to quality education to all. However, the policy documents fail to consider the fragility of the state's economy, which provides little assurance that the goal of providing quality education to all will ever be achieved. Equity requires additional resources, to expand access to schooling and enhance both access and quality of schooling, which RDP funds and local resources are incapable of providing. Second, these policy documents have conceived the concept of the disadvantaged sections very narrowly by equating it with black people and women. They have not considered other important, under-represented sections of South African society such as disadvantaged whites, the disabled, gays and lesbians.

These policy documents have, to a limited extent, subscribed to a critical multicultural perspective in trying to locate black identity within the context of historical specificity, power and culture - unlike liberal multiculturalism, which invokes the ideal of a universal common humanity in which all can participate without any regard for differences in race or class.

So far I have analysed the policy documents from a liberal and critical multicultural perspective. There are also certain features in these documents that reflect rival multicultural approaches, such as critical multiculturalism and the conservative multicultural approach. Elements of a conservative multicultural approach are evident in the promotion of the concept of tolerance of cultural differences in a way that appropriates the difference of others in the name of whites' own self-knowledge and increased domination. In my view, the policy documents have visualised the concept of cultures as "givens" or in sociological terms "ascribed" rather than "emergent" cultures, where people of all ethnicities engage with each other in communal life in the cities and in competition for housing, jobs and life-chances (O'Keefe & Sill, 1988: 27).

### 3.4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to assert that the policy documents have made a commendable effort to develop an educational system that attends to the specificity (in terms of race and gender) of differences yet at the same time addresses commonality in terms of guiding references to freedom and liberation. However, one has to acknowledge that there is a limit to what can be achieved in a context characterised by deep-seated ethnic prejudices, economic instability, and an authoritarian system of governance. In such a context, any attempt at promoting reconciliation among various ethnic groups through a multicultural approach can be problematic.

I would like to make some recommendations which might go some way in promoting both liberal and critical multicultural approaches in the South African educational system. In the first place, in compliance with critical multicultural approach, I see the need to revise pioneering programmes such as the NQF and OBE in accordance with the multicultural canon of cultural pluralism. These revisions should reflect the comprehensive demographic, social, cultural and linguistic realities of South African society and not just the economic and technological sides of life. This means that the curriculum should demonstrate and emulate the interdisciplinary nature of human life, knowledge, values, skills and experience.

Secondly, a concerted effort should be made to achieve a greater balance between technological development and humanistic concerns in education, in such a way that the proficiency in fine arts, music and sports as considered as important as technical skills. Finally, what would be worthwhile is the creation of special education programmes incorporating curricula which emphasise such topics as peace education and trauma therapy programmes, in conjunction with the development of relevant educational curricula and programmes. This will help in rebuilding the lives of a black population which has undergone both physical and mental oppression for decades.

These recommendations may look far-fetched considering the present economic and educational scenario in South Africa. The South African government is still struggling to

promote basic literacy and technical skills among the growing black African population. However, I feel it is essential that the present educational system along with promoting technical skills among disadvantaged students should also nurture the aesthetic and psychological needs of these students, to help them to grow into citizens participating fully in the development of the nation.

### **3.5 Development of the concept of multicultural education in the post-apartheid era**

#### **3.5.1 Introduction**

The preceding discussion indicates through a critical analysis of landmark policy documents the present government's recognition and acceptance of the culturally diverse nature of South African society as well as a desire to develop a substantial common culture with a high degree of interaction between and among different groups. Its wish is that this cultural pluralism should take place within the context of participatory democracy. One of the aims of post-apartheid education is to equip and prepare individuals to live as reasonable citizens in South Africa, capable of adapting and adjusting to a changing society.

Taking cognisance of this viewpoint, in this section I discuss critical perspectives on the concept and the feasibility of multicultural education in South African conditions. This discussion draws primarily on observations made by prominent educationalists on the nature of multicultural education. The discussion will suggest that the assimilationist version of multicultural education lacks the support of mentors and trained scholars in South Africa as it resonates with the Verwoerdian manipulation of cultural differences. The discussion will also indicate that critical multicultural approach is most appropriate in the South African educational context as it demands broad-based school reforms involving the dismantling of racism in institutional practices, the restructuring of curricula, and changes in instructional strategies and learning styles in order to promote creativity and expressiveness among students. These reforms should be informed by an understanding of the complex ways in which racism expresses itself in various settings. The discussion will conclude by underlining the need for the blend of liberal and critical

multicultural approaches in education in contemporary South African educational scenario for several reasons: first, for the emancipation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds through popular access to education; second, for building up an equitable democratic polity; and finally, for the efficient production of skilled people to serve an internationally competitive economy.

It is essential to recognise that the concept of multiculturalism as visualised in South Africa differs radically from that evolved in Britain and America. The demand of various cultural and numerical minorities in the USA or UK for inclusion in the curriculum is very different from the situation in South Africa, where the white, culturally dominant group is a minority. Further, it is essential to recognise that the South African society displays structural pluralism where different ethnic groups are competing for political power in the same state while the USA as an immigrant society displays cultural pluralism where celebration of diversity is not linked to the separation or unequal power relations as people are fully united across all their differences. Consequently, it is in general far easier for American multicultural claims for inclusion to be pluralist, defracted and incorporated in marginalised and supplementary ways than it is in South Africa. Whatever meaning multiculturalism comes to attain in South Africa will be decisively shaped by the fact of the black numerical majority. The rights of the majority being “far more compelling” than those of minority (Muller, 1993).

At this point, I do agree with Muller that in South Africa there is an essential need to recognise the cultural values of black South Africans in the educational system, values which were neglected in the apartheid curriculum. I have reservations, however, about his statement that “the rights of majority are far more compelling”. He claims that multiculturalism has a limited application in South Africa as the rights of the majority, inevitably the black population, have to be protected. He seems not to realise the fact that under apartheid rule it was not only black people who suffered; there were other ethnic groups which also became the victims of apartheid segregationist policies, such as Indians and coloureds. Thus, in order to promote the educational interests of all these groups South Africa needs more than a democratic education which will take into account

only the interests of the majority: it needs a multicultural education which will serve the interests of other disadvantaged groups along with the African people.

In recent times, Multicultural education has become an integral part of educational debate in South Africa. Proponents of multicultural education in South Africa (Coutts, 1992; Versfeld, 1994; Alexander, 1994; Christie, 1994) visualise multiculturalism as a liberatory pedagogy and treat it as an important approach to education that can promote cultural transformation, the appreciation of cultural diversity, national reconciliation and unity, the maintenance of a shared national culture and competence in people to resist prevalent racist attitudes and discrimination. They claim that multicultural education can facilitate the transition from a racially divided and oppressive South African society to a cohesive and tolerant one. They stress that in order to combat the historical forces that propagated the ideology of segregation in education, multicultural education should be promoted.

However, they also speculate on the need to develop a concept of multicultural education which shall take into consideration the socio-economic reality of contemporary South Africa. They do not find the theory of multicultural education imported from the European nations applicable in the South African context as it predicates the existence of a black disadvantaged population in the context of domination by a Euro-oriented white minority.

At this stage it may be useful to point out that the South African voices on multicultural education support elements of a radical multicultural approach, as they assume liberal multiculturalism to be an elegant version of apartheid. They see South Africans as victims of colonialism, which deprived them of their self-respect and dignity; hence they need liberation. In educational terms this means consciousness-raising, which implies an awareness of the values of black cultural forms as well as the realities of oppression. South African educationalists stress that the education of the black child should help him/her to resist the oppressors' cultural and ideological domination (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993).

This approach stands in sharp contrast to the liberal multicultural approach adopted by western nations, as their main emphasis is on promoting cultural pluralism. In the South African context it is assumed that the promotion of liberal multiculturalism shall to a great extent lead to the continuation of neo-apartheid practices, as this approach makes space for dealing with disadvantaged groups' culture as a separate entity. It also ensures the perpetuation of the dominant culture. Thus the space provided remains no more than a decorative forum for the appreciation of folklore (Alexander, 1998). These educationists assume that the main role of multicultural education is to promote cultural transformation, national reconciliation and to sensitise students to racial oppression. In the following discussion I briefly summarise the views of leading South African educationalists under four major multicultural themes. Three themes emanate from the radical approach and liberal multicultural paradigm.

#### *3.5.1.1 Appreciation of cultural diversity*

Multiculturalism appears to be an orientation which enables the establishment of institutions that respect differences without fixing or naturalising any one over another. Thus Cross (1992) recommends that cultural and ethnic diversity should be seen as enrichment for a national culture, as an asset rather than a handicap. He believes that a limited degree of assimilation and integration is desirable in the process of nation building, given the divisive impact of apartheid and the levels of mental colonisation. Coutts (1995) takes this argument further and treats multicultural education as a means to national reconciliation by encouraging students from dominant cultural group to accept and respect viewpoints of historically marginalised groups' students. Coutts (1995: 254) asserts that:

The multicultural classroom sees the cultural and linguistic differences not as a problem to be overcome but as enrichment and an advantage. It is those children themselves who provide for the multicultural class the rich range of ideas and learning resources. In the truly multicultural classroom students are constantly encouraged to negotiate with their cultural heritages as they respond to the challenges that confront them.

### *3.5.1.2 Promotion of national reconciliation*

Neville Alexander, strongly supporting the cause of national unity in contemporary South Africa, perceives that multicultural education as exploring the “necessary and complex interplay between unity and diversity, between a national culture and cultural pluralism” (Cited in Moore, 1994: 257). Nkomo (1990:307) argues that the alternative education system contemplated by the ANC government offers the basis for a post-apartheid democratic national culture and education which is unifying, socially concerned and promotes values committed to human dignity. It seeks to encourage the talents of all South Africans, to provide tools and skills that would make it possible for ordinary people to enrich their lives and thus to enhance South Africans' cultural life in general. Likewise, Morrow (1998) observes that multicultural education promotes the feeling of shared identity among students. He claims that multicultural education disembeds students from the sets of habits and practices of a particular culture and its traditions, and encourages the development of a shared identity across cultural boundaries.

In more recent educational discourses such as the Policy Framework for Education and Training document, an earlier emphasis on class has given way to a new concern with a pluralistic and diverse South African identity not only in cultural terms but also along the lines of gender, urban/rural location, disability etc. Significantly, more recent ANC policies have also advocated in broad terms the role of education in promoting unity in diversity through a flexible framework which allows for “the accommodation of cultural, provincial and local differences and needs” (South Africa, 1994d: 69).

### *3.5.1.3 Promotion of competence to resist oppression*

For some, multicultural education is an instrument to achieve the ideals of a new South Africa. These may include resistance to oppression, maintenance of shared national culture and appreciation of cultural diversity. Karodia (1994) studying the concept of multicultural education from a critical perspective has asserted that multicultural education involves sensitising people to other people's histories in that it makes them aware of how people have negotiated with their heritage to survive, to resist oppression or

to gain access to the sources of power. At this level multicultural education can become empowering. Unless students can see how culture is empowering for people multicultural education is useless (Moore, 1994). Suzuki (1989), following a liberal multicultural approach, also supports the aim of multicultural education to develop potential among students to resist racism. He claims that the goal of multiculturalism is to support and encourage individuals to be aware of their cultures and to have an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, and to participate in one or more cultures while assuming some responsibility for maintaining a shared national culture (cited in Goodey, 1989:103).

Finally, many educationalists, including Muller (1994) and Christie (1990), believe that multicultural education helps to develop students as potential critics of the concept of culture, as it constructs learning experiences through which students to come to terms more critically with the concept 'culture' and 'cultural differences' as inalienably political. Muller (1994) further speculates that multicultural education is but one aspect of the larger pedagogy of difference oriented to promoting students' resistance to the multiple and intersecting forms of oppression. He states that:

Multicultural education, therefore, if it is to have a liberatory intent, should be directed at empowering people in their specific and diverse struggles in a whole range of sites of supports. This requires a methodology which enables students to identify their own struggles and find appropriate ways of supporting them through a range of groupings both within the school and the community (Muller, 1994: 261).

#### *3.5.1.4 Promotion of cultural transformation*

Mc Gurk (1990), a staunch advocate of multicultural education, believes that multicultural education is an educational approach which can effect a cultural transformation. He believes it happens as students acquire the cultural competencies to function effectively in the networks and institutions of power both nationally and internationally.

### 3.5.2 Views against the promotion of a multicultural approach in education

In the light of the above discussion, a case can be made for the implementation of multicultural education in the cause of combating racism and prevailing socio-economic inequalities, apart from promoting national consciousness. In contrast, there is another viewpoint that also enjoys substantial currency in South Africa. This viewpoint assumes that the implementation of multicultural education will prove disastrous as it provides fertile ground for racism. According to its critics, the multicultural approach assumes cultural differences to be natural. This principle shares a strong affinity with the discourse of apartheid that justifies racial segregation on the basis of cultural differences. Further, it de-politicises culture and ignores the power and structural dimension of racism. Moreover, because of its emphasis on cultural pluralism it fails to measure up to the aspirations of black disadvantaged groups. In the following discussion, I have attempted to synthesise the views held by South African educationalists opposed to the implementation of a multicultural approach.

#### *3.5.2.1 Emphasises cultural differences*

Multicultural education has been a target of much criticism in South Africa as many South African educators embrace the viewpoint that multiculturalism continues to recognise and emphasise racial and cultural differences and that this emphasis fosters negative attitudes and prejudices (see Muller, 1992; Morrow, & King, 1998; see also section 1.1). The ruling ANC government also communicates scepticism about multiculturalism. Mc Allister (1997) has in a nutshell formulated the dilemma we have to face when dealing with South African multiculturalism. He believes that formal multiculturalism with its institutional boundaries leads to the categorisation and polarisation of people and an increase in ethnic stereotyping and consequent mobilisation along ethnic lines:

Multiculturalism conveys the idea of 'many cultures' each distinct from one another, implying boundaries rather than continuities; logically followed by separateness and distinctiveness. This contrasts with the conscious mixing of language, race and culture in much of contemporary South African life (p 20).

Many proponents of the black consciousness movement are particularly uncomfortable about accepting multicultural education as an alternative to the apartheid education as both ideologies, according to them, promote the theory and practice of cultural differences. Sebidi, a prominent intellectual of the black consciousness movement, has clearly stated his disbelief in the positive impact of multicultural education as it does not support the political goals of the ruling party. Moore (1994:240) presents this position as follows:

The African National Congress and its allies have as their primary political goal the creation of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. For them multicultural education sounds suspiciously like making difference a more fundamental principle than national unity. They, therefore, are more suspicious of it than downright hostile to it. It is people whose roots lie in the black consciousness movement who most commonly are hostile to the concept of multicultural education.

#### *3.5.2.2 Negates cultural differences*

There are some critics such as Gilroy (1990) and Louw (1983) who claim that multicultural education negates cultural differences. They stress that the basic assumption of multicultural education (cultural commonality across differences) serves one group at the expense of others (Gilroy, 1990). Louw (1983), however, argues from a different perspective and concludes that the assumption of cultural commonality across differences negates the reality of the existence of ethnic and cultural differences in the South African society. For him multiculturalism is just a concealed form of integration that will lead to anarchy and racial tension.

#### *3.5.2.3 Promotes apartheid ideology*

The promotion of multicultural education in South Africa is also confounded by a widespread acceptance of a viewpoint that equates it with apartheid ideology. To some critics the recognition of cultural diversity is seen as an extension and continuation of the ideology of apartheid. Morrow (1998) perceives a strong similarity between apartheid ideology and multiculturalism. He stresses that in two respects multiculturalism and apartheid ideology share a common concern. First, both ideologies feel the need to

recognise and respect the differences between the different groups who compose the society. Second, they both agree that the oppression of one group by the other will continue if both of them share the same geographical space; hence the only way to avoid such domination is to allow diverse ethnic groups to sustain themselves separately from each other and be provided with an opportunity to nurture their own distinctive culture. Finally, a fear is expressed that multiculturalism would recreate a neo-apartheid state in South Africa where different races remain in their separate ethnic cocoons. Different races would continue to live separately, side by side. They would not live together as one nation. They would find it difficult to find a common agenda, a shared destiny, common vision and values. This would make it difficult for South Africans to discover the collective communion of our collective human soul (Mbegi, 1997).

#### *3.5.2.4 Fails to accommodate afrocentricity*

The idea of Africanisation brings some tensions to the promotion of multicultural education in South Africa. For instance, prominent South African educationalists such as Luthali who have seen themselves to be within the broad stream of African nationalism value separate black ethnic identities. They share the belief that such an ethnic identity is significant for individuals (Ashley, 1989:79). The black consciousness discourses also make manifest afrocentricity, by demanding the deconstruction of the negative images of black cultures portrayed in school syllabi; they see the promotion of these images as an aspect of colonial domination. They also object to discourses which homogenise the experiences of diverse black groupings under the single heading of 'black culture' (Tikly, 1995).

The question of an African focus on education becomes quite problematic when considering the views of multiculturalists who while underlining the need for an African focus in the curriculum, emphasise the importance of retaining a universal content and outlook (Ashley, 1989). This viewpoint has been criticised by other political groups in South Africa including AZAPO (Azanian People Organisation). AZAPO's approach to education rejects Africanisation (understood as a simple process of the "blackening" of personnel as a means of bringing about educational change). AZAPO argues for a new

curriculum that will combine a selection of the positive aspects of cultural practices prevalent among diverse social groups in South Africa (AZAPO, 1991).

To sum up the discussion, I would like to study the viewpoint of Jackson on the promotion of afrocentricism in education. Jackson unlike, AZAPO, takes a balanced perspective by asserting that afrocentricity can be treated as a part of critical multiculturalism until it does not act as a hindrance to promotion of multicultural values such as cultural pluralism. He asserts that multicultural education is just one aspect of a critical pedagogy which supports the co-existence of competing or distinct interests and makes room for the agenda of Africanisation, without eroding the fundamental principles of democratic tolerance, equality, and mutual recognition (Jackson, 1997).

### 3.5.3 Conclusion

The above discussion clearly indicates that the concept of multicultural education in South Africa is still in its formative stages, and that as an educational reform movement it has thus evoked highly emotional and strongly polarised reactions. It is necessary to recall that the concept of multicultural education is widely recognised as essentially a Western concept. It emerged in Britain in the 1960s in the form of educational programmes aimed at increasing the achievements of ethnic and immigrant students and to help white students and teachers develop a more positive attitude towards racial, cultural and ethnic diversity. Hence, its major tenets are broadly informed by the British liberal traditions such as democratic system of governance, equality of educational opportunity and accommodation of cultural diversity brought by the immigrant population. As we have seen from the survey of the viewpoints of South African educationalists the cultural complexion of contemporary South Africa differs greatly from that of the Western ones. The legacy of apartheid has no doubt contributed to the critical and suspicious attitudes that are prevalent in South Africa.

However, judging by my observation there has been clear acceptance of critical multiculturalism in the present setting as a range of viewpoints that have been considered in this discussion have contended that multicultural education can help in resisting racism

and in empowering the disadvantaged. Thus, incorporation of a critical multicultural approach in the educational system may help it to become a pivotal vehicle of black people's emancipation.

### **3.6 Evolution of the concept of a multicultural curriculum in South Africa**

#### **3.6.1 Introduction**

The concept of a multicultural curriculum is a fairly development in the South African educational context. In 1993 NEPI declared that multicultural principles such as non-racism, equity and equality, and the development of national unity, should be embodied in a common curriculum to be developed for all South African schools. However, it also pointed out the potential danger of implementing a multicultural curriculum in the existing socio-cultural reality of South Africa. For instance, it stated that the multicultural curriculum "may suggest that cultural differences are innate and static and limit students' understanding of how differences are socially produced and how they relate to patterns of power" (NECC, 1993: 113). Thus, from the beginning, the nature of multicultural curriculum has been as controversial and contested in South Africa as the concept of multicultural education itself. Yet controversy has not prevented the idea of a multicultural curriculum making its way into post-apartheid educational policy initiatives. In the discussion that follows, I will confine my attention to multicultural elements in the Interim Core Curriculum (1997), since the textbooks selected for this study all claim to have subscribed to that curriculum. However, from time to time references are also made to policy documents such as the Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) and the Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training (1996), to facilitate comprehension of the evolution of multicultural characteristics in the curriculum development process in South Africa.

### 3.6.2 Promotion of multicultural orientation in curriculum development in post-apartheid South Africa

I intend here to establish to what extent the general and specific aims outlined in the Interim Core Curriculum for four major curriculum areas (language teaching, history, geography and natural sciences) identify with the goals of a multicultural curriculum. In order to make this process simpler, I have classified the Interim Core Curriculum guidelines pertaining to these subject areas into five major categories that form core aspects of a multicultural curriculum. They are: cultural awareness, global identification, multi-disciplinary orientation, language awareness and skills development.

#### *3.6.2.1 Cultural awareness*

As early as 1994, the Policy Framework for Education and Training clearly stated that the curriculum should promote unity, common citizenship and the destiny of all South Africans irrespective of race, caste, gender or ethnic background. The Curriculum for General and Further Education and Training, went further in observing that learning programmes should protect and advance basic human rights, irrespective of gender, race, class, creed or age. It asserts that learners must be helped to develop a sense of self worth: that they need to experience acceptance, irrespective of the language they speak and the gender, the class or ethnic group to which they belong (South Africa, 1995b). The Interim Core Curriculum clearly shows that the promotion of values such as political tolerance, cultivating respect for cultural diversity and building a positive sense of individual and collective identities are crucial for social development.

The science syllabus in the Interim Core Curriculum aimed at supporting national goals, notably nation building, the achievement of democracy, the elimination of discrimination in education and the spread of equity within society. It promotes a modified cultural pluralism that recognises and accepts the culturally diverse nature of society and looks favourably on the development of a common culture with a high degree of interaction among diverse groups. It identifies and celebrates differences while treating them as empowering, integral features of South African society. It observes that the subject content of diverse learning areas can make a positive contribution to the development of

diversity within the framework of national unity. This is evident from the declared societal aims of the science syllabus

They assert that the aim of science teaching shall be:

- To work towards the reconstruction and development of South African society and the empowerment of its people;
- To contribute towards the widest development of the society's culture;
- To promote non-racial and non-sexist values;
- To promote unity in diversity through a flexible framework which allows for the accommodation of cultural, provincial and local differences and needs;
- To participate actively in promoting a just, democratic and equitable society;
- To demonstrate an understanding of how different societies create and adapt technological solutions to particular problems;
- To broaden access to material resources, knowledge acquisition and development;
- To redress past imbalances; and
- To contribute towards socio-economic development and better life for all; and become aware of science as an aspect of culture and of the role and implication of natural sciences for people's way of life (South Africa, 1997a: 14).

### *3.6.2.2 Multi-disciplinary orientation*

The Interim Core Curriculum also promotes a dynamic approach to school knowledge. It stresses that content should be studied realistically through an integrated approach that is free to draw upon the resources of any subject discipline in order to facilitate a full understanding of each issue. It hopes that traditional disciplines, if they are to be studied in an authentic way, would require an investigation, which utilises perspectives and knowledge that cross subject boundaries. For instance, the science curriculum should include a balance of biological, environmental, earth, and mathematical and physical sciences, health, personal and family life education, including Aids education. The following critical outcomes of the natural sciences curriculum further endorse the desirability of studying a topic from multiple perspectives:

- The ability to evaluate technological products, processes and systems from functional, economic, ethical, social and aesthetic points of view;
- A critical understanding of the inter-relationship between technology, society, the economy and the environment;
- A fundamental understanding of and ability to apply technological knowledge, skills and values working as individuals and as group members, in a range of technological contexts (South Africa 1995a: 132)

### *3.6.2.3 awareness of language diversity*

The specific outcomes of the Interim Core Curriculum aim to develop a learner's understanding of the way in which language is used as a popular instrument to reflect, shape and manipulate people's beliefs, actions and relationships. The complexity and sensitivity of a multi-lingual context specifically requires the development of a learner's skills to interpret and consciously reflect on how language is used. The proposed Language Literacy and Communication learning area aims to develop among students the following:

- An ability to explore and explain the ways in which language is used to transmit and shape socio-cultural ideas and values;
- An ability to recognise, challenge and respond to power relations and biased attitudes towards different languages;
- An ability to identify and analyse the 'hidden agenda' in manipulative texts;
- An ability to identify and analyse visual and other non-verbal features of the text;
- An ability to demarcate, analyse and respond to ideologically driven language effectively; and
- An ability to distinguish, analyse and respond to biased attitude language effectively (South Africa, 1995a: 15-19).

#### *3.6.2.4 Global identification*

The Interim Core Curriculum also aims at encouraging among students a sense of responsibility with regard to the use of natural resources and an understanding of the relationship between human beings and their physio-cultural environment. In the international arena the curriculum promotes the development of attitudes and values such as international interdependence, global solidarity and environmental awareness. It makes it clear that we have to develop learners with the skills to be competitive in the global market and attitudes that will allow them to live meaningful lives within local and global cultural contexts. These aims are particularly evident in both the geography and natural science curricula's general goals:

- Prepare individuals for the world of work and for the social and political participation in the context of a rapidly changing and dynamic global economy and society;
- Develop the necessary understanding, values and skills for sustainable development and an environment that ensures healthy living;
- Ensure that learners acquire a certain amount of knowledge in respect of the natural world that falls within their scope of comprehension and experience;
- Address social and environmental issues in order to promote development and social justice;
- Ensure that all science subjects include awareness of the ideal of sustainable living based on effective utilisation and management of natural resources; the maintenance or improvement of environment productivity and control of all forms of environmental pollution; and
- Develop the learners' ability to perform effectively in their changing environment and to stimulate them to contribute towards its improvement (South Africa, 1995a: 5).

#### *3.6.2.5 Skills development*

The White Paper on Education and Training states that the curriculum should be relevant to the needs of the individual as well as to the social and economic needs of society. (South Africa, 1994a: 65). A National Core curriculum (1997) was proposed which would emphasise the development of general and academic skills and complement these

with forms of vocational training. The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) further claims that the curriculum and teaching methods should encourage independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence and form judgements, achieve understanding, and recognise the provisional and incomplete nature of most human knowledge and communicate clearly.

The Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training (1996) also argues for the promotion of critical and creative thinking in the curriculum. It states that learning programmes should promote the learners' ability to think logically and analytically as well as holistically and laterally. Such programmes should acknowledge the provisional, contested and changing nature of knowledge, and the need to balance independent individualised thinking with social ability and the ability to function as part of a group, community and society (South Africa, 1996a).

The Interim Core Curriculum stresses the consolidation and development of skills pertaining to responsible citizenship, decision-making, critical thinking and career competence. Emphasising the need to develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills among learners, it clearly states that the specific aims of natural science studies are that the learner will be able to:

- Develop the ability to observe carefully and to solve simple problems by applying a scientific method of reasoning and scientific procedures;
- Apply a range of technological knowledge and skills ethically and responsibly;
- Stimulate critical and reflective reasoning and develop problem-solving and information processing skills;
- Develop and promote problem-solving activities, including the use of calculators and study of technology as applied to the teaching and learning of mathematics;
- Promote an ability to solve technological problems by investigating, designing, developing, evaluating as well as communicating effectively in their own and other languages and by using different modes (South Africa, 1995a).

### 3.6.3 Views on multicultural curriculum

In the preceding section we explored multicultural perspectives on curriculum development in the Interim Core curriculum. In the following section I intend to explore what, according to contemporary South African educationalists, the basic requirements of a multicultural curriculum should be. The major objective of this exercise is to develop a comprehensive picture of how the concept of multicultural curriculum has been perceived in the South African context, by studying similarities and differences among viewpoints conveyed in the educational policy initiatives and by the South African educationalists.

There are a number of widely-held views on the subject of the multicultural curriculum in the South African context. They have been detailed comprehensively by Basil Moore (1994) in his article entitled "Multicultural education in South Africa: Some theoretical and practical issues". The following discussion is to a large extent based on the views of various educationalists on the multicultural curriculum as cited in Moore's article.

The first viewpoint that I consider extended by Joan Squelsh. She stresses the need for the curriculum itself to be sensitive to the particular contexts from which the students come:

In our work with teachers we get teachers to sit down and look closely at the lesson plans. They analyse the lesson plans they have been given from a multicultural perspective: the methodology; the relevancy, the language used, the content and how it was assessed. When they look at lesson plans this way the typical problems they find are stereotyping, offensive or racist language, and inappropriately complex languages for those for whom English is a second language. The content assumes a white, middle class lifestyle and does not reflect the circumstances of a township family (cited in Moore, 1994: 255).

A second point of view stresses the need for the curriculum to be culturally inclusive. Mokobung Nkomo, contends that:

We need an education that is multicultural through and through. While there is room for the study of different cultural heritages in subjects like history, geography and social studies, we certainly do not need to have the

study of cultures as a separate subject. This will marginalise the issue of cultural diversity. But what we need is for the richness of cultural diversity to be built into how we approach all subjects from mathematics to music (cited in Moore, 1994: 255).

Similarly, Ruth Versfeld (1994) believes that South Africa needs a curriculum which values diversity, tolerance and appreciation of cultural differences and which also helps students to manage cultural differences productively (cited in Moore, 1994). Following the same line of argument, Goodey (1989) asserts that the curriculum should show a sympathetic insight into the characteristic and positive influences of different cultures and racial groups in the society. Mc Gurk (1990) goes a step further and asserts that the curriculum has to start to address the conflicting nature of South African society in a more explicit way so that a child becomes aware of the discriminatory use of racial categories. Michael Cross (1992) points to a multicultural curriculum with an emphasis on global rather than local concerns, on national rather than ethnic or regional interests, while making use of the actual diversity that exists. What he meant by this contention is that the education system will have to emphasise national unity, in many ways, at the expense of local diversity until the imbalances created by apartheid rule are significantly redressed. This will enable whites and also a large number of blacks who for many years have been withdrawn from their African cultural roots to appreciate and value their cultural heritage.

A third perspective accentuates the need for the curriculum and the methodology used to help by fostering in students a sense of culture being open to change, as people use or discard elements of their cultural heritage to negotiate their own lives. This is the approach advocated by Said Karodia:

For me the essence of multicultural education is sensitising people to other people's histories. For that you start with the actual students you have in your classroom. Unless you understand culture in racial terms it is not possible to have a monocultural classroom. All of the students and their families will have faced different sets of circumstances and will have negotiated differently with the range of cultural heritages available to them. What we need to help people appreciate is how people have come to their particular lifestyles by different routes (cited in Moore, 1994: 256).

Some South African educationalists express the view that that a multicultural curriculum should centre on a previously subordinated culture. They propose, for example, an African-centred curriculum that challenges “the western historical perception of European pre-eminence in art, culture, science, maths, religion and philosophy” (Gordan, 1991:13). Neville Alexander (1989) believes that the Africanisation of the curriculum should become a priority too, not leading to intellectual isolation, but developing an African focus. This would apply across the curriculum. For example, in English literature there is a need to include African works while not ignoring the universal aspects of literature as are found, for example, in the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Voltaire, and some American writers (Ashley 1989:71).

The implementation of an afrocentric approach offers immense possibilities but also raises question about its appropriateness for all learners. Mc Gregor & Mc Gregor (1992) maintain that a differential curriculum can be accepted in South Africa only when there is more equality, as differentiation is still associated with race and disadvantage given the prevailing inequality. Widespread agreement would therefore need to be obtained about the content of a common core curriculum so that no particular group perceives differentiation as a disadvantage. Also, instead of the past emphasis on differences, such a core curriculum would need to establish certain common South African values. In short, the aim of the curriculum should be to unite the people of South Africa, not to polarise them.

#### 3.6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to summarise views articulated in the policy documents under consideration and by the South African multiculturalists that I have considered so far on the nature and requirements of a multicultural curriculum. In the first instance, I would like to stress that both the policy documents and the South African multiculturalists subscribe to the liberal multicultural approach to the extent that they emphasise that the school curriculum should promote a diverse cultural heritage and the development of a core curriculum. Secondly, a close study of the policy documents show that by and large

they incorporate a liberal multicultural perspective. For instance, the Interim Core Curriculum has placed strong emphasis on skills development and the incorporation of a multi-disciplinary approach and the global identification. In contrast, the South African multiculturalists have taken a radical multicultural stand, firstly, by stressing the need to develop an African-centred curriculum and, secondly, by insisting that the curriculum should sensitise students to institutions and structures that reinforce social class stratification, economic inequality and the victimization of disadvantaged ethnic groups.

To sum up, in the present circumstances the South African education system needs a curriculum that values diversity and tolerance, and appreciates cultural differences productively. The curriculum should also offer students a wide variety of learning experiences and opportunities in all subject areas that will expose them to knowledge, experiences and perspectives beyond their own life world (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993). Here my aim is not to support the ideals of liberal multiculturalism as I feel it is essential for students not only to know the culturally diverse nature of the South African society, but also to know how cultural differences can organise social life into patterns of domination and subordination. Further, there is an undeniable need to focus on the structural oppression confronted by oppressed groups, including Africans and women, in the form of patriarchy and white supremacy as an essential aspect of curriculum.

### **3.7 Factors affecting the successful implementation of multicultural education**

Multicultural education in the South African context is a complex issue with many unique challenges. In South Africa, the future status of multicultural education as a valuable educational approach remains fragile and the promotion of multicultural education in South African schools will no doubt continue to be resisted on educational, ideological and economic grounds. The implementation of multicultural education also implies change to existing educational ideologies, policies and practices. Resistance to change can be expected and has already been witnessed in many countries, including South Africa.

Drawing on the writings of Vally and Dalamba (1999), Naicker (1999) and Dekker & Lemmer (1993) and on my own observations, I propose the following major obstacles to the successful implementation of multicultural education in South Africa:

- The South African society is host to many contending political ideologies, some of which propagate racial divisions. Multicultural education will have to address ideologies across the social and political gamut (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993).
- The fact that South African society constitutes several cultures will make accommodation in a single system more demanding, for teachers especially.
- Lack of financial resources and the state of physical and intellectual disrepair in the majority of schools in South Africa shall make affirmative action and academic support difficult in multicultural schools (Naicker, 1999).
- Many teachers are defensive and reluctant to acknowledge that discriminatory practices are still evident. They are also uninformed with regard to the roots of racism, and unable to distinguish between multicultural education and anti-racist education (Vally & Dalamba, 1999).
- Financial constraints will inevitably have a negative effect on the development and implementation of multicultural education. There are many pressing needs such as the need for more schools and the upgrading of facilities, which require immense financial resources (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In the discussion so far we have seen that there is a great range of ideologies and views on how South African children from different backgrounds in the same classroom are to be educated. In this section, I wish to summarise some of the points I have made in the discussion.

My belief is that in the contemporary South African education scenario the urgent need is for a curriculum that helps South Africans along the path of national reconciliation. There should also be an emphasis on promoting a global perspective in the curriculum to provide the country with skills that will enable it to compete in the global economy. A

related argument centres on the need for learners to develop broad horizons. By acquiring knowledge of the socio-economic attributes of various developing and developed nations, learners will gain a better understanding of the global context in which we operate. South Africans should not be blinkered and fixed in their own experience at the expense of an appreciation of the major cultures of the world. The challenge, then, is to ensure that the process of restructuring the curriculum is informed not only by European experience but also by the experience of both developed and developing countries elsewhere, in addition to locally generated knowledge (Education Africa, 1997).

The current South African education system will have to confront and challenge all the root evils of the present situation if it is to serve the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic state (King & Van Den Berg, 1991). One of the main purposes of education should be to place those who have been discriminated against in the past in a position where their educational background will enable them:

- To compete on an equal basis in the market place and to make their contribution to the economic welfare of South Africa;
- To take their place freely in society and to contribute to its richness and diversity;
- To share in the decision-making process of the country at all levels, in education as well as a wide range of other human activities – social, economic and political; and
- To live as citizens with their fellow citizens in a common South Africa and to share the same regard and affection for the country.

There is a need for a curriculum which is relevant to the life experiences of disadvantaged students, incorporating and acknowledging these students' experiences of life and work, so that they can begin to reflect upon their circumstances, formulate solutions to problems and enjoy access to a greater variety of post-school opportunities. If they cannot see themselves in the literature, history and geography that they learn, they will never be able to identify with the subject matter and make it their own (Coutts, 1995).

To conclude, a radical reform in the existing curriculum is an urgent need because of the need for more relevant content given the heterogeneous school population. The curriculum should take into consideration cultural differences, linguistic diversity and socio-economic factors that influence educability. Further, it must be relevant to the needs of the individual as well as the social and economic needs of the contemporary South African society. The challenge for the future is to devise curriculum development and dissemination procedures that facilitate the task of democratic nation-building, that give due regard to non-racism and non-sexism and that promote among students critical thinking, communicative competence and the ability to function with confidence in the society at large.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Content analysis is a popular method of analysing data in documents and refers to the systematic description of the contents of documents. Content analysis is also applied to identify the underlying myths or ideologies informing the photographs and sketches which form an integral part of the text, as well as to examine the visual content within a historical context (Seale, 1998). The major impetus for developing content analysis was to judge various kinds of literature against certain standards (Silverman, 1993). In this study my primary aim is to examine the extent to which a multicultural approach is incorporated into the content of texts. A number of multicultural themes have been selected for the purpose of analysis. They will act as standards in terms of which to gauge how successful each text has been in subscribing to a multicultural approach (section 1.2).

The remainder of this chapter is divided into six parts. Parts 4.2. and 4.3 discuss the concept of qualitative content analysis, the procedure of applying qualitative content analysis and the limitations of content analysis. The remaining parts deal with various aspects of the research design and the role of the researcher, and conclude with some thoughts on issues of validity and generalisability in the context of this research.

### **4.2 Reasons for selection of content analysis for the proposed research**

Content analysis seems to me an appropriate method to use to study the text content in the texts primarily on two grounds. First, content analysis assumes that the text as the carrier and circulator of social and cultural meaning is replete with a variety of potential meanings that can be realised by a socially situated researcher. Uncovering these meanings involves a study of underlying assumptions, bias, prejudices and propaganda in the printed material (Robson, 1993). Second, content analysis, in my view, is well suited to research probing widespread cultural notions or stereotypes. It also offers an opportunity for the investigator to learn about how subjects or the authors of the textual

materials view their social worlds. The primary concern of the current study is to investigate the extent to which the texts have adopted a multicultural viewpoint in their portrayal of various ethnic groups in South Africa, the representation of women, including women of colour, and of global environmental concerns in both the developed and the developing countries. In this study an attempt is made to expose biased presentation, distortion and cultural stereotypes in relation to issues concerning developing nations, women and disadvantaged groups (section 1.2).

Moreover, its practical viability and simple application also persuaded me to select content analysis as a research methodology. As a method, it can be utilised with a minimum of technical equipment. This method concentrates on studying texts, hence it does not require costly technological equipment such as a camera or a tape recorder. Further, persons with a minimum of specialised background knowledge can practise it, and it can yield valuable insights (Gulgin & Handel, 1992). Moreover, content analysis allows the researcher to determine where the greatest emphasis lies after the data have been gathered. She does not set out to prove or disprove a hypothesis by gathering facts to support her position. Finally, the methodology of the procedure can be made explicit to the reader (Berg, 1998).

In the discussion that follows I discuss the development of content analysis as a qualitative research technique. I then elaborate on the merits of content analysis as a research method for this study, arguing for the suitability of qualitative content analysis instead of the more widely used quantitative content analysis method. Then I move on to explain the procedure by which qualitative content analysis is incorporated in the research design. The discussion concludes with a brief deliberation on the limitations of qualitative content analysis, followed by a mention of the possible research findings that might be obtained through the application of qualitative content analysis to the texts.

#### **4.3 Development of the concept of qualitative content analysis**

Content analysis is a methodology used to analyse both overt and implicit messages within textual data. It is usually taken to be a quantitative method for the analysis of

qualitative data, used to analyse the presence or absence of particular words, messages and images from the manifest content of the text (Holsti, 1969). Barnard Berelson's classic, *Content analysis in communication research* (1952), describes the traditional concept of content analysis commonly known as quantitative content analysis. Berelson (1952: 488-522) outlined a rigorous quantitative approach to the content analysis of media messages. However, there is a variant of content analysis with a qualitative dimension which analyses the latent and the implicit messages and meanings embedded within the text. It requires a system of interpretation that goes beyond mere counting of occurrences and instead analyses more subtle aspects of textual construction, layout and content (Ball and Smith, 1992).

The concept of qualitative content analysis was put forward by a German critical theorist, Kracauer (1953), as an alternative to Berelson's quantitative approach. He called for a qualitative content analysis technique drawing on hermeneutic textual procedure. Kracauer argued that the inadequacy of quantitative analysis stems from the methods themselves: when trying to establish the meaning of texts by breaking them down into quantifiable units the analyst in fact destroys the very object he or she is supposed to be studying (quoted in Larsen, 1991:123). Kracauer advocated an approach that examined the content of the text in totality. The task of the analyst is to bring out the hidden messages in the text. Kracauer (1953: 638) defined qualitative content analysis as the "selection or rational organisation of such categories as condense the substantive meanings of a given text, with a view to testing pertinent assumptions and hypotheses. These categories may or may not invite frequent counts". He argued that a quantitative analysis leads to an inadequate treatment of significant key words or phrases as it formulates the categories in the first instance and then attempts to place the text content under these categories (Kracauer, 1953).

Qualitative analysis, as defined by Holsti (1969), constitutes the drawing of inferences on the basis of the appearance or non-appearance of attributes in messages, and has been defended most often, though not solely, for its superior performance in problems of the applied social sciences. George (1959:7) concluded that "Qualitative analysis of a limited

number of crucial communications may often yield better clues to the particular intentions of a particular speaker at one moment in time than more standardised techniques". To sum up, qualitative research is not so much interested in the measurement of social variables as it is concerned with investigating the qualities that a social phenomenon has for the members of a particular society - the meanings and significance they attribute to beliefs, practices, appearances, and so forth (Ball & Smith, 1992).

#### 4.3.1 Reasons for selecting qualitative content analysis for this research.

I consider qualitative content analysis to be a viable method for uncovering messages about gender, race and ethnicity in textbooks. Specifically, I assert that in any textbook latent and implicit meanings and messages are embedded within the ordinary display of words and images on the page. They form the unconscious part of the text. In other words, a subtext exists which is significant in the construction of meaning within the textbook. I also assume that the subtext or the unconscious part of the text is identifiable; it may be assessed by careful, analytical, theoretically informed, qualitative content analysis (Project for Multicultural and Inter-disciplinary study in Education, 1999). Furthermore, there are three major advantages in selecting this method for the present study. First, through this method it is possible to uncover the subjective and hidden values and beliefs of the author as individual and of the individual's society and culture that are subtly expressed in the document. Second, this approach gives to researchers a choice of performing content analysis on a specific issue of their interest rather than undertaking a project to study the whole book in order to come to any relevant conclusion, which can be at times ponderous and time-consuming. Finally, this approach can help in highlighting multicultural perspectives included in the text-content as well as visual materials.

My second reason for selecting this method is that in the past much of textbook research has been of a qualitative nature. Frameworks for analysis have been primarily normative, theoretically loose and frequently defined by the nature of the study undertaken (Dean and Hartmann, 1983). A common tendency appears to have been for researchers to

establish a set of guidelines on which their analysis is based. For instance, in a study of ethnocentrism in western textbooks, Preswerk and Perrot (1978) identified a number of categories that structured their analysis of a history text. These included the legitimisation of European action, the transfer of European values in non-European society, and non-European interpretations of history.

Finally, the conceptual framework and the aims of the proposed study also provide a strong rationale for the use of qualitative content analysis:

- The concerns of the study are more centred on analysing the textbooks to reveal ideological manifestations such as feminism, and multiculturalism (Lowenthal, 1949).
- In this study I formulate interpretations as I go through the material whenever the content cues me in some way.
- This study employs complex and descriptive multicultural themes. Further, it lacks the rigid system of categories, allowing for a subtler or more individualised interpretation of the text content and visuals (Berelson, 1952)
- This study does not treat text content as literary pieces of writing but as reflection of diverse ideological positions.

#### 4.3.2 Procedure for applying qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis begins with a theoretical problem formulated into a research problem or question (Robson, 1993). The second important step is the collection of data. Obviously, the choice of data is often determined by the demands of the research question. To reduce the task to manageable dimensions various sampling techniques are applied. After the sampling of data is done, the researcher makes observations on a limited number of individuals, objects or events so that he or she can make inferences about the larger number from which she has drawn the sample (Neuman, 1997). The choice of unit of analysis largely depends on the problem and content under investigation. The researcher usually takes some kind of document as his or her unit of analysis. This could be anything from a book to a magazine (Neuman, 1997).

It is usually necessary in content analysis to construct categories as they contain the substance of the investigation. There are certain criteria for the selection of categories.

- They must reflect and be sensitive to the research question(s); and
- They should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive of the content under consideration (Berelson, 1952).

Carrying out the analysis is the last and the most important part of the process. However, the most thorough analysis can only be accomplished if the material under consideration is properly coded. Coding is the key step in the research process since it serves to “summarize, synthesize and sort many observations made out of the data” (Charmaz, 1983: 112). Coding is the first step in the conceptualisation of the data (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). In part, coding provides the link between data and conceptualisation. There are various devices for coding data in qualitative content analysis such as open coding, axial coding and analytic memo writing. In this study I have used only open coding. Open coding, also referred to as ‘initial coding’, represents “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 61). The primary aim of open coding is to open inquiry widely by bringing themes to the surface from deep inside the data.

The procedure of open coding is as follows: The researcher focuses on the data themselves and assigns code labels for themes. No thought at this stage is given to making connections among themes or elaborating on concepts that themes represent. The researcher begins coding with a list of themes based on the researcher’s initial research question. Qualitative researchers vary in how much detail they code. Some code every line while others code paragraphs. The degree of detail in coding in most cases depends on the research question, the richness of data and the researcher’s purposes (Neuman, 1997). After the coding of data the crucial and final step of interpreting the data is undertaken: this entails uncovering patterns or themes from the data. The researcher then begins the process of evaluating the emergent hypothesis against the data. This involves

a return to the data, challenging the hypothesis, searching for negative instances of the pattern and incorporating these into larger constructs (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

#### **4.4 Application of content analysis to visual representations in the proposed study**

##### 4.4.1 Introduction

A visual representation, in this study, is seen as an important vehicle for the transmission of ideology. A visual does not only denote particular things in the world but also connotes a range of higher order ideological meanings. The ideological constructs explain themselves through a multiplicity of codes that invade the visual in the form of key signifiers. These key signifiers represent a digression from the literal photographic message towards an established body of knowledge which they connote. As the symbolic forms of expression that reflect the thinking, values, behaviour and myths of a society, they have the capacity to reveal and represent aspects of the social world. They are all cultural products and inevitably present a particular ideological position to the viewer (Ball & Smith, 1992). Visuals are also the potential conveyors of the author's ideology along with the text. It is assumed that an illustration is never the representation of reality per se, but what an illustrator chooses to reflect. An illustration, even if it is utilised in the text for decorative purposes, will inevitably contain an element of ideology emanating from the author's comprehension of material and cultural reality. Hence a photograph can be treated as an abbreviated version of the entire socio-cultural system of which it is a part (Bannet, 1989).

Thus in this study an attempt has also been made to conduct a content analysis of visual representations. I assume that visual data included in the text is carefully selected. They are not simply included for illustrative purpose but intend to engage the reader in an analytical investigation. They are designed to encourage a reader to come to some conclusion concerning the socio-economic reality, beliefs and value system of the society portrayed in the illustrations. These visuals, can, for instance, present the experiences of the disadvantaged groups in the society, in such a way, which may enable the viewer to empathise with the situation of the subject (Becker, 1975). Bearing these observations in

mind a textual analysis, in my view, can be enriched by critically reflecting on visual material and the accompanying commentating text.

#### 4.4.2 Procedure for interpreting visual representations

Any visual analysis will give us two messages: a literal message and the connoted message. At the level of literal message, the photograph replies – in a more or less direct, more or less partial manner – to the question, what is it? It only helps in identifying the elements of the scene and in comprehending the ostensible meaning of the scene as a whole (Robert, 1985). Connotative messages signify something different from what is shown in the text. It is not immediately graspable at the level of message itself; “it is, one could say, at once invisible and active, clear and implied” (Sontag, 1982:48). A connotative message, in simple terms, is the hidden meaning within the photographic message proper. The reader’s task, then, is to discern the connotative message or the ideological position of the author from the denoted message by using his or her power of reflection (Ball, and Smith, 1992).

Based on this premise, this study has applied content analysis to study both literal and connoted messages in visual representations that constitute sketches and photographs, along with the body text constituting speech bubbles, captions and the accompanying narrative. In this study the body text accompanying the visual is treated as an important constituent of the visual, as it does not only provide additional information but also helps in clarifying the issues embedded in the graphics by providing knowledge about the social and cultural context in which they are placed. This study’s primary aim is to reveal the multicultural ideology embodied in the visual data incorporated in the texts. Content analysis is used to study illustration as it:

- Allows a much deeper analysis of the images;
- Draws out the full complexity of ideological meaning in the visual material; and
- Provides a powerful framework for analysis and very few practical guidelines for rigorously employing it (Seale, 1998).

In this study I have tried to uncover that which is implied in the photographic message: to see beyond the literal meaning being conveyed. Hence the use of content analysis is not limited to manifest content (those elements that are physically present) but has been extended to the latent content. The analysis extends to an interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physically presented data. For example, a visual may be assessed for various kinds of multiculturalism it is subscribing to apart from the visual content (Berg, 1997). The procedure of analysing visuals is quite similar to that of content analysis. A range of multicultural themes has been selected from the multicultural perspectives under consideration. The selected themes constitute the basis for the selection of photographs and sketches included in the text. In this study, the visual analysis is not conducted in isolation but in combination with the content analysis of the text content as it is assumed that visuals form an essential component of the text. It is assumed that a photograph can only convey the idea if it is supported by an implicit or explicit narrative. The narrative juxtaposed with the image supply an abbreviated but necessary link to the understanding of a phenomenon or a concept under consideration. Hence it seems valid to argue that the original stimulus offered by the image tends to get enhanced by the existence of strong narrative. Thus the images do not stand alone. The text and the images combine advantageously to provide a cultural critique. Here I would like to take an example from one of the texts. In the history text, *All that Glitters*, there is a photograph on page 31 which depicts a small, black boy lighting a cigar for his master. The photograph only informs us that small black children were employed by the Boer farmers for domestic purposes. However, the accompanying text relates the phenomenon of child labour during the 1890s in South Africa. It narrates that black children were captured forcefully by the Boer farmers and then subjected to inhuman treatment as they were given the tasks of building wells and dams. This process continued until they reached the age of 25. Thus it is clear that a photograph in itself is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon of child slavery. The information provided by the surrounding text is essential to bring the concept home.

#### **4.5 Limitations of content analysis**

A study based entirely on content analysis invites certain difficulties and deficiencies inherent in the method of content analysis. In the first instance, content analysis is assumed to be unable to capture the context within which a written text has a meaning. Content analysis struggles continuously with the problem of context or the embeddedness of a text within personal or group experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, though, I have (in the previous chapters) provided a comprehensive and hopefully adequate framework in which these textbooks, as interpretations of the new South African curriculum and educational orientation, can be understood. Second, content analysis is ordinarily limited to the manifest content of the communication and is not normally aimed primarily at the latent intentions that the content may express, nor the latent responses it may elicit. Again, this limitation does not apply to this study, where I have attempted to interpret text beyond mere surface meaning. Third, even with the strict criteria used in this study, there are still certain intriguing personal interpretations by the researcher that may have vague ideological or emotional overtones. This emphasises that the understanding of textbooks depends to a large degree on the individual. Fourth, content analysis describes what is in the text. It cannot reveal on its own the intentions of those who created the text or the effects that messages in the text have on those who receive them (Neuman, 1997). Fifth, content analysis cannot determine the truthfulness of an assertion or evaluate the aesthetic qualities of the literature (Nachimias, 1996). Finally, the qualitative orientation of content analysis is assumed to be a less rigorous and less valued way of doing inquiry as it as subjective and arbitrary valuational component is introduced into the method that results in an unscientific approach (Berelson, 1952). I shall return to this point later in this chapter.

#### **4.6 Design of the proposed research**

Following the pattern outlined above, I began my content analysis with a research question: to what extent do contemporary South African school textbooks subscribe to a multicultural approach? To begin with, I had to select a unit of analysis. In this study I treat each of the textbooks as a unit of analysis. After defining the unit of analysis the problem of sampling emerged. I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is an

acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. It uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind. Since the purpose of this research is to study multicultural elements in contemporary textbooks for secondary classes in four major disciplines, I selected one textbook published during the years 1996-1998, for secondary level students from each of four disciplines on the strength of the extent to which they incorporate of elements of selected multicultural orientations.

After some data collection and reflection, my next step was to construct analytic categories tailored to my theoretical problem and precise operational definitions of my categories. For this purpose, I selected a special kind of content category known as theme category for analysing data. Each theme detected was placed in a theme category. A variety of themes with essentially the same basic meaning could thereby be classified under the same theme category. In this study, the themes are derived from the nature of the research question. They reflect some of the major characteristics of the multicultural approach. Through the theme categories I would then be able to detect the major motifs in the content and recognise them in their various statement forms. Once the themes were prepared, I tried first to identify the relevant data and to arrange the data which emanated from the analysis of the text content into a set of themes related to three selected multicultural approaches namely critical, liberal and radical multiculturalism and two traditions associated with them, namely afrocentrism and feminism.

My method of analysing texts reflects various features of qualitative research. In the first instance, the emphasis is placed on generating new concepts rather than testing existing ones; second, critical and interpretive approaches are used to analyse data; third, the research procedures are particular and replication is improbable; fourth, the research findings are in the form of observations; fifth, concepts are in the form of themes rather than variables; sixth, data analysis is conducted with an aim to explore diverse orientations of multiculturalism from evidences in the texts and then to organise these research findings in such a way so as to produce a coherent and consistent picture; and finally, interpretation does not include tables with numbers; instead the researcher weaves

the data analysis and interpretation in the form of discussion. Thus, the data are in the form of words, including quotes and descriptions of particular concepts or events.

The study also considers several characteristics and limitations of qualitative research that are invariably encountered in the process of interpreting data. The study emphasises the importance of social context for an understanding of the social world. First and foremost, the study attempts to capture controversial aspects of the social and economic world for which it is difficult to develop precise measures expressed as numbers. Second, the proposed study recognises as a limitation of qualitative research that it is impossible to eliminate the impact of the value system of the researcher completely. It takes into account the integrity of the researcher. It places trust in the integrity of the researcher as far as the interpretation of the data is concerned. Finally, like any other qualitative analysis, the written report is the culmination of the study. The final report describes the background of the study, the theoretical framework guiding it, and the design and methodology of the study. It provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data and also explores what the findings imply in terms of further analysis.

The following guidelines form the basis on which qualitative content analyses of the texts are conducted. These guidelines were formulated after an examination of literature dealing with criteria to guide teachers in the selection of multicultural textbooks for schoolchildren (Evans, 1992; Klein, 1985; Prieswerk and Perrot, 1978). These guidelines are sanctioned by the goals of the study:

- Whether a broad distribution of content is sought which gives equal weight to African and other indigenous groups (Prieswerk and Perrot, 1978);
- Whether the developments taking place in various countries are portrayed accurately (Klein, 1985);
- Whether the content and illustrations represent the entire spectrum of South African society (Evans, 1992);
- Whether an attempt has been made to break stereotyped patterns while presenting issues concerning the socially disadvantaged population (Prieswerk and Perrot, 1978).

- Whether the images portrayed of the developing nations comply with a global perspective or perpetuate the myths promoted by a European-centred approach (Klein, 1985);
- Whether the texts oversimplify the accounts of colonial exploitation and oppression faced by developing countries by disguising, distorting or ignoring inconvenient facts (Klein, 1985);
- Whether themes and concepts inherent in the text content are grounded in a broader context of opening up to cultural, social and economic realities of the local environment (Klein, 1985);
- Whether the text furthers national integration, international understanding and democratic attitudes (Klein, 1985);
- To what extent an interdisciplinary and global approach has been applied in recent textbooks (Klein, 1985);
- Whether the publications have incorporated a balanced perspective while discussing the current socio-economic reality of South Africa (Evans, 1992);
- To what extent text-based activities incorporated in the current texts help pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes for meaningful participation in the process of social change in contemporary South Africa (Klein, 1985);
- To what extent the texts discern personal characteristics, activity, and representation in diverse job classifications, personal interests and social attitudes concerning both male and female characters (Stinton, 1979); and
- To what extent derogatory terminology and sexist language occur in the text (Stinton, 1979).

In this study three major multicultural approaches along with two traditions associated with them are explored in the analysis of visual representations (see section 1.3). The visual materials that I shall be focusing on in this study include photographs and sketches, and to a lesser extent diagrams and maps. The procedure for analysing illustrations was fairly simple. In the first stage, a range of photographs, drawings and maps was selected from each of the four selected texts which in my view related to one or more selected multicultural themes. In the second stage, the visual content including the

captions on each visual representation was analysed with the aim of exploring the above stated ideological orientations embodied in them. In the third stage, a report was formulated detailing the extent to which the selected visual representations reflect a multicultural ideology.

In this study, an analytic procedure was applied for uncovering embedded information and making it explicit. This procedure consisted of five modes: organising the data; generating categories, themes and patterns; testing the research question against the data; searching for an alternative explanations of the data and writing a report. Each phase of data analysis entailed two processes: first, to reduce data to manageable chunks for interpretation and second, to bring meaning to the raw inexpressive data through an interpretive act. The interpretative act brings meaning to data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report. The classic set of analytic moves is:

- fixing categories to classify the data drawn from textbook material;
- noting reflections after careful study of the text content;
- conducting an in-depth study of the text material by dividing it into small segments to identify multicultural themes and other ideological orientations in it;
- confronting these generalisations with the research question or the construct Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The results of the data interpretation are presented in the descriptive mode. The findings of the research will, in my view, help readers in developing a comprehensive view of the subscription to a multicultural approach in the texts.

#### 4.6.1 Role of the researcher

Qualitative research is primarily creative and interpretive and the role of the researcher is paramount. My personality influenced the selection of topic, my intellectual approach and my ability in the field. The product of my labour is a complex, dense and reflexive interpretation of the issues under consideration. Hence the possibility of my personal biases, values and the judgement becoming explicit in the research report is strong.

Further, photographs do not straightforwardly represent reality, but they require interpretive work on the part of the viewer. What is found in the photographs is to some extent conditioned by the cultural knowledge I bring to the viewing. Moreover, the meaning of the photograph is structured by my social and ideological affiliations. For instance, my leaning towards liberal feminism has no doubt influenced my interpretation of the depiction of women in the text content as well as in the visual representations.

At this point the question emerges of the extent to which inferences drawn through a qualitative method are sound and trustworthy. Qualitative research has been associated with terms like subjectivity. The positivist viewpoint stresses that in qualitative research the personal emotion of researchers distorts their perspectives, which often culminates in producing inaccurate findings. In response to this allegation, I think it is pertinent to contemplate the issue of validity. In the following discussion, I consider various views on the concept of validity and generalisability in qualitative research and position my study within them.

#### **4.7 Quest for validity and generalisability in the proposed study**

The concern for validity is often seen in the light of securing safeguards against the ubiquitousness of human error arising from over-identification or under-identification with contextual values. The issue of validity is closely related to the concept of objectivity. Objectivity is often understood as measuring an attempt on the part of researcher to minimise, or eliminate his or her subjectivity from research activity and findings. In positivistic science, validity has come to mean whether a method measures what it is intended to measure, but in a broader sense the concept of validity pertains to the extent to which our observations indeed reflect the phenomena or variables of interest to us (Pervin, 1984: 48).

The traditional criteria for methodological adequacy, essentially developed by positivism, have for most of the twentieth century justified the use of quantitative methods in the social sciences through the use of techniques that produce numerical data which is presumed to reflect objective categories. The positivists opt for sense-directed data

which give empirical science its meaning. They believe that the reliability and stability of the method is an indicator of the validity and the truthfulness of the findings (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). They assume that the essentially reflexive character of qualitative analysis renders an account not only non-objective but also partial, incomplete and bound to the contexts and the rationale of the researcher. This view tends to assume that since all quantitative research is based on scientific methods, it is objective and value-free.

In order to counter this positivistic perception my endeavour in the ensuing discussion will be to demonstrate that this research work does meet the alternative criteria of validity extended by qualitative researchers including Scheffler (1967), Myrdal (1969), Popper (1976), Erickson (1985), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Wolcott (1990). Qualitative researchers (Scheffler, 1967; Myrdal, 1969; Popper, 1976) have proposed replacing the notion of objectivity with that of critical scrutiny. They stress that objectivity in the qualitative sense has nothing to do with consensus. A view, according to them, is objective if it is subjected to rigorous examination, to challenge. It has been teased out, analysed, debated and criticised – in part, it has been forced to face the demands of reason and of evidence (Philips, 1987).

Following this line of thought I have sought to safeguard my research against personal bias by circulating my working drafts at all stages of my research among my supervisors. I feel that the responses of my supervisors assisted me in recognising where my interpretations were under developed or overblown. A second position that I have considered is that of Erickson (1985). He has emphasised that the soundness of the research depends on its clarity of presentation and its usefulness to potential users. In the proposed study I have attempted to report my interpretations in a coherent and methodical way. I hope that the research will prove useful for teachers and students in identifying gender bias, distorted portrayals of disadvantaged groups and other ethnocentric biases concerning developing nations in school texts.

I am also influenced by a case for rigorous subjectivity or disciplined subjectivity made by Wolcott (1990). It is based on elusive criteria such as balance, fairness, completeness

and sensitivity, coherence and internal consistency. The concept of disciplined subjectivity differentiates subjectivity arising out of a personal loaded viewpoint and preconceived notions from a viewpoint supported by carefully gathered evidence. In order to curb the element of personal bias in my data interpretation I have tried to record my observations accurately. I am also submitting the texts along with my research report in order to give readers access to the data themselves. I have been very candid about my subjectivity: to the extent that I thought my personal reactions were important, I revealed them. My interpretations are supported by evidence from the texts rather than by my personal viewpoint on the texts.

This research also satisfies the criterion of reflexive validity (Le Compte and Millroy, 1992), which insists on the inclusion of an account of the values and interests of the researcher in the study itself. This concept was introduced in sociology by Robert Park and other qualitative researchers of the Chicago school during the 1960s and the 1970s (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) later adopted it as one of the tenets of their theory of trustworthiness. They stressed reflexivity and openness on the part of the researcher which includes the importance of self-criticism and self-reflection. This requires an effort to unload one's personal baggage and reports one's own biases with straightforwardness, honesty and integrity. Earlier in this chapter, I have clarified my position as investigator in the section entitled 'Role of the researcher'. In this section, I have incorporated a personal statement discussing the possibility of bias emerging from my academic background, social affiliation and ideological position.

Nevertheless, a fundamental problem persists. The concept of validity, at least in its broad sense of scientific accuracy and correctness, still haunts the qualitative researcher. The problem of validity in qualitative research starts with the research question itself, as this is determined by the value system and cultural assumptions of the researcher. In my example, the research question concerning the extent to which contemporary textbooks have incorporated multicultural elements does reflect my leaning towards democratic and pluralistic ideals, such as the promotion of cultural diversity and non-sexism and the redress of inequality. These cultural assumptions further determine the selection of

particular research methods and their implementation in the interpretation of the text. Here I would also like to explore the standpoint taken by an ethnographer, Hammersley (1992), concerning validity in qualitative research. She argues that an account is valid and true if it represents accurately the features of the phenomenon it is intended to describe, explain or theorise. I can say that the current study has remained faithful to the phenomenon under study rather than to a particular set of methodologies or techniques. In this research no attempt has been made to meet the requirements of positivistic or quantitative criteria of validity. This would have confined the study within valid but insignificant parameters, apart from reducing the researcher to an objective observer and a coding specialist. Further the quantitative analysis might have led to premature coding, forcing the data within a theoretical framework, closing alternate conceptualisations and precluding discovery of subtle “unimportant data”, connections and processes (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:190).

To sum up, in this research I have favoured intense personal involvement and abandoned traditional scientific controls in order to develop an ability to learn from a long series of mistakes, as I consider conducting research not merely an academic exercise but also an important step forward in personal growth. I feel there is a need to treat subjectivity as a strength of qualitative research, as detached objectivity sometimes gives the impression that the researcher is not a part of his own investigations (Wolcott, 1990). I believe that this study is enriched by my personal insight, feelings and perspective as a human being.

#### 4.7.1 Issue of generalisability

Generalisability is another issue that I would like to discuss in relation to my research. According to Campbell and Stanley (1963) external validity pertains to generalising the effects of observed experimental conditions to other populations and contexts. To meet this requirement of generalisability, factors which limit the study’s application to other situations (such as factors external to the conduct of the study) should be ruled out (Le Compte & Millroy, 1992). In qualitative research, generalisability is unachievable as in most cases the research conducted with a view to producing a standard set of results that any other researcher in the same situation or studying the same issue would have

produced. Rather, the emphasis is on producing a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation (Schofield, 1990).

However, many qualitative researchers recognise the importance of dealing with the issue of generalisability. In this discussion, I have taken only two conceptualisations of generalisability that are relevant to my research. They are offered by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Greene (1990). They claim that the qualitative researcher cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry: he or she can only provide 'a thick description' necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility. The thick descriptions provide the information necessary to make informed judgements about the degree and extent of similarity in particular cases of interest (Schofield, 1990). The primary strategy utilised in this research to ensure external validity is the provision of thick detailed description so that any one interested in the transferability will have a solid framework for comparison. I have provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher's role and the basis for the selection of data.

Furthermore, data collection and analysis strategies are reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in this study. In this research the texts have been subjected to intensive analysis. The data constitute not merely text content, but also illustrations comprising photographs, drawings and maps. Further, in order to attain rich data an attempt has been made to study data from diverse perspectives. Apart from being analysed in terms of the multicultural approach, the data have been closely scrutinised from other perspectives. Creative and divergent thinking styles are applied in the data analysis process. Wild guesses are avoided by using carefully reasoned arguments that develop inference.

From the viewpoint of the classical sense of generalisability, it would be difficult for any researcher to replicate my findings, in the sense of independently coming up with similar conceptualisations. I doubt whether I would come to the same conclusions if I were to

conduct the same research a few years from now. Therefore I conclude that it is impractical to make replication a criterion of generalisability in qualitative research. Finally I need to point out that the small sample has also played a determining role in rendering the study non-generalisable in a statistical sense. However, in a qualitative study the number of subjects or data sources depends on the purpose of the study. Since the purpose of the study was to explore the multicultural approach in textbooks, I assumed a small sample of four books would be sufficient to enable penetrating interpretations.

## **Chapter 5: Content analysis of the selected texts**

In this chapter I present the content analysis of the text content and visual representations in four selected textbooks. As referred to in section 4.2 of, the primary purpose of the content analysis is to study the incorporation of multicultural elements in the texts. Through the application of content analysis I shall be studying the extent to which the text content and visuals in the texts have subscribed to the three selected versions of multiculturalism. Apart from this, an effort shall be made to discern the elements reflecting traditions that are closely associated with multiculturalism namely, feminism and afrocenrism.

The procedure of analysis has been detailed in section 4.5 of Chapter 4. Since the themes are based on three versions of multiculturalism (see chapter 2) they are placed under the specific multicultural approach to which they subscribe.

### **5.1 Content analysis of text content and visual representations in *All that Glitters***

#### **5.1.1 Introduction**

*All that Glitters* breaks new ground in the teaching of history in South Africa. The history of the ordinary people of this country is finally being recognised in this work as legitimate knowledge. So, for example, the text discusses the life experiences of migrant workers who were separated from their rural homesteads and treated as second-class citizens, working in very dangerous conditions for low wages and living in a cramped compound without any privacy. The visuals play their part in portraying the desperate circumstances of black workers who opted to live in single-sex hostels developed by the local authorities to accommodate migrant workers. A photograph on page 112, for example, graphically portrays the living conditions of migrant workers in a single sex hostel. The workers were just provided with a wooden bed and a steel cupboard. The photograph also highlights that the walls are bare and that the personal space provided for the mineworkers in the room was totally inadequate. Thus a single photograph can reveal the story of how the industrial revolution in the form of the development of extensive mining and modern industries changed the lives of many South Africans, and the South

African countryside forever. Mine dumps, smoky factories, shack settlements, matchbox houses and rich suburbs became common features of the new landscape. All these developments are at the centre of the great drama of South African history, and feature strongly in this textbook.

The approach applied in this text for studying historical events can be described as a viable multicultural alternative compared to the earlier eurocentric approach to studying South African history that followed the grand contours of the white settlers with the odd paragraphs about black people tacked on to the end (Education Africa, 1997). This book depicts blacks as disadvantaged people who had been long suppressed by white colonialists and were forced to live under undesirable social and economic conditions as the result of apartheid policies. It places emphasis on a broader social perspective, 'A history from below' (Bam & Visser, 1996). Such social history focuses not just on a single event but on broad social transformations and their impact on ordinary people and on the social relations and divisions within societies. Thus, it reveals the rich possibilities of providing historical accounts of ordinary people instead of political leaders and the like (Bam & Visser, 1996).

#### 5.1.2 Analysis of multicultural elements in the text

After giving a brief outline of the theme of the text in the forthcoming discussion I explore three major multicultural orientations in the text. Further, I also study two other rival traditions associated with the multicultural approach. At this point it is essential to mention that in this study I have treated selected feminist approaches as a part of critical multiculturalism and afrocentricism as a part of a radical multicultural approach.

##### *5.1.2.1 Liberal multicultural approach*

###### *5.1.2.1.1 Positive description of Pre-colonial South Africa*

To begin with, the text follows the liberal multicultural approach by detailing the positive achievements of the pre-colonial era, particularly the well-developed trading system and rudimentary mining activities. An exercise on page 22 mentions extensive trade systems

that prevailed in South Africa long before the arrival of European powers. According to the text South Africa had been trading with Arabs and traders from Sofala and Inhambane in southern Mozambique. An extensive trade system was supported by trade routes that existed between the ports and the central regions of South Africa. Apart from the neighbouring countries Africans also traded with Europeans. They bought weapons, ploughs and consumer goods from Europeans in exchange for hunting products such as ivory and skins. The text also includes an extract from C. W. de Kiewiet's work *A history of South Africa* showing that in 1870 most common people used consumable items brought from Britain and other countries.

The text further relates scientific innovations that took place in pre-colonial times. For example, on page 43 it claims that even in pre-colonial times iron and gold were mined even though in small amounts. Moreover, South Africans were also aware of the iron smelting technique which helped them in producing farming implements, weapons and tools. A sketch on page 44 shows natives from the Tswana community smelting iron to produce agricultural implements. The message to learners is that mining was not an invention of European powers, as is generally assumed, and in this way the text works towards subverting commonly held assumptions of the superiority and sophistication of colonising powers.

In the portrayal of the pre-colonial societies the author subscribes to two features of liberal multiculturalism. She subverts the popular myth that African societies were primitive and barbarian and people living primarily by animal hunting and food gathering. The text shows that the lifestyle of common African people was by no means barbarian as they were using items such as buckets, coffee, tea and soap which are generally used by people living in a civilised society. She also emphasises the achievements of pre-colonial societies to combat the Eurocentric view that all scientific and technological development in the colonial societies took place only with the advent of European powers. Thus the text counters the colonial myth that in the pre-colonial era only western countries were responsible for scientific innovation and were therefore technologically superior.

#### 5.1.2.1.2 Sympathetic portrayal of the working class from a global perspective

The text also promotes another dimension of the liberal multicultural approach, that is the incorporation of the global perspective (section 2.3.1). The text takes the example of the industrial revolution in Britain and studies its impact on the urban and rural population in order to develop a background for understanding the impact of the industrial revolution in South Africa. Pages 8-19 offer a brief history of the impact of the industrial revolution on the economic and social lives of ordinary people in rural and urban Britain. The text explains the impact of changes in agriculture, the growth of coal mining factories, the Enclosure Act and the development of towns on the working class. The text further enumerates how rapid urbanisation led to the growth of urban slums, polluted and filthy living conditions and the spread of epidemics, symptomatic of terrible poverty and hardships. The visuals compiled in the text further confirm this viewpoint by depicting the dire living conditions of the working class in Britain during the era of the industrial revolution. For instance, the sketch on page 16 depicts the desperate living conditions of industrial labourers in Britain. It depicts a worker's family living in a cellar. The house is dark and damp; the floor is broken in several places, and the windowpanes are broken and stuffed with rags. The accompanying text (an extract from the novel *Mary Barton* by Mrs Gaskell) highlights the children's hunger, as a loaf of bread brought by a friend "vanished in an instant."

Using the example of the British industrial revolution as a background<sup>1</sup> to the South African industrial revolution the author helps students to develop a better concept<sup>1</sup> of the living conditions of the working classes in societies which are transiting from a feudal to an industrial economy. Learners are likely to get a more comprehensive picture of the living conditions of the working class, as well as become sensitised to the exploitation of the poor by the powerful industrialists. Moreover, taking an example of the western country and then applying it to a developing country should also help students to realise that the conditions of the working class in advanced countries were quite similar to those in a developing country like South Africa, leaving aside the element of racism which was an exceptional feature in the case of South African example. Finally, the history text, by

studying the experiences of working class from a world perspective, helps students to understand the social and economic consequences of the industrial revolution, such as the growth of towns and cities, urbanisation, the growth of urban slums, and the development of a tenancy system in both a developing and a developed country. The students also attain a better understanding of social and economic problems confronted by the labouring classes on a global rather than national scale.

Apart from descriptions of living and working conditions of British industrial labourers we find references to the experience of the poor Indians who had come to South Africa from various parts of India to work as indentured labourers in the sugar plantations. The text presents a first hand account of the experiences of a female Indian worker in a sugar plantation in Natal. A passage on page 36 narrates the story of an Indian woman who had come to work on the sugar plantations as an indentured labourer. She had to bear the additional burden of gender discrimination, as the salary paid to women was half of that paid to men for the same amount of work on the plantation.

This example promotes elements of both critical and liberal multiculturalism as well as critical feminism. In the first instance, it promotes liberal multiculturalism by showing the positive contribution of Indian people, who came as indentured labourers, in the promotion of the industrialisation in South Africa. It further promotes critical multiculturalism by showing how racial ideologies have worked to reduce Indians to a class open to brutal forms of exploitation, and also by pointing out that Indians share a history of exploitation, subjugation and exclusion with African peoples. They are also denied access to benefits and opportunities because of racism and other forms of oppression. The text promotes critical feminism by showing that Indian women became victims of attitudinal discrimination in South Africa where women were treated as a devalued social group and their contribution to the economy is trivialised.

#### *5.1.2.1.3 Sympathetic portrayal of poor whites*

The text adopts a liberal multicultural approach by treating the people from the dominant groups as people confronting problems of unemployment and proper housing. The

author briefly discusses on pages 119 and 120 the pauperisation of rural Afrikaners who migrated to urban areas and were forced to compete in the labour market with unskilled workers. The text further depicts on page 120 that the white newcomers in the urban and industrial areas were at a competitive disadvantage in relation to the Africans because they were unskilled and could not find employment in mines. Thus there was serious competition between the demands of the newly augmented and insecure white class and the ultra cheap African labour. A photograph on page 120 shows how poor Afrikaners, after migrating from their native villages to the towns, were forced to live in racially mixed slum yards as they could not afford better housing in the cities.

The text, in this instance, promotes liberal multiculturalism by reflecting on the alternative life strategies adopted by white Afrikaners, which created difficulties for them in finding suitable jobs that could support their superior living standards. Thus, by sympathetically delineating the economic problems of poor whites, the text promotes a balanced perspective in that it not only focuses on the problems of racial groups commonly perceived to be disadvantaged but also refers to the predicaments of the sections of groups generally perceived as advantaged and dominant. Further following the liberal multicultural approach it does not assume whites as a monolithic group who by virtue of their colour managed to monopolise all the economic resources. It studies cultural division among white groups. Thus British whites formed a more affluent section of the society than Afrikaners as a section of Afrikaners formed the class of poor whites whose living conditions were quite similar to that of blacks.

#### *5.1.2.1.4 Celebration of cultural diversity*

The text also acknowledges the struggle waged by the Indian community in Natal against oppressive apartheid laws. For example, an illustration on page 135 shows major Indian political activists meeting each other after their release from detention for having orchestrated a strike against the government. According to the text, the strike was conducted by 400 coalminers who were later joined by railway workers, sugar mill workers and printers. The impact of the strike on the government was so strong that it set up a commission of inquiry, whose recommendations were in line with the demands of

the protesters for the repeal of the poll tax and the recognition of Indian marriages.

Thus, even though the text in general gives an impression of promoting black political activists, it also includes the contribution made by Indians in the general struggle of black workers against exploitation and denial of political rights. The text appreciates the strong resistance put up by the Indian population from all walks of life against the three-pound poll tax and their struggle for the recognition of Indian marriages. The text further promotes liberal multiculturalism by distinguishing Africans from Indians rather than placing them together in one category as 'people of colour'. It is a general tendency among western multicultural texts. It shows that the Nationalist government policy of racial discrimination and oppression was not only confined to Africans but also extended to other cultural groups whom it classified as non-whites.

#### *5.1.2.1.5 Skills development*

Skills development is one of the essential ingredients of the liberal multicultural approach (for details see section 2.3.1). Text-based activities are also a feature of this book. The writer herself has proclaimed in her foreword that the most exciting thing about this book will be participating in the activities and exercises in the classroom. She claims that all these exercises will help to develop new skills that can be extended to secondary classes. For example, exercise 6 on page 10 questions students about the visual content in a painting by Lawrence Stephen Lowry. It requires students to study the painting carefully and then write a paragraph on the quality of life of people in an industrial city in Britain in the early 20th century. In similar vein, exercise 1 on page 22 uses three sketches as historical evidence, from which students are expected to "discuss with your partner what life must have been like in the 1860s." The sketches depict the varying styles and conditions of Boer, African and British family life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These exercises introduce students to historical evidence helping them to gain some of the skills necessary for handling evidence confidently and critically. They place emphasis on getting students to learn the various skills necessary to piece together interpretations of the past. Students learn the analytical and practical skills historians themselves use instead of only uncritically consuming unchallenged facts. Students interpret the

evidence, assess its reliability, and arrive at their own judgement.

This book is also rich in activities like drama, creative writing and conducting an interview. For instance, exercise 6 on page 10 asks students to interview a black member of their community who has some experience of the effect of migrant labour on family life. Working with old people would be good for children in terms of their social development and community awareness. This activity promotes language awareness, comprehension, interview techniques, and research skills among students. They learn how to question, interview, listen, empathise, categorise, analyse, extrapolate, synthesise and so on. Finally, this exercise develops the skills of sensitive listening and empathy among students.

Similarly, the text includes a range of exercises that promotes creative writing among students. For instance, exercise 6 on page 143 requires students to write an essay on the activities of the ICU. Here students are not allowed to detail factual information. Instead, they are asked to provide their own interpretation of events while using facts to back up their opinion. Similarly, exercise 1 on page 132 requires students to visualise themselves as indentured workers and to detail their reaction to the unfair treatment they would have received from their white employees. Exercise 4 on page 99 asks students to prepare a speech on topics presented in the text. They are supposed to work in groups on the selected topic. One of the selected group members then presents the prepared speech to the class. These activities not only promote creative thinking but also develop the spirit of group participation on the basis of democratic principles.

Moreover, the text incorporates various exercises related to role-playing. The main objective is to create a sympathetic reconstruction of an event or historical moment. The exercises also ensure that the drama must remain within its historical context, and students have to think and act within that context. For instance, exercise 4 on page 25 asks students to write a play on the unfree labour in the 1860s. The play, according to the text, should focus on examples of unfree labour in Transvaal and Natal in the 1860s. The procedure which they are asked to follow is in three steps: first to conduct research on the

topic; second, to write a script outline and finally to present the play before the class. This exercise, in my view, also helps students in developing communication and expressive skills.

#### *5.1.2.2 Critical multicultural approach*

So far I have identified the elements of the most popular multicultural approach in the text. In the following discussion I will study elements of the critical and radical multicultural approaches that have been given peripheral treatment in the West but are enjoying wide currency among South African multiculturalists. The text reveals various aspects of the critical multicultural approach. They include the promotion of the feminist perspective, depiction of the social reality of the black oppressed class, and detailed description of various patterns of racial discrimination based on race and cultural differences.

##### *5.1.2.2.1 Critical depiction of British imperialism*

There is a strong element of critical multiculturalism in the depiction of how the British took advantage of internal conflict within African kingdoms and defeated them individually. This was also one of the methods of accruing cheap labour for the mining industry in South Africa. Page 79 charts the substantial contact and conflict between the whites and the African kingdoms of the Pedi, Zulu and Xhosa, which finally led to the crushing defeat of the African kingdoms and the disintegration of these empires. In addition, an extract from a textbook, *New History*, on page 73, reflects the author's critical attitude to the British government's political approach to the black natives who helped them win the Anglo-Boer War.

Thus it is clear that the text has studied the colonial history not from the point of view of the conqueror, but from the point of view of the vanquished. It also breaks the colonial myth that the British conquest of the native kingdom had a benevolent motive behind it, that is of civilising the natives and introducing them to all the benefits of western cultures and science. In the South African context British rule has led to subjugation and exploitation of natives. Further the text is also critical of the treacherous attitude of the

British conquerors who betrayed the natives once their economic interest was served.

#### *5.1.2.2.2 Oppression of black farmers and industrial labourers*

In line with a critical multicultural orientation, that text offers a critique of the use of state power by the white population to victimise and subdue native black people. The text clearly indicates, on page 91, the non-beneficial nature of the government regulations concerning black labourers and farm workers.

First, the government policies tended to protect the interests of mining finance capital by confiscation of the black farmers' land, the imposition of taxes, and by making rent tenancy sharecropping illegal. Second, the text is very critical of the measures utilised by the white government to force black people to forsake their traditional mode of life and to become wage earners. The text assumes that the imposition of heavy taxation and arbitrary legislation and the development of native reserves were the primary causes of rural Africans becoming migrant labourers. The text stresses, on page 91, that another cause of the reduction of a major section of Africans into landless wage labourers was the white government's attempt to promote the unequal ownership of the land by allocating an amount of land to the Africans that was far from sufficient for their subsistence through the mechanism of the Land Act of 1913. The map on page 91 shows that only 7.5 percent of South Africa's total area was allocated to black people and the rest to whites. The land apportioned to the Africans consisted of many fragments scattered throughout the country. Through this policy of spatial segregation the mass of black people who occupied the 'white' land were dispossessed of it and excluded from access to it except as wage labourers. This act also empowered the state to forcefully remove the African workers from the white farms.

The text also uses an extract from Sol Plaatje's work *Native life in South Africa* to illustrate the cruelty imposed by the Nationalist government on homeless blacks who were evicted from 'white' farms. The Nationalist government would not allow black children to be buried on white farms. These children, evicted from their native place, died of exposure while they were trekking in the countryside in bitter winter cold. Thus there

was large-scale intervention on the part of the state to ensure land for white farmers and a constant supply of cheap labour for mines.

Through this example the author attempts to take multiculturalism beyond the comfort zone by making it come to terms with the oppressive acts committed by white privileged groups in collaboration with the state machinery to reduce an independent black farmer to a wage labourer. The text also depicts how persistent racist policies led to oppression of the black population, first, by creating a division between the black and white communities into geographically distinct rural areas; second, by ensuring the destruction of the primitive agricultural economy by systematically depriving Africans of their land through repressive legislation; and third by promoting the colonial social order in which Africans were required to work as wage labourers for their new masters.

The text, further conforming to critical multiculturalism, also attempts to study the dimension of racial discrimination in the Land Act of 1919 by underlining how cultural and colour differentiation created havoc in the lives of the black rural peasantry. They were, by virtue of their colour, deprived of their very means of livelihood, the land, and were forced to enter into the most exploitative economic contract with their oppressors.

The text further reveals racial discrimination confronted by black people as they were not allowed to raise their voice against exploitation through trade unions. The text observes that blacks, who were the major part of the industrial labour in South Africa from the beginnings of the economic modernisation, were given no opportunity by the state to develop class-consciousness. The reason for this was the policy of racial discrimination adopted by the government. The state machinery ensured that black labourers' capability to organise unions in defence of their economic interests would be stymied, and their chances for mobility within the industrial order would be severely limited. For instance, page 144 notes that that Africans were not allowed to have registered trade unions. Hence their trade unions remained "small, weak and divided." In contrast, the state machinery allowed the skilled white, coloured and Indian workers to defend their interests through the formation of trade unions that protected their economic interests and negotiated for

improved working conditions. The book's emphasis on the state's deliberate and sustained refusal to recognise the political rights of blacks is a strong indicator of its critical multicultural orientation. It shows that the non-recognition of black political rights was motivated by the desire to maintain the cultural and economic hegemony. The coloured and Indian population was granted this right, as they did not pose a challenge to white supremacy, being minority groups. Black people were denied this right as they formed the majority group. Hence the government created the conditions which ensured that black people would never be able to mobilise themselves politically against the racist regime.

#### *5.1.2.2.3 Concern for the living conditions of black people*

The text, following critical multiculturalism, attempts to reconstruct the past by focusing on the trauma of African migrants and their penurious and painful life in urban towns. The author instances the living conditions in the new industrial towns where there was poor housing, little sanitation. There were millions of migrant workers who suffered harsh poverty throughout the period of industrialisation. Their living conditions were undesirable both from the point of view of sanitation and socially.

The text also refers on page 117 to the policy of area segregation adopted by the government since the mid-1920s by passing legal measures such as the Native Urban Areas Act (1925) and the Native Land Amendment Act (1937) which reduced Africans to second-class citizens by declaring cities to be white areas. These Acts aimed at control of the movement of African to towns, both by allowing them to stay in towns as long as they had a job and also by prohibiting them from building property in the towns. As a result, the only alternative left for the black migrants was to reside in racially segregated black and coloured townships that were rapidly growing on the outer fringes of the city. The text also includes a photograph on page 117 which portrays the lifestyle of poor blacks in Doornfontein in the 1930s. The photograph depicts poor people living in tin shacks. Similarly, on page 109 the text relates three major housing options available to a factory worker's family in the large cities. They included living in a slumyard, living in matchbox houses in the townships or becoming a squatter. It also includes two pictures of black

people living in a slumyard and a tenement. These pictures emphasise the message that both housing systems were inadequate for suitable living.

This instance, following a critical multicultural approach, depicts that blacks were forcibly excluded from the white society and were subjugated to various forms of oppression, including exclusion and marginalisation. In an urban society they formed an underclass which survived on low paid jobs and living in townships that were designed for them at the fringes of the city. Hence this society suffered both economic injustice in the form of poor housing and low paid jobs and social injustice in the form of social isolation and spatial segregation. By highlighting these factors – ignored in history textbooks of the previous decades – the author maintains a critical view of historical developments. In this was the book is likely to alert students to the injustices of the apartheid era, by implication rather than direct attack.

#### *5.1.2.2.4 Racial discrimination*

The explicit treatment of the consequences of apartheid is another feature which sets this book apart from most its predecessors in the field. Examples appear on pages 130 and 131 where three major problems that black South Africans have to face in the urban areas as a result of the policy of racial discrimination are considered. The disadvantaged socio-economic position of black people led them to accept menial and low-paying jobs in order to sustain themselves in the towns. Page 131 discusses how migrant labourers had to find work in informal sectors to sustain themselves. A photograph on 130 shows a black migrant factory worker having to take tailoring as a part time job to earn extra income. Since the factory owners made no provision for their housing, they lived in very cramped facilities lacking the most basic facilities. Apart from these difficulties they had to struggle against arbitrary regulations which restricted their movements in the cities. The passage also mentions that farm labourers had to work as tenant farmers where they were exploited by the Afrikaner farm owners. Their whole family had to work long hours without any payment in exchange for a small piece of land to live on.

The text also displays a strong tendency towards a critical multicultural approach, by

portraying cultures in terms of experiences central to everyday life. The text explores the crucial political, social and economic structures that underpin the most substantial experience of culture such as patterns of employment opportunity, alternative forms of income and residential concentration. The text, particularly, delves into the adaptation strategies of the rural peasantry and the way they constructed their resources in the face of social and economic structures that condemned their strategies to failure.

#### *5.1.2.2.5 Promotion of a feminist perspective*

The text demonstrates a leaning towards a feminist perspective by including women's experiences as an integral part of the historical working class experience. This text addresses gender issues while dealing with women's history as migrant labourers from two feminist approaches: liberal feminism and radical feminism. To begin with, the text complies with the liberal feminist approach by projecting white women not as possessing weak and emotional dispositions but as self-reliant, strong and autonomous (page 126). In similar vein, rural women are depicted as victims of apartheid laws who eventually triumph over their circumstances by attaining financial independence. For instance, the text details on pages 125-126 how black women earned their livelihood by illegal liquor brewing and by seeking employment in the clothing factories and local laundries. Following the black feminist perspective, the text portrays how black women took up legal as well as illegal professions in the informal sector such as sewing clothes and selling beer as permanent ways of earning money in order to save themselves from unemployment and exploitation (pages 124 and 125). These visual representations promote liberal feminism by depicting both African and white women's struggle for financial security. The descriptions break the stereotyped image of women, showing instead assertive women who can survive and transcend their harsh circumstance by their sheer resilience and resourcefulness. The text also represents black women as toiling alongside the men, in the urban areas in order to maintain the family, not as sheltered or protected weaklings, oblivious of the desperate struggle for existence unfolding outside the home.

Apart from detailing black women's hardships, the text also discusses the job situation of

Afrikaner women from a radical feminist perspective. For example, on page 126 it stresses that a large number of Afrikaner women were being forced into factory employment, as result of increased Afrikaner impoverishment in the 1920s, to work often under highly exploitative conditions. In order to illustrate the impact of poor wages on the living conditions of the Afrikaner girls in the cities the text uses an extract from the novel *Klerewerkers* by Hester Cornelius. The extract relates the story of four Afrikaner girls who were working in a garment factory for very low wages. All they could afford was a small room to live in and inadequate food. Further, the text promotes radical feminism by stressing that the development of the labour force in South Africa was stratified by gender roles as Afrikaner women earned a smaller salary than their male counterparts since it is assumed that they are supported by male earnings. Both the text and the illustration utilised by the text are critical of the patriarchal ideology which promotes gender inequality by expecting women to occupy a subordinate place in society. It recognises the demoralising treatment women have received in monetary terms in the factories. It also shows that the environment in the factories does not support the participation of women in the production process on equal terms with men.

To sum up, the text recognises the distinctiveness of women. The text indicates that gainful employment had widened women's horizons and liberated them from the stifling confines of the home. They experienced a new sense of self-presence in terms of independence and empowerment. The text further demonstrates how women from all ethnic groups had achieved some power and increased autonomy in different spheres of their lives despite their significantly disadvantaged position in the society. The text studies racism beyond the black-white phenomenon by adding the dimension of gender. It shows that apart from the black male labouring class racism also shaped the life and means of sustenance of other black social groups such as women.

### *5.1.2.3 Radical multicultural approach*

#### *5.1.2.3.1 Positive portrayal of labour revolts against racial discrimination*

One of the primary tenets of radical multiculturalism is the resistance to oppression and empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Radical multiculturalism demands that disadvantaged people should revolt against specific forms of inequality and oppression promoted by racist white domination (Section 3.1.3.3). The text has devoted one whole section to discussing major uprisings conducted by black and Indian working classes against the oppressive white government. The text vividly represents the black working class's bitter struggle and its solidarity against state oppression in the form of revolt against hazardous working conditions and inadequate payment for their work, accompanied by unreasonable taxes that were imposed on them from time to time by the apartheid regime. For instance, page 145 details the famous mine workers' strike that took place in 1946 on the Witwatersrand, one of the biggest strikes ever in South Africa. About 76,000 workers participated in it; it lasted for a week. The miners' agenda included the repeal of War Measure 145, family housing and the right to have a workers' organisation. The text includes a photograph depicting a large number of mine workers marching in the street while armed police guards are standing on the side of the road to control any disruption that may be caused by the marching workers.

In this context multiculturalism becomes a decolonising discourse, as the text describes the struggle of people of colour for self-determination in a South African industrial setting. The black labour revolt is treated, in this text, as an expression of resistance to white supremacy. The aim here is not to attain black supremacy but pluralism without hierarchy. This instance of labour revolt as detailed in the text clearly reveals radical multiculturalism where black people see themselves as entitled to full membership of South African society and hence struggle against the dehumanising treatment given to them at the work place. It was also a revolt against the disempowerment of black people by means of oppressive legislation. The black labour movement, in the text, is not treated as a general vehicle for basic human rights but as a struggle for basic political rights by subjugated ethnic groups in a country long subjected to single ethnic group dominance.

Hence the black labour revolt symbolises a struggle against cultural and economic domination where the rights of subordinate cultures are devalued and voices are silenced by violent means. The text, moreover, follows the critical multicultural perspective by centring on the atrocities committed on black labourers by the Nationalist government rather than following the eurocentric approach where the voices of marginalised groups remain mute and the emphasis is laid on what white people thought of the labour revolt and how they achieved the task of repressing these revolts.

#### *5.1.2.3.2 Promotion of afrocentric approach*

Afrocentricity is sustained, in this text, by depicting indignation at the widespread practice among the Boers of exchanging and kidnapping Swazi children and keeping them as unpaid servants until the age of twenty-five. It depicts frontier farmers as the exploiters and the black population as the victims of economic and racial oppression. The frontier farmers' attitudes and conduct towards blacks were characterised by differentiation, servitude, territorial separation and rough treatment. The text details how in Boer republics, in the late 1830s, black children were captured and placed in the care of white persons at an early age. They were a welcome addition to the Boer households performing a variety of activities. They were used as herdsmen, diggers of irrigation canals and constructors of dams and kraal walls (pages 30 and 31). The illustrations also tend to follow an afrocentric approach by including a photograph on page 30 that portrays a well-fed child slave helping his master to light a cigar. It shows that rich Boer households were the chief beneficiaries of the "inboekseling" system. There is also a picture story narrating the story of a child who was forcibly taken away from his family and made an inboekseling. The captions further reveal that the inboekseling system compelled black children to work for trekkers in return for food, clothing and shelter (Cameron, 1986). The captions also reveal that Boer commandos often conducted raids and captured thousands of children by killing their parents. The text implies that to a great extent this system was a refined form of slavery; the black children were required to work until the age of twenty-five and they could not be sold. Thus through the use of story and graphic representation learners would be encouraged to explore their own reactions to the long history of black slavery in South Africa. In this respect, *All that*

*Glitters* does indeed break new ground in that it uncovers and holds up for critical scrutiny some of the more shameful episodes of South Africa's history.

While following the afrocentric as well as critical multicultural approaches the text tends to show that Boers who form the white dominant class were able to enslave black people owing to their superior political and economic position. They also received support from the state which was committed to protecting white privileges. These white privileges could only be protected at the expense of black people who were forced to contribute to white people's prosperity. Critical multiculturalism is evident in the dimension of child labour which is very different from a Marxist connotation of child labour where the guardians of the children by their free will sign a contract with the employer who assigns their wards mutually agreed tasks for fixed periods of time. In this context, in addition to adding the cultural element, the text shows that children were forced to labour against their will. Hence the child enslavement was not the feature of a capitalist society but of a society where certain cultural group could exploit other racial groups on the basis of their cultural dominance. The concepts of slavery and child labour are interrelated with racial politics.

The text also follows the black perspective by emphasising black labour revolts and giving peripheral treatment to the white labour activities. For instance, the text has devoted 9 pages (pages 138-147) to discussing black labour revolts while white labour activities are accommodated in two pages (pages 136-137). A major section of the text is devoted to black migrants and the pathos of black migrants' socio-economic situation is strongly evoked. There is scant description of poor whites who found themselves in similar situations as the text very briefly describes in two pages the social and economic problems of poor whites. Further, the text also gives a clear indication that white racial attitudes had helped in improving the jobs and living condition of poor whites (page 121).

By including the experiences of previously marginalized people and creating spaces for multiple voices, the text develops a new conceptualisation of South African history where the contradictions and multiplicity of experiences are honestly acknowledged. However,

this focus often leads to prejudiced representation as it leads to the silencing of experiences which seemed to emerge from ruling class groups. Multiculturalism is about rethinking South African history but should perhaps lead to more than acknowledging the history of oppressed and formerly silent groups: the contribution and experiences of so-called dominant cultural groups need also to be included.

The text also adopts an afrocentric approach as it is concerned with African people being the subjects of historical and social experiences rather than objects in the margins of European experience. It views diverse phenomena from the perspective of Africans as central rather than peripheral. By relating the labour history while considering the historical situatedness of a particular cultural group the text has undermined the legitimate contribution of the white labour force.

The text further subscribes to an afrocentric approach by primarily concentrating on the pathetic conditions of black labourers. They are presented as victims of poverty and unscrupulous government policies. The whole tenor of the presentation of this book is such as to show black natives as victims of Afrikaner farmers who were treated as oppressors. For instance, the text details on page 130 the story of the exploitation of a black tenant family on an Afrikaner farm.

The text also incorporates critical multiculturalism by incorporating personal experiences to show how racism in South Africa has manifested itself in diverse forms of oppression including subjugation, oppression and disempowerment. The text further offers a classical representation of the colonial ideology prevalent in South Africa which affirmed that all social and economic benefits should be associated with a white skin. The text, in this instance, has also followed an afrocentric approach by not merely relating the dehumanising life experiences of black people but has also identifying with them. It fails to explore other socio-economic interaction between white and black social groups other than of oppressor and oppressed.

### 5.1.3 Findings and discussion

The critical multicultural approach undisputedly enjoys prominent status in the text. The text critiques the emerging racially segregated capitalist society in the early twentieth century from the perspective of an oppressed black population. The text strongly identifies with the under-represented, oppressed and marginalised (see sections 5.1.2.2.2 and 5.1.2.2.3); also, it unwraps various dimensions of the history of black communities of South African in several ways. First, the text details how legal land alienation had reduced self-supporting, independent farmers to labour tenants on the capitalist farms. In extreme cases, they were also forced to migrate to the mines and cities in search of work as wage labourers (section 5.1.2.2.2).

Second, it focuses on the impact of racial segregationist policies on the living conditions, employment opportunities and socio-economic position of black people (sections 5.1.2.2.2 and 5.1.2.2.4). Third, the text shows how state power produced real limits to the capacity of subordinate groups to struggle against oppression (5.1.2.2.2). Finally, it supports the radical and liberal feminist approaches by exploring the complexities of black women's lives as a part of a working class which was empowered and not as a victims of a patriarchal social order (section 5.1.2.2.5). Finally the text promotes liberal and radical feminist perspectives by depicting how both rural African and Afrikaner women grew autonomous and self-sufficient by engaging in paid professions in the cities (section 5.1.2.2.5).

Radical multiculturalism is another approach that the text has largely subscribed to as it has not only promoted a radical multicultural approach but also the afrocentric approach which is generally considered to be a part of radical multiculturalism. The text endorses a radical multicultural approach by manifesting how feelings of racial injustice arose in the black working class not only because of the economic opportunities unfairly withheld by legal enactment but also because of the indignities imposed on racial grounds and how this led to the development of a trade union consciousness (section 5.1.2.3). Further, it complies with an afrocentric approach by describing blacks as the victims of white oppression both in urban and rural areas and by showing how white attained positions of

privilege by implementing legislation that transferred the economic resources such as land and power into their hands (section 5.1.2.2.3).

Liberal multiculturalism receives peripheral treatment in the text. The text has only included four aspects of liberal multiculturalism. The text has incorporated the global perspective by detailing working class experiences from a global approach by incorporating descriptions that stress the life circumstances of poor white people in Britain in the urban areas who became victim of the process of industrialisation which favoured only the rich white class (sections 5.1.2.1.1). The liberal multicultural approach also finds expression in the text through construing Afrikaners as an impoverished, ignorant, pliable and unskilled labouring class (section 5.12.1.3), by commending the achievements of pre-colonial South Africa, (section 5.1.2.1.1) and by emphasising the development of multicultural skills among students through text-based activities (section 5.1.2.1.5) Finally, it subscribes to liberal multiculturalism by seeing the Indian minority group not as added on to the pre-existing nucleus of communities but rather as an active participant at the core of the conflictual history (section 5.1.2.1.4).

To sum up, the text has elements of all major multicultural approaches. It supports a critical multicultural approach by concentrating on the predicament of black people emanating from specific institutional practices that produced specific forms of inequality and oppression. Radical multiculturalism is depicted in the positive portrayal of black disadvantaged people and finally, a liberal multicultural approach is revealed in the portrayal of small sections of the white population as victims of industrial development in South Africa, along with blacks.

## **5.2 Content analysis of text -content and visuals in *Living Geography***

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

This book is a part of the series *Living Geography*, a series designed according to its title, to give insight into living in the world as we approach the 21st century. This new *Living*

*Geography* series emphasises environmental education and focuses on skills and relevant issues in line with the Interim Core Curriculum (1997). Through examples and case studies, students learn about different cultures, regions and communities in South Africa and other parts of the world. This particular text- *Living Geography* Standard 7/Grade 9 - explores how both geographical and socio-political forces affect the way people live. The key theme of this text is that geographical processes influence human existence and are influenced by humanity. Throughout the text the main aim has been to explore how people affect their environment both in South Africa and other parts of the world.

### 5.2.2 An exploratory study of multicultural aspects in text content

In this study content analysis has been applied to explore to what extent the author has incorporated multicultural perspectives in the text content and visual representations (see section 3.3.4).

#### 5.2.2.1 *Incorporation of liberal multiculturalism in text content and visuals*

##### 5.2.2.1.1 *Emphasis on environmental concerns in the global context*

The text, though dominated by South African geographical features, also combines the study of many other areas in the world providing a global perspective. For example, the subject of human destruction caused by natural disasters in the text is introduced with international examples such as the eruption of the volcano on Mount St Helens in the USA on May 1980 (page 42). It also compiles a wide range of case studies on diverse environmental issues such as the earthquake horror at Kobe in Japan (page 40) and the refugee problem in Bosnia (page 139). It further emphasises world-scale management issues such as nuclear disasters, oil spilling and the refugee problem. For instance, one whole unit on page 155 is devoted to the impact of the Gulf War in the Middle East on the marine life. There are also some excellent items on pages 142, 148, 151 153 and 164 on the widespread destruction caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the refugee problem in Mozambique and wild- life destruction owing to the oil spill in Alaska. Finally, on the national level the text also mentions a wide range of environmental catastrophes to facilitate a better perception of the human devastation caused by the

natural disasters such as tropical cyclones in Northern KwaZulu Natal and widespread drought in South Africa.

These global examples help students in improving the understanding of global environmental problems such as nuclear disasters which they would not have attained if the geographical knowledge had been confined to the national issues only. Further, other geographical problems that South Africa is currently facing such as the refugee problem and wild life destruction are better understood when explained by taking examples from other countries rather than the national ones. Here the text also promotes global perspective by adopting a state-centric rather than region-centric approach while exploring the concept of natural disasters. Moreover, it has not only taken examples from the developing countries but also from the developed countries showing that developed countries like Japan and Italy with all their physical and material resources and technical capabilities also become victims of the natural disasters. The text also holds potential to be used in any multicultural school in South Africa as it contains material for geographical case studies ranging from coniferous forests in Canada (page 185), to flood damage in Bangladesh (page 142), to the tropical rainforest of Malaysia and Brazil (page 177). This approach gives students a global picture of climatic regions.

#### *5.2.2.1.2 Recognition of immigrants socio- economic experiences*

Moreover, the text has also adopted an international perspective while relating issues of habitation of refugees from neighbouring countries. The text includes a photograph on page 144 showing how refugees from Mozambique are forced to live in areas which are exposed to flooding. It depicts Alexandria, a black township in Johannesburg, situated at the Jukskei River, which suffers serious flooding. This area as depicted in the photograph seems to be an inhospitable part of the city, with refugees living in shacks. The area would appear to lack adequate safeguards such as proper storm water drains, as the floodwater is shown encroaching on the township. The text indicates that many refugee families whose shacks were located along the river were left homeless, in spite of the fact that the Sandton fire department had stationed its workers in the area for an emergency rescue operation.

The text by this description promotes liberal multiculturalism as it helps students to have a sympathetic attitude towards other people and communities, appreciate other people's problems and concerns, and develop an understanding of how environmental hazards affect poor people only. It also promotes critical multiculturalism by showing that black people out of poverty and lack of employment opportunities in their own countries are forced to migrate to other advanced neighbouring countries (such as South Africa) where they experience economic inequality in terms of standards of living and living conditions similar to their black South African counterparts.

#### *5.2.2.1.3 Promotion of skills*

The text follows the liberal multicultural approach by emphasising activities which tend to promote among students environmental awareness as well as direct them to develop a sense of responsibility towards surrounding environment. The writers, in the foreword, claim that the book incorporates a number of skills which are not only important for geography lessons in school, but are also important in helping students to deal with complicated life situations when they leave school. For instance, the book provides instructions for an environmental project along the lines of the school river-watcher project undertaken by boys from the Umhaltazana club to repair the damage that has been caused to catchment areas. In my view, an exercise like this develops an awareness among students about how human activities have brought about environmental degradation in their surrounding areas. This awareness, in turn, compels students to search for viable solutions to minimise environmental degradation. It helps students to become active citizens as such projects help them to take the responsibility of environmental enhancement in their later life.

Moreover, the text also includes learning activities based on diverse case studies. In one of the case studies relating to the pathetic tale of a Bosnian refugee girl on page 169 the learners are asked to note down their reaction while putting themselves in her position. The text, further, directs students to write a letter to a refugee child expressing their sympathy and concern about her living conditions as a refugee. First, this learning

activity promotes a multicultural perspective as it makes students conscious of the traumatic life experiences of the refugee population and secondly, it teaches students to empathise with the suffering of other people and develop a compassionate attitude towards them.

#### *5.2.2.1.4 Inter-cultural contacts*

The author has clearly followed a liberal multicultural approach by presenting a picture of the changed nature of societal patterns in post-apartheid South Africa where children from diverse ethnic groups share common concerns, enjoy the same status and work as a team. The sketches depict a close and friendly acquaintance among students. There are signs of a healthy respect and compassion for each other. Second, the contribution of black students is recognised and admired by white children. For instance, in one of the drawings on page 12, an African boy is depicted explaining to one of the members of the group the cardinal points on a compass. There is no indication either from the gestures or from the dialogues included in the sketches that any of the group members maintain any kind of prejudiced view of any other member of the group. Indeed, students are depicted as helping each other in order to reach their goal.

This example promotes liberal multiculturalism by emphasising a co-operative rather than individualistic and competitive approach to learning. It also promotes critical multiculturalism by breaking the Eurocentric myth that black students are intellectually deficient and less academically inclined as compared to white students.

Further, the sketches reflect the changed complexion of the educational system in post-apartheid South Africa, which affirms diversity by promoting the ideas of equal education for students from various ethnic origins. Following the liberal multicultural line, the sketches indicate that education includes not only academic learning but also activities and projects outside the school. They help students to learn to live in a complex and pluralist society such as South Africa. For instance, the text incorporates three sketches on pages 9, 12, and 18 showing five curious and happy children (two girls and three boys) from diverse ethnic groups undertaking the project of climbing Table

Mountain together. During the journey, they often lose their way and at such moments they draw on the group's capacities to ensure that they are on the right track.

#### *5.2.2.1.5 Positive achievements of developing countries*

The text conforms to a liberal multicultural approach by emphasising the positive achievements of developing countries such as South Africa. The text includes a sketch on page 57 and two photographs on page 140 featuring some simple, practical and inexpensive measures undertaken by farmers in South Africa to combat environmental degeneration, and to save people from the consequences of natural disasters such as droughts by introducing specific kinds of crops which can withstand drought conditions. For instance, one sketch on page 57 depicts school children planting trees along the riverbanks and constructing tyre "blankets" to hold back the banks of the river. These measures are being taken to prevent further damage and to repair some of the damage caused to the catchment areas. Another diagram on page 60 depicts a technique used to prevent soil erosion on Durban's beaches. Here the dredgers dig up sand from the harbour and take it to large pumping stations where it is mixed with water and then pumped on to the beaches.

Finally, there is a photograph on page 99 depicting a betterment village. This village system was developed to preserve the environment. People are asked to grow trees in woodlots to save natural trees near the village. Only few people are allowed to keep cattle as too many cattle cause soil erosion. In addition, a photograph on page 140 shows how people in the contemporary era are employing pre-colonial agricultural practices such as the cultivation of sorghum in the drier regions instead of maize as it requires less rain. It is suggested that the cultivation of sorghum can help to prevent people from starving in the drier areas in South Africa.

By describing the positive achievements of developing countries in the field of science and technology the text indicates that developing countries are no longer only dependent on the developed world in order to resolve their problems. On the contrary, they are making efforts to be self-reliant. Further, it also shows that in the contemporary era

developing countries are becoming environmentally conscious and developing indigenous ways and means to combat environmental degeneration. Further, this description subverts the Eurocentric view of the developing countries as poor, economically underdeveloped and lacking scientific technology to sustain themselves economically and environmentally.

#### *5.2.2.2 Adaptation of a critical multicultural approach*

The text indicates a strong leaning towards critical multiculturalism by studying the impact of the apartheid laws on black disadvantaged people. It emphasises that the primary aim of the Nationalist government had been to promote the racial oppression and subjugation of the black population. Many black people in South Africa had to come to terms with stark realities of powerlessness, unemployment, and the housing problem and basic civic services in their everyday life. The text has also subscribed to a critical multicultural approach by depicting the impact of apartheid policies on the black disadvantaged population in terms of housing. Blacks were forcibly removed from their original dwelling to areas which were not only economically disadvantageous but also suffering from environmentally hazardous conditions.

##### *5.2.2.2.1 Authentic presentation of living conditions and socio-economic problems of urban black poor*

The book, in the first instance, adopts a critical multicultural orientation by detailing on pages 86-88 the role of apartheid policies, specifically, in creating a social system founded upon the 'setting apart' in space of different race groups. In general, it examines the disadvantaged position of blacks concerning housing provisions. To some extent, it follows the humanist approach by taking a particular interest in the everyday life experiences of black people both within the urban and rural environment. For instance, on page 115, the text refers to the problems of black urban people who have to travel long distances in order to reach their work places as a result of being forced to live in townships which were outside from the city centre. Similarly, on page 86 the text discusses how black people were forced to shift from areas which had housing facilities, churches, schools, and water pumps to areas which lack even basic facilities. In these

reallocated areas the land was infertile and these areas lacked basic facilities such as water and housing as people have to live in shacks.

This text helps students to acknowledge the existence of class privileges in the apartheid era and recognise how they perpetuated social inequalities as they made oppressed groups invisible by excluding them from the national life and denied them social cultural and economic benefits which whites enjoyed as a result of their privileged position. The state protected the hegemony of the dominant groups by physically eliminating black people by mass expulsion and by subjecting them to physical segregation, racial discrimination through arbitrary regulations

Apart from the problem of housing the urban blacks who were residing in informal settlements had to face the problem of periodic demolition of their shacks as it was assumed that they produced unhygienic conditions. For example, on page 132 the text relates the incident of the demolition of shacks at Shantytown which left hundreds of squatters homeless. This demolition was conducted after a complaint from the local white residents that the shacks were creating unhealthy conditions which made their children sick. The text on the adjacent page also includes a photograph depicting the council workers demolishing shacks while black people standing nearby watching helplessly their houses being bulldozed by these workers

The text, through this instance, studies specific forms of cultural devaluation injustices suffered by the black people. Some of them include political /legal injustices (denial of legal rights and equal protection) social injustices (exclusion and marginalisation) and psychological injustices (harassment, violence and discrimination). It also shows how the state helped the whites in monopolizing the resources but also protecting them as the socially entrenched power elite. The text through this example studies the concept of politicising of culture, the ideal of multiple cultural spaces all protected by the state from invasion by each other. This example also shows that the possession of a cultural identity empowers certain groups and not others. The white culture, in this example, is represented as a zone of control, of force and of exclusiveness.

The text also relates the oppression of black people in terms of unemployment and under employment in cities. The text discusses on page 112 the impact of unemployment in the urban areas on the black migrants. Many black South Africans who migrated to the towns had few job choices. They were primarily employed in the informal sectors. These jobs provided them with low or modest incomes and were irregular in nature. According to the text in 1993 about 30 % of the working class in South Africa were employed in the informal sector. Of the 30% employed in the informal sector 90% were Africans, and 80% earned less than R 650 per month.

The text shows that economic injustices are directly connected to the economic structures such as the racial division of labour which relegates poor blacks to disadvantageous position by forcing them either to take up menial jobs or get themselves employed in the informal sectors. Working in the informal sector has its own disadvantages as there was no regular income and no security. However it is essential to point out here that the illustration included in the text gives an impression that black people have adopted the informal sector as an alternative avenue to earn income in the face of massive unemployment. Hence their involvement in informal activities have led to their empowerment. The illustrations do not depict any feeling of job insecurity or disenchantment with their current jobs; on the contrary, workers depicted appear happy and fulfilled. In this way the writers create an opportunity to promote entrepreneurship and show black South Africans in a positive light, both in terms of taking the initiative to create employment and participating in the national economy.

#### *5.2.2.2.2 Racial discrimination*

The authors adopt a critical multicultural approach when discussing the miserable living conditions of the black population in the rural and urban areas. They show how the imposition of the policy of apartheid - strict racial segregation by law in urban and rural areas – have led to the enhancement of whites' social control through the manipulation of space. By way of illustration, a map on page 81 representing the residential ethnic distribution in Cape Town, depicts that the area beside the central business district is

reserved for whites' residential purposes only, while other groups such as blacks, coloureds and Indians are situated furthest from the city centre. The white location at the centre of the city can be assumed to possess the best of the civic amenities and the most effective means of communication and transport.

The text addresses the phenomenon of spatial segregation from a critical multicultural perspective by describing urban spatial planning as a device applied by the apartheid regime to manifest white dominance more strongly in the fabric of the cities. The general resultant pattern is one of white occupation of central areas and of those geographical sectors with important facilities, with non-whites distanced at the city's periphery (Clarke & Ley, 1984). It also points out that black groups are oppressed in the façade of maintaining their ethnic identity as they as they were forcefully excluded from the white society and were forced to live in areas allocated to them against their will. This segregation was also inherently unequal as each cultural group given separate facilities. Thus this racist classification proved disadvantageous to blacks.

#### *5.2.2.2.3 Indifferent attitude of government towards disadvantaged groups*

The text promotes critical multiculturalism by emphasising that in the apartheid era people's access to physical resources was circumscribed by their ethnic identities. On pages 96 and 97 the text presents the example of Pheneas Khoza's settlement to show that the areas given to the black people were inadequate for living purposes in one form or another. For example, there is a table on page 97 which illustrates three different kinds of areas given to a black family for housing purposes. All these areas have certain advantages and disadvantages. The first area lacks water resources within an easy reach. The second area has hard soil which is difficult to plough and the third area gets very cold at night and is also far away from the town. Hence all these areas are unsuitable for habitation. The black family, however, selected the first area as it has only one disadvantage but has other facilities such as proximity to transport, fertile soil and pleasant climatic conditions.

This example highlights two major aspects of critical multiculturalism. First, it connects the issue of area allocation to racial discrimination where black people were given areas which were not self sufficient while reserving the productive areas for white people. The text further conforms to critical multiculturalism by giving a glimpse of the socio-economic reality of black people in the rural settlements. For instance, Phineas Khoza's family is forced to select an area which lacks water at close proximity. It also shows that non-white cultures in South Africa share a history of blatant discrimination; they suffered social and material subordination in terms of housing and are forced to live in oppressive conditions. The Nationalist government created structures that affirmed the interests and concerns of the white dominant class who were controlling the material and symbolic wealth in South African society.

In addition to spatial segregation, the text is also very critical of the policy of residential segregation during the apartheid era. The systematic implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950 had a profound impact on South African housing. The most striking geographical feature of the Group Areas Act was that it provided for residential segregation and the zoning of towns for each of the racial groups present. This provision restricted the choice of black and Indian people to live where they liked in the cities. The impact of the Act was far more telling on Black people than on Indians. The implementation of this Act also forced thousands of blacks to leave their houses and to settle in relocated sites which were at a considerable distance from the city centre. These allocated sites were quite inappropriate for black households in terms of poor location, poor local job prospects and inadequate infrastructure and services. For instance, by evoking the everyday life of a worker in Johannesburg, a photograph on page 85 displays how relocation meant a significant increase in transport costs and time spent commuting to and from the work place, with resultant disruption in family ties. In the text a worker relates how he spends a quarter of his salary on transport and spends three hours reaching his work-place. He sees his family in daylight only on Sundays. In short the body text in conjunction with the visuals demonstrate how the location of the housing environment adversely affected all aspects of black people's lives.

The text also highlights the policy of racial discrimination adopted by the Nationalist government towards the black population by making no provision for basic infrastructure and services to the black urban settlements. For instance, the text features a photograph on page 131 showing housing developments in informal settlements in the cities. It depicts that the residential situation of a major section of the black population in Johannesburg is typified by structures of simple and usually low quality construction; there is a cluster of shacks built up in a row in this settlement. They are made of wood and corrugated iron, and lack basic facilities such as electricity and water.

The text has, through these examples, touched on major concept of critical multiculturalism. It stresses that the discrimination in housing and other economic benefits to oppressed groups stems from the cultural devaluation of these groups. As a result of cultural devaluation black people suffered from racial discrimination and unjust distribution of economic resources. They were not treated as equal human beings and their cultural identity was not positively recognised within the larger social sphere. Hence what was required was not the redistribution of resources but recognition of their cultural distinctiveness. It also shows how the monopolisation of wealth in the hands of a minority of people who in South African context happen to be white has deprived many black people of healthy quality of life.

The text also shows that the implementation of the Group Areas Act had not merely affected disadvantaged groups socially and economically but also had a deep psychological effect, as little contact was permitted between different groups. For instance, the text takes an example of an Indian family (page 90) that was removed from Pageview to Lenasia, an area 35 km away from Johannesburg as a result of this Act. The collection of sketches on page 91 vividly portrays the changes in the lifestyle of Indians who were forced to leave their original place of residence in response to government policy of residential segregation. The Indians in the illustrations are relating the problems that they face in the area allocated to them by the government. They have three main grievances: first, in the earlier settlement they were leading a communal life where people shared each other's sorrows. In this place they have lost contact with people of

other ethnic groups who had been their neighbours in Pageview. Second, the place is far from the nearest town and there are certain areas in this settlement which lack housing facilities. However, two members of this family are presented in the illustrations as satisfied with the place as they have got their own house and there are some good areas for residential purposes in this place as this family has a kitchen garden attached to their house where the elderly woman member in the family grows vegetable.

The text promotes three major aspects of critical multiculturalism through this case study. The first aspect is that the Indian family is subjected to physical segregation against their will and thus denied the political right of freedom of choice. Further, it criticises the Nationalist government policies that led to the disintegration of a multicultural society characterised by the free intermixing of people from various races and accommodation of cultural differences. In turn, they tried to establish culturally distinct and geographically concentrated societal cultures that hindered any possibility of cross-cultural contacts. Finally, the text and the illustrations also indicate that the National party, while dismantling the concept of multicultural citizenship where people identify with the larger community with whom they cohabit, have tried to promote the concept of differentiated citizenship which meant a each cultural group shall maintain distinct identity and group life.

#### *5.2.2.2.4 Recognition of black populations' deteriorating living conditions in separate homelands*

Apart from being critical of the apartheid laws that led to the sub-standard living conditions of the people in urban areas, the text, following the critical multicultural approach, also provides a detailed description of the impact of the apartheid laws in the 1950s on the rural population in the homelands. They were forced to live in areas where they had to cope with long distances and sub-standard living conditions and civic facilities. Some 13 million people were resident in these areas which covered 13.6 percent of South Africa (page 78). The homeland administration provided even lower standards of services in sectors such as education, health, pensions and infrastructure than those provided by the government to Africans living in non-homeland areas. The

commuting distances from the homelands to jobs in white areas were in many cases extensive (page 100 and 104). In the allocated homelands people were usually given a shack, a pit toilet and a small piece of land to cultivate. They were called the closer settlement (page 84). On page 86 the text takes the example of the problems faced by the black people who were forcefully removed from Mogopa to Pachsdraai in 1984. In this settlement people lived in shacks. They had no running water, no jobs and no fields to plough. Added to these problems was the problem of transportation. The settlement was situated far way from the nearest town.

It also shows how subordination of native blacks as cultural entities led to the economic impoverishment and their consequential dependence on the government for basic facilities. The use of cultural criteria for determining access to social services and other entitlements to different populations groups has culminated in the impoverishment of black people. They were confined to native reserves where they were unemployed and unable to scratch a living for themselves alienated from the national life. The land and resources were seized from the blacks in the name of developing separate homeland for them to maintain their ethnic identity.

It also shows how discriminatory government legislation incurred negativity, rancour and hostility among black people. Blacks were considered as inferior people who had no rights and privileges apart from those which the whites chose to grant them. They were considered unfit to associate with whites hence they were forcefully removed from the white areas. Further, it emphasises that racial segregation existed in South Africa in the form of political inequality, social and economic disparity and racial oppression. Through these means it is ensured that the black community had minimal access to the resources so that domination could be maintained.

#### *5.2.2.2.5 Promotion of feminist perspective*

The text subscribes to the liberal feminist perspective in addressing women's concerns through the case study of an African woman, Tsakani, who constitutes a part of unemployed black people in urban areas. They generally earn their living by being

employed in informal sectors. The text and the drawing on page 113 relate the personal experiences of a Tsakani who also happens to be a single parent. She earns her living by selling vetkoek every day at different places. She is the sole earning member in a family of 6 people.

Through this example the text promotes all the selected feminist approaches. First, it subscribes to liberal multiculturalism by reflecting on the changing status of women from a caretaker of the family to an income generating member. The text further promotes liberal feminism by portraying her as a self-reliant, resourceful, hardworking, economically active, independent and enterprising woman who is carrying the burden of maintaining her four small children on her meagre earnings. The text celebrates the sense of independence in a semi-literate woman who enjoys her work and does not feel dependent on anyone for a job.

Finally, it follows critical multiculturalism by showing that women have to enter the labour forces not out of choice but because there is no one to support them. In most cases the economic opportunities presented to these unskilled women is to work either in domestic service or to earn irregular income through informal activities making use of traditional skills such as running a food stall. These activities only help them to earn enough to satisfy the basic needs of the family. Furthermore, these jobs lack economic security as they lack organisational back up to support the employee in the case of emergency. Finally, the text promotes radical feminism by showing a single woman's struggle to sustain herself and her family by working from early morning to late at night.

Another drawing and a map on page 156 illustrate how a peasant woman has managed to escape from Mpai in Mozambique to Hlupherkom in South Africa along with her two-year-old son after walking for three days continuously. The body text further indicates how courageously she underwent immense problems during her journey to South Africa; for example, once she had to save herself from being killed by a charging elephant.

The text promotes liberal multiculturalism in depicting the peasant women as a

resourceful and courageous person who managed to defend herself against state aggression by escaping from the country under adverse circumstances. This instance presents a counter to prevalent stereotypes, which show women as passive and vulnerable victims of persecution. Further, following critical multiculturalism, this incident also shows how poor people become victims of state oppression as there is no external protection and further the state machinery enables the dominant group to oppress and exploit other groups. It also shows some of the characteristic features of the authoritarian rule in Mozambique evident in a lack of tolerance, lack of equality, denial of political rights to oppressed groups and persecution of subjugated social groups including women.

Feminist ideologies are also promoted by visuals in the text. The visuals, taking a school situation, promote a liberal feminist perspective by challenging that form of sexual discrimination in which the female students receive a persistent message that they are inferior. There is a complete absence of sexual stereotypes which assign outdoor activities to male students and stress that female students should remain indoors and learn skills that will help them to perform traditionally prescribed roles. In fact, in three sketches on page 12, female students are depicted as playing an effective role in helping other members of the group to find their way up Table Mountain. They display proficiency in using various geographical instruments, such as compasses, when required.

#### *5.2.2.3 Incorporation of radical multicultural approach*

The text has not subscribed to the radical multicultural approach as it has not incorporated any instance where the disadvantaged ethnic groups have raised their voice against racial oppression. However it has incorporated afrocentrism. It reflects two basic features of afrocentrism: first, the whole text is replete with instances that relate to many socio-economic problems which black people had to face in the apartheid era as a subjugated group; second, it has in just 4 pages (pages 101, 103, 122-123,) attempted to show that they enjoyed living in the residential areas in the city which offered all kinds of facilities and even in rural areas could maintain a lavish lifestyle (p101).

#### *5.2.2.3.1 Promotion of afrocentric approach*

The text, following an afrocentric approach, to a great extent favours a black perspective. A large section of the book is devoted to explaining the living conditions and economic struggle of black people in rural and urban areas. First, on page 101 it postulates a negative view of white society. It describes whites as the chief beneficiaries of the apartheid system. Even in the rural areas whites enjoy an affluent life style: their farms are highly mechanised and their children enjoy the best schooling in the nearby towns. Their farms are well connected to the nearby towns by an effective transport system. In addition, they maintain their own personal transport, such as cars, so that they do not have to rely on public transport to cover long distances. The text goes even to the extent of describing how financial institutions such as banks helped white farmers with emergency funding in case of poor rainfall. This facility, according to the text, was however not available to black farmers. These instances tend to provide a glimpse of the affluent lifestyle of a small segment of white people. The text ignores a large section of white people who were struggling for housing and jobs like any other black person.

The text further complies with an afrocentric approach by showing through illustrations the deep resentment of black people against the apartheid laws. For instance, in a sketch on page 82 an old black farmer is complaining of how his house was destroyed by the government authorities and he was forcibly removed to an infertile area. Further, it is indicated that this areas was far away from town and lack civic facilities. A second graphic on page 87 relates the story of an old woman who had to live on money remitted by her sons as her land has been taken away by the government. Another speech bubble in the same sketch states that apartheid laws have taken away the land that was the means of livelihood for black people. As a consequence they had no employment and had no option but to live in shacks in poverty. The third speech bubble in the sketch indicates the psychological trauma that the old woman has undergone because of forced removal, as she has had to break her ancestral ties and adjust to new circumstances.

This example, subscribing to critical multiculturalism, presents a reality of the apartheid era where black people are treated as inferiors and forced to live in overcrowded

conditions. They are further discriminated against in the world of housing, and social benefits. On the other hand, white society is economically prosperous and self-sustaining as the apartheid policies primarily aimed at promoting the economic interests of the white people. This text shows that race forms the basis for the political and economic differentiation where the white racial identity serves as the basis for radicalised privileges as white racial identity provides the basis for allocating societal benefits.

The text in this example also follows the Eurocentric approach by portraying blacks as helpless creatures, made to suffer humiliation, defeat and oppression. For example, the graphic depicts the resentment of black people of their forced removal from their homes. However, it also evokes their helplessness to revolt against white power and their resignation to a difficult and miserable lifestyle.

In representing white people in an unfavourable light by reinforcing a stereotypical notion of the lifestyle of white people the text reveals an afrocentric orientation. Whites are depicted as the affluent section of South African society and hence enjoy all possible amenities. No attempt has been made to show them as ordinary human beings confronting economic and social hardships in their daily life.

Finally, the text has adopted an afrocentric approach in terms of other ethnic groups: coloureds and Indians have also received peripheral treatment. For instance, the text studies the effect of apartheid legislation on the social life and living conditions of the Indian community in just two pages (pp. 90-91). The text has also to a great extent ignored the problems confronted by the coloured community as a disadvantaged group.

#### 5.2.4 Findings and discussion

In this text, the critical multicultural approach is by far the predominant approach, followed by the liberal multicultural approach. The text embodies several aspects of critical multicultural ideology. Critical multiculturalism underlies the exploration of the relationship between urban geography and the political practices in South Africa. In the first place, it depicts through African people's lives in rural areas as well as urban areas

how government policies have facilitated the economic subjugation of the black population, creating poverty and growing unemployment and miserable living conditions by failing to provide basic facilities for an increasing numbers of black South Africans (sections 5.2.2.2.1, 5.2.2.2.5 and 5.2.2.2.4).

The text further studies the growth of the legislative framework and its effect on the distribution of settlement and population. It demonstrates how the Nationalist government oppressed the black population by implementing laws that led to the confiscation of black people's land, and their forced removal to inferior locations in terms of services and other urban amenities such as transportation. The crucial point here is that both the text content and visuals indicate that apartheid laws through geographical manipulation had been successful in rendering black people powerless because they lost access to an important resource - land - which was their only means of subsistence (5.2.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2.5).

The text further endorses the perspective of critical multiculturalism: first, by detailing how the apartheid town planning severely impacted on black people's housing. In short, poor people were forced to live in overcrowded conditions. Second, by depicting the socio-economic reality of poor black Africans who could only afford housing in the form of shacks in cities (section 5.2.2.2.1).

The text, moreover, complies with several other aspects of a critical multicultural approach, providing insight into how social structures created by apartheid rule entrenched difference and justified exclusion. Both social and the economic inequalities in South African society are highlighted. Social inequality in this context relates to housing and better facilities and better location in the cities. Economic inequality means in this context unequal distribution of resources (sections 5.2.2.2.6 and 5.2.2.2.3). Finally, the text indicates that the authors have subscribed to a liberal feminist approach by showing women as quite capable of sustaining themselves against any adversary (section 5.2.2.2.6). The text has also combined liberal and critical multiculturalism by depicting

the living conditions of refugees from the Mozambique in South Africa (section 5.2.1.1.1.).

There are also three features of a liberal multicultural approach evident in the focus on environmental issues from a global perspective, the incorporation of learning activities that promote multicultural attitudes such as sensitivity to environmental concerns (sections 5.2.2.1.1 and 5.2.2.1.2), visual representation of the importance of interracial contact in the school situation, and commendation of the efforts made by developing countries to preserve the environment (sections 5.2.2.1.3 and 5.2.2.1.4).

A radical multicultural approach is noticeably absent, except in the incorporation of afrocentric attitudes. This is apparent in the visuals depicting the negative impact of the apartheid government initiatives on the lives of the black population by promoting a sympathetic understanding of socio-economic problems of black people in urban and rural areas (section 5.2.2.1.1).

#### 5.2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to explore possible obstacles which could have prevented the promotion of multicultural approaches such a global perspective. The text very closely follows the guidelines of the Provincial Geography syllabus produced by the Department of Education and Culture (Province of Eastern Cape) in 1996. It directs authors to use local examples while discussing the problems of urbanisation and its implications. Similarly, authors are directed to use 'historical and relevant examples' while conducting a discussion on environmental issues. In fact, the syllabus makes no reference to the employment of a global perspective in the explanation of any of the geographical concerns prescribed. Furthermore, the authors are instructed to refer to examples relevant to local environment while discussing natural disasters.

I feel there is a need for illustrations that promote interracial understanding by depicting white people as possessing intrinsic human values and a feeling of compassion and goodwill towards their black counterparts. Finally, my analysis of this text suffers from

one major limitation. It fails to study the psychological state of poor blacks from the multicultural perspective. Several illustrations in the text suggest that they experienced daily feelings of alienation, fear and a pessimistic attitude towards their future prospects in South Africa.

To sum up, despite this limitation, the book can prove an excellent reference to students of South Africa. The book is both concise and informative. Care has been taken to use appropriate language to make the text suitable for use by multilingual students. The learning activities clearly promote the ability to interpret official documents and reports and extract important ideas from them, the ability to communicate findings in an acceptable and effective way. They further contribute to the process of helping young people to understand and improve their local environment.

### **5.3 Content analysis of *New Successful English***

#### 5.3.1 Introduction

Language is one of the major ingredients of our everyday life. We need it to communicate and to build relationships with people. Hence, language is part of the whole process of social interaction. However, language is a powerful and transformative part of culture also. It is much more than a set of words and grammar rules. It is a forceful instrument for giving individuals, groups, institutions and cultures their identity. In South Africa language has played precisely this role. During the apartheid era, even though more than 20 languages were spoken in South Africa, only two, English and Afrikaans, were given the status of official languages. Since these were the languages of privileged white South Africans, the language policy thus served as an instrument of division and discrimination.

Historically, languages in South Africa have also been deployed by government as an agency of control. The Nationalist government used language policy to promote its apartheid ideologies. It ruled that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in black schools would be limited to the end of standard 4. From standard 5,

English or Afrikaans would be the medium of instruction (Hartshorne, 1992). Thus, the relative position of English, Afrikaans and the African languages was determined by the dominant white groups. African people had little influence on the decisions taken about languages in the schooling system (Unterhalter & Wolpe, 1990). In fact, black people's interests and wishes were made subordinate to the political and economic purposes and ideologies of the main white groupings. This policy had a strong impact on the process of black empowerment in South Africa as in order to progress socially and professionally black people had to develop proficiency in the official languages.

Subsequently, with the decline of apartheid rule and the advent of an ANC government, the long-standing fact that South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural country has been acknowledged. The ANC government has declared that the language issue shall be approached with respect, tolerance and a deep sense of regard for the needs and wishes of the wide-ranging variety of South Africans of diverse language and cultural orientations (South Africa, 1994a). This affirmation marked a major transition in the role of language from sustaining racism to promoting the multicultural tenets of cultural integration, anti-racism, positive cross-cultural aptitude, multilingualism and national unity.

Against this background I shall now consider a current English textbook, *New Successful English*, prescribed for Grade 9/Standard 7 students. My central concern in this analysis will be to explore the extent to which the text content and visuals reflect selected multicultural approaches.

### 5.3.2 Analysis of multicultural tenets in the text

#### 5.3.2.1 *Incorporation of liberal multiculturalism*

##### 5.3.2.1.1 *Skills development*

In this study, I have selected a range of exercises promoting cross-cultural understanding, sensitivity towards environmental concerns and multilingualism. At the outset, I would like to discuss the exercise on page 36 as it promotes multilingualism. In this exercise

the students are required to search for formal equivalent English words for colloquial words from other languages, such as “kif”, “aikona”, “kwela” and “ispaza.” Similarly, there is an exercise on page 131 that instructs students to collect words in English and African languages related to the subject of music. They are then asked to arrange all these words and their definitions in the form of a dictionary. The activity is accompanied by a sketch of children working on the project. Thus the exercise - apart from promoting multilingualism - is also a good example of co-operative learning. Such activities promote peer relationships, better psychological adjustment and improved self esteem of students as they find their views appreciated by the group.

There are also numerous exercises that promote multilingualism and cross-cultural understanding. For instance, there is one exercise on page 67 that asks students to choose TV programmes for individuals from diverse ethnic groups and with diverse interests from the TV guide published in a local newspaper. The selected TV programmes should include a news programme in English for an English speaker, a Portuguese movie for a Portuguese speaker and all TV programmes telecast in Afrikaans for an Afrikaans speaker. This exercise promotes among students an attitude of respect for all languages irrespective of their status. It also emphasises that the acquisition of proficiency in languages other than the mother-tongue is crucial for students' overall academic growth as it helps them to become sensitive to racial biases towards African languages.

Another exercise that I would like to discuss in this regard is on page 43. The object of the exercise is to write a biography based on interviewing someone from the community. Students are expected to identify an “interesting” person and conduct an interview with that person. The notes gathered are then written up in the form of a paragraph, edited by a friend, and finally written up as a finished product. This kind of exercise helps the students to become effective communicators but also to develop a keen insight into the language systems, social customs, traditions and value systems of people who may be older than they are. A related exercise on page 112 asks students to write a life history of Nelson Mandela on the basis of information given in the text. This exercise, in my view, is an excellent example of the employment of a liberal multicultural viewpoint as it helps

students to empathise with the difficult life circumstances of black nationalists during their jail term. It also helps them to appreciate the oppressive nature of the apartheid regime. Quite apart from this political agenda, the activity serves to arouse national pride in learners' heroes.

Finally there is an exercise on pages 126 and 127 that promotes cross-cultural understanding. In this exercise the names of various famous South African personalities from diverse ethnic groups are listed. The exercise also incorporates information capsules that contain relevant information about these personalities. On page 128 the authors have produced a new set of notes for each artist, and students are expected to match the names of the famous personalities with the information provided in these notes. This kind of activity promotes liberal multiculturalism by promoting a positive view of famous people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Interestingly, the only white musician mentioned (Johnny Clegg) is nicknamed "the white Zulu" as a mark of respect for his adoption of Zulu culture (dress, dance and music style) in his performances.

The text incorporates all components of liberal multiculturalism. There are learning activities that promote multilingualism, positive racial attitudes and cultural integration; some also aim at sensitising students to ethnic experiences influenced by racial factors such as oppression of subjugated races. First, the learning activities present an excellent occasion for cross-cultural learning. Second, the students are not perceived as passive consumers of pre-constructed knowledge but are encouraged to formulate new ways to conceptualise and organise the given data. The learning activities help students to make reflective decisions on global issues such as wild life conservation. Third, the learning activities further help in developing social action skills by making students aware of the social and economic impact of the apartheid policies in South Africa. Finally, they help students to broaden their ethnic and cultural options, increase their frame of reference and develop greater appreciation for individual and ethnic differences.

### 5.3.2.1.2 *Global identification*

A global perspective, one of the major themes of liberal multiculturalism seems to be the key theme of this text. While dealing with the theme of environment and weather it discusses the climatic characteristics of the desert regions, taking the examples of hot and cold deserts regions in the world. For example, it features a global map on page 158 depicting the location of hot deserts in the world. They include the Gobi Desert in Asia, the Atacama Desert in Latin America, the great Australian Desert in Australia and the Sahara and Kalahari Deserts in Africa. The writers then go on to discuss topographical features of different desert areas in the world. They include two illustrations depicting topographical features of two different desert regions, namely the sand dunes in Namibia and rocks in Arizona.

By studying geographical phenomena through global examples the text aims to encourage the intellectual development of learners, as its emphasis is not on rote learning of facts about a geographical concept. It follows an information-based approach, which uses a range of exemplification to improve the comprehension of the concept. Thus the use of the technique of concept exemplification from a global perspective helps students to understand the specificity of geographical phenomena in a wider geographical setting.

Furthermore, the text also studies environmental concerns such as the extinction of wild life from a global perspective. For instance there is a photograph of an elephant on page 93 with a caption “the last of the elephants” that I would like to discuss in detail. The caption clearly conveys the message that elephants are now becoming an endangered species. The accompanying text describes the problem of the killing of elephants in three developing countries: the Central African Republic, South Africa and Nepal. The most prominent reason for killing elephants in African nations is to procure ivory. However, in Nepal elephants are killed in order to procure land for an ever-growing population. Thus an environmental crisis is presented from a global perspective since factors other than economic interests are presented as reasons for elephant killings; the text reveals that other factors, such as under development and high population growth, as also responsible for elephant killings. Further through this example it also makes students aware of

economic problems in different countries, namely the poverty in African countries and the high population growth in Asian countries. It also shows that human society does not exist outside the fragile ecological system but interacts with it in both a negative and positive way.

The text also features blacks gaining access to position and power. It not merely counters racist stereotypes, which promote negative and depressing representations of the black population by emphasizing how they became victims of racialised social order, but instils the positive feeling of achievement in black students. Page 37, for example, features the life history of a popular black professional musician, Franco Lumbo Makiadi, who was born and brought up in Zaire. It traces his long struggle from being a penniless, half-educated street-kid to being a world famous composer, vocalist and guitarist. According to the text, he has recorded about 1000 songs in his lifetime, which is quite a record. Apart from declaring him a great musician, the text also reflects on some other relevant aspects of his personality stressing that he is a sensitive and a compassionate person whose prime aim in the life is to entertain the local crowd. Here there are clear elements of liberal multiculturalism in that the text shows that Africans do not only form ignorant unskilled labouring class but also constitute a class of distinguished professionals. But the writers further incorporate critical multiculturalism by not merely focusing on the success of black people but by also paying attention to the social and economic barriers that they had to encounter before reaching that status.

The selection of folk-tales on page 73 and 169 from West Africa and a famous mythological tale from Greece is also worth noting. This section reflects a liberal multicultural approach by giving information on the social customs, traditions and moral values prevailing among the people in the pre-colonial times in West Africa. For example, in the Nigerian folk tale on page 185 it is shown that all the vital decisions concerning the village people are taken by a council of the adult members of the village under the leadership of the local chief. Thus they give the reader insight into the democratic character of decision making in the west African societies and counters the Eurocentric myth that African societies were primitive in pre-colonial era and were

governed by autocratic chiefs.

#### *5.3.2.1.3 Cultural pluralism*

One unique feature of this text is that it incorporates detailed information concerning the religious beliefs, religious texts, methods of worship, religious leaders, places of worship and important festivals of different ethnic communities residing in South Africa. These may be found on page 148 and 149. What is unusual about these descriptions is that equal coverage is given to all religions. The text incorporates photographs depicting an interior of a Buddhist temple, and an outside view of the Hindu temple respectively, thus acknowledging different modes of worship among the various religious groups in South Africa. There are two other photographs on page 149 depicting religious practices among Muslims and Christians. In the first photograph two young Muslim girls are shown reading the Quran with their heads covered as a mark of respect for the Holy Scripture. The second photograph shows both black and white Christians praying in a church. It reflects the acceptance of cultural diversity in the religious sphere in the contemporary South Africa where both the white and black population groups are given same status at the religious places.

Through illustrations the authors advocate liberal multiculturalism by committing themselves to multi-faith education in a multicultural society operating on a principle of cultural pluralism in terms of which different racial groups maintain their distinct identities and culture within a framework of equal opportunity and mutual tolerance. The text also promotes a multicultural view of South African society, where people must learn to be effective in dealing with the ever-growing number of cross-cultural encounters facing them in the future. Now that South Africa has become part of the global economy many South African students may get an opportunity to work in different countries. At the same time, such photographs encourage students to acknowledge and appreciate communities and religious practices other than their own.

The incorporation of a famous Hindu myth in the text also reveals the authors' leaning towards liberal multiculturalism, as they have selected a mythological story of a

disadvantaged ethnic group rather than the white dominant groups. Thus page 153 features one of the most popular Hindu mythological tales describing the life and adventures of a Hindu god, Ram, and his wife Sita. Also incorporated is a drawing depicting Ram and Sita in the traditional attire. In the sketch Sita has joined hands, which is the form of greeting among Hindus. The language of the text contains no derogatory descriptions and thus helps in enhancing the cultural understanding and tolerance in a culturally fragmented country such as South Africa. It upholds the Hindu religious beliefs and commends the Hindu value system concerning the role of an ideal son and an ideal husband, as depicted in the character of Ram.

The text also supports cultural pluralism by subverting the myth that black students are deficient in intelligence or less academically inclined. An obvious example is the conversation between a white and an African girl on page 135. In this conversation the English girl is asking an African girl to help her to complete her Mathematics homework, as the given exercises are too complicated for her. This communication clearly implies that black students are as intelligent as white ones. This example promotes liberal multiculturalism by depicting African students in a positive light.

However, there does appear to be one major contradiction in the visuals discussed above and the visual on page 84. On the one hand, the selected visuals aim at developing a positive understanding of different ethnic cultures. On the other hand visuals and text are included that depict stereotyped features of disadvantaged cultures. For instance, on page 84 the text includes a story of an Indian girl character who has to pretend in the market place that she and her boyfriend are just acquaintances and have met accidentally, so that people might not know guess that they are having a relationship. The text makes the reader aware of two negative features of Hindu society. First, its conservative character which does not approve of free interaction between young people of the opposite sex socially; and second, gender bias prevailing in Hindu society where women are not given the freedom to conduct day to day interaction with people of the opposite sex according to their own choice but are required to conform to social norms. The sketch accompanying the text depicts the couple, showing the girl in the kind of traditional dress

one would only see at important ceremonies such as weddings. It would be absurd to imagine a girl dressed this way meeting her lover in a public place. This is an instance where not enough thought or research have gone into the illustration, so that it may mislead readers into believing that the Indian sense of tradition – already evident in the fact that the couple are meeting “illegally” – is even manifest in people’s clothing. The sketch thus contributes very little to the text; instead it may tend to reinforce prejudices against unsympathetic cultural positions in certain cultures.

#### *5.3.2.1.4 Promotion of cross-cultural friendships*

The promotion of cross-cultural friendship, in my view, is another multicultural feature that finds expression in the text content. The text contains several extracts which reflect intimate friendship between students from different ethnic groups. Here, I shall be analysing only two extracts, which are in the form of conversations between two students, coming from two historically antagonistic cultures (African and white) on some vital issues concerning career choices. In the first case, on page 177, an English boy and an African girl, Ayenda, are discussing their job preferences and prospects. At the end of the conversation, Ayenda advises Ben to start his own business as he is a poor student and in the near future he may face problems in getting a suitable job. This example promotes a liberal multicultural approach by not depicting whites as intelligent and resourceful people but as ordinary students facing difficulties in attaining suitable job owing to poor academic performance. In the second conversation on page 82 an English girl is complaining to her African friend about her parents’ suspicious attitude towards her. They do not allow her to go out with her boyfriend as they suspect that she is going out with him for sexual enjoyment rather than for pure fun.

Both conversations reflect on the multicultural nature of the South African society where two people from different ethnic groups meet each other on an equal footing and develop a level of mutual understanding and respect. Further, they also reflect a level of intimacy among students from different ethnic backgrounds.

#### *5.3.2.1.5 Inter-cultural contacts*

Inter-cultural contact, a prominent aspect of liberal multiculturalism, is another significant theme in the text. There are as many as 14 drawings in the text depicting social interaction amongst children of diverse ethnic groups. Here I would like to study two drawings depicting classroom situations.

A drawing on page 135 depicts a multicultural classroom in which children are shown engaged in a debate on issues concerning the good points and bad points of owning a firearm. This exercise is based on the extract given on page 134-135 which relates that many students possess guns in order to threaten their teachers and their fellow students; firearms also serve as symbols of status and power.

These two drawings – on page 131 and 135 - closely follow the liberal multicultural approach; first, by showing the black ethnic group's children being accorded the same status as children from dominant groups; second, by depicting positive interdependence and the enhancement of multicultural skills such as trust-building and communication among students through co-operative working; third, by portraying a healthy personal and professional relationships, creating a basis for healthy social development. They also support the idea of a South African identity built on the basis of equality by stressing that only through knowing, working with and interacting personally with members of other groups can a student learn to value diversity and use it in developing an ability to work effectively with peers.

There are also many sketches depicting the adult population interacting with one another in both market and office situations. There are two drawings on page 182 and 183 showing men and women of different ethnic groups working in an employment bureau. The speech bubbles indicate that their job is to help students by giving them information about the skills required to attain the jobs of their choice.

These sketches subscribe to two liberal multicultural features. They tend to reduce prejudice by depicting contact situations involving inter-group co-operation, and they

also depict the doctrine of cultural integration in terms of which different groups maintain their cultural identity: a black woman in the photograph is depicted as wearing traditional African costume.

#### *5.3.2.2 Subscription to critical multiculturalism*

Some elements of the critical multicultural approach are also evident in the text-content and visuals in the text. The text documents the growing violence and degenerated law and order situation in the township schools in the contemporary era and the economic hardship of the rural black people after the implementation of apartheid regulations, particularly, forced removal.

##### *5.3.2.2.1 Incorporation of a feminist perspective*

The text predominantly follows a liberal feminist approach by describing the accomplishments and daring activities undertaken by women. In the first instance, the text incorporates on page 62 a story written by Sol Plaatje describing the bravery of a tribal woman, Mhudi, who battled single-handedly with a lion to save the life of an unknown traveler. Similarly, a story on page 176 discusses the struggle of a black South African woman to become a telecommunications engineer in Cuba. There is also a sketch on page 176 depicting her as working on a computer. The text accompanying the sketch states that she is working in the field of telecommunications in South Africa and is also actively involved in the national policy-making process.

The text, in three instances, depicts women as independent, physically strong and quite capable of managing their lives. The text further promotes liberal multiculturalism by showing a black woman of South Africa forming a significant part of the technical manpower and contributing towards national development in her capacity as an advisor in telecommunication. The text negates gender-related qualifications which confine women to traditionally prescribed female jobs and supports the right of women to have access to all areas of paid work. In addition, the text promotes liberal feminism by showing that women can niche a place for themselves in society without challenging the existing patriarchal system. It also demonstrates that women as individuals have interests and

talents of their own and thus are uncomfortable with the roles their gender has assigned to them and are more inclined towards academic pursuits which enhance their intellectual and professional abilities. Interestingly, at one point in the text there is reference that seems to subvert the feminist perspective: 'Oliver Tambo visited us there. He suggested I do engineering. But a fellow student helped me to make up my mind. He said I would never pass an engineering degree because I am a girl'. The fellow student's advice seems to run contrary to the thrust of this activity, but it is, in my view, included to highlight the traditional, stereotypical gender attitudes still prevalent today. In the classroom it would probably serve as a prompt for debate on gender stereotyping and the role of women in society.

The text follows a liberal feminist perspective by taking into account the complexity of women's experiences. It includes a range of instances depicting the contributions made by women in the fields of sports, music and science and technology. For instance, it takes an example of Elana Meyer on page 22 who set a new world record in the 10,000 meter women's track event in Sweden. Similarly, the text includes a range of drawings on pages 25 and 26, depicting women's involvement in sports such as golf and volleyball. It also contains on page 127 very impressive descriptions of two women musicians of South Africa - Brenda Fassie and Miriam Makeba. Miriam Makeba is described as a political activist also who had to live in exile for many years because of the political situation in South Africa.

The text has through all these instances promoted liberal feminism by attempting to depict women's struggle for excellence in various fields ranging from sports to technology. Further it depicts women as politically conscious role-players in black people's struggle against racism in South Africa.

#### *5.3.2.2.2 Presentation of socio-economic reality of the township areas*

By focusing on and expressing concern for growing violence and deviant behaviour among black youths in townships the authors clearly align themselves with a critical multicultural orientation. The passage on page 134, referred to above, draws attention to

the growing gun culture in contemporary South Africa and its adverse impact on male students in the township schools. The text states that in current times it is not uncommon to see students from a township school carrying a firearm which is used to threaten teachers, scare fellow students and harass girl students. Some students, however, keep them for security purposes. Page 81 includes a bleak picture of the situation of black children in townships. It shows that black children are at risk as their impoverished family background places limits on their opportunities for development. The text relates the story of Joel Matlou. He works as a delivery boy to earn money for his family instead of going to school. Matlou's story draws attention to the degeneration of values in contemporary black society, where children lack respect for their parents. The thrust of his message, however, is a plea for a return to past values, where children were obedient to their parents. Thus the text promotes a positive attitude, reinforced by the photograph of two young men rakishly posing for the camera on the corner of a downtown shopping area. They seem at ease, cocky and confident. The implication is that they own the streets: what is perhaps not clearly established is whether or not the reader is meant to regard them as street-wise modern youths who have abandoned traditional values, or as successful self-employed youth, like Joel Matlou. But the message is clear: "...your parents are your luck. They know you, but you do not want to know them. Why?"

The text through the story of Mbuledo Mzamane, on page 57, describes the problems faced by a small schoolboy boarding a train that is going towards the township area in Johannesburg. The school boy is scared of a local gang named 'wander boy gang' constituted of the young men from the township areas who have boarded the train. From the description it can be assumed that these gang members probably harass the people travelling in the train.

In these examples it is clear that the authors promote critical multiculturalism by commenting on the existing socio-psychological environment in black areas. They emphasise how high levels of crime have increased the feeling of fear and vulnerability among unprotected citizens. Further they depict the degeneration of black youths who, instead of improving their disadvantaged position by improving their life-skills, have

taken the path of violence. Furthermore, even in the school situation teachers and students are victimised by deviant black students. There is also a lack of legitimate police force to fight these criminal activities, which promotes a general atmosphere of terror among people who commute from these areas. This text, in this instance, apart from promoting critical multiculturalism also promotes an element of liberal multiculturalism as the text contains few words from Afrikaans such as “dumani”, “dankie” and “stompie” (page 57). The fact that no effort has been made in the text to explain the meanings of these words underlines the assumption that South Africans are indeed a multilingual nation.

Unfortunately, these instances to some extent also promote a stereotypical description of black youth where they are associated with criminal attitude, violence and harassing tendencies. Furthermore, there are no explanations of these conditions; reasons such as poverty, instability in black townships and massive unemployment among black youths are not explored.

#### *5.3.2.2.3 Concern for the predicament of the black population*

Critical multiculturalism is further promoted through raising students' awareness of the racial oppression that rural black people had to undergo in the apartheid era. Page 139 depicts the discontent among the rural black population over their forced removal from their native land. The text forms a part of the memorandum sent by villagers to the minister of co-operation and development. It sketches the feelings of helplessness, frustration and resentment among the people of Bophelong when they discovered that they had to vacate the village as their chief had already agreed that people in the village would move to another place called Bophuthatswana. The allocated location was far away from the town and did not provide land to the tenants. The text also helps them to comprehend the trauma and the feeling of helplessness among the black people who lacked the power of decision-making concerning the area where they would like to live, and promotes critical multiculturalism by describing methods used by the Nationalist government to oppress black people. For instance, the government trucks came and destroyed the only church in the village. This instance also promotes liberal

multiculturalism by providing a glimpse of the cultural practices prevailing among the black people. They treat the graves of their ancestors as sacred and treat them with respect. Further it also depicts a healthy community life where all the residents have worked together in various construction projects. The text also approves liberal multiculturalism by describing the initiative taken by the local black people to improve their living conditions. For instance, they built a church and two schools in the village.

#### *5.3.2.3 Promotion of a radical multicultural approach*

A radical multicultural approach is evident on page 39 in an extract from the diary of Sol Plaatje which details the dissatisfaction expressed by political prisoners concerning the food provision in the jail. It further follows radical multiculturalism by depicting black revolutionaries with significant political potential who revolted against the white hegemonic regime and refused to succumb to various techniques of harassment used by the Afrikaner police such as exploding shells in the prison cells. It also aims at making students aware of the Nationalist government strategy of subjugating black people by wrongfully detention dehumanising treatment in jail. By focusing on these inhumane practices – practices which had remained concealed for decades – the text deliberately encourages critical engagement on the part of learners who are expected to confront their past in order to enrich their present and future. Thus deeply significant stories, suppressed for decades, are a prominent role in developing learners' critical skills.

#### *5.3.2.3.1 Inclusion of Afrocentric approach*

The text also has some elements of an afrocentric approach in its story selection. A poem on page 169 stresses only the role of black population in the making of modern Africa. It also reflects on the racial oppression and discrimination faced by African communities during the apartheid era. The text makes no effort to romanticise black poverty, instead it tends to study political and economic factors such as apartheid legislation and the vested economic interests of native chiefs that have contributed to the growing impoverishment of the black communities (page 139). This instance also indicates an afrocentric approach by concentrating on a single group study. It tends to promote particularism rather than

cultural pluralism. It also subscribes to afrocentric reinforcement of the racial interpretation that all people with black skins are subjects to white supremacist abuse.

Conversely, the white groups receive marginalised treatment in the text. The whole text contains six life experiences of black people and only one instance that describes the lifestyle and worldview of white people. As discussed above, there is the extract from the autobiography of a famous black political activist Sol Plaatje and the passage on the life experiences of Joel Matlou. Page 123 has a description of the problems Godfrey Maloi had to face while he was learning music. On page 126 the text focuses on a wide range of South African musicians only one of whom is white. Finally it recounts the struggle of a black African woman to become a telecommunication expert, as already discussed. White experiences are dealt with in one instance only, namely the extract from Olive Schreiner's dairy on page 40, describing the dilemma of a white woman who is finding it difficult to strike a balance between her professional and domestic responsibilities.

These examples promote afrocentricism by showing the black race as creative and their accomplishments as central to the development of South Africa. They also reveal the contribution of black people to South African society and culture. Included are life experiences of black individuals who have challenged the dominant ideologies and are heroes to their own ethnic communities. Thus by recognising the black ethnic contribution to South African society the text instils a sense of structural inclusion, validation and equity. The text also subscribes to afrocentric approach by under representing the experiences of white population hence it fails to reflect the diversity of population in South Africa.

However, this approach of recognising the positive achievements of single ethnic group works against liberal multiculturalism, which concerns itself with promoting cultural diversity. It stresses that an over-emphasis on oppressed group experiences only promotes racial antagonism and further hinders the process of cultural enrichment among children

### 5.3.3 Results and discussion

The liberal multicultural approach is pre-eminent in the text: all the major aspects of this approach are incorporated in the visual representations. It recognises collective commonality and inter-relatedness while at the same time acknowledging and respecting differences (section 5.3.2.1.4). It depicts how schools can become sites for cultural democracy by combating prevailing racist and discriminatory feelings among students (section 5.3.2.1.5). It endorses cultural pluralism, which affirms the right to be different and the need for members of different cultures to respect one another. The text treats cultural diversity as a valuable resource that should be preserved and extended (section 5.3.2.1.3). Finally, it incorporates a global perspective by depicting the problem of wild life preservation and other geographical phenomena from an international perspective (section 5.3.2.1.2).

The text also subscribes to a critical multicultural approach: first, by detailing how the racial, political and social structures in South African society have reduced blacks to the status of a marginalised and impoverished social group in their own country (section 5.3.2.2.2); second, by showing distress over the growing violence, strained relations between white and black communities and rising unemployment in contemporary South Africa. And finally, by following the liberal feminist approach in depicting the upliftment of women through their accomplishments in the technical as well as non- technical fields (section 5.3.2.2.1).

There is also some evidence of a radical multicultural orientation in the authors' appreciation of the courage of black revolutionaries who endured the Nationalist government's atrocities in jail. They also subscribe to an afrocentric approach to a great extent by accentuating the achievements and talents of the African population (section 5.3.2.3) and by showing how the rural political set-up, in collaboration with the apartheid regime, facilitated the implementation of repressive measures such as forced removal (section 5.3.2.3.1).

#### 5.3.4 Conclusion

One aspect of the textbook which may be open to criticism is the use of visuals that accompany written text. Occasionally I was unclear how the authors intend the pictures to be interpreted. The photograph on page 81 that depicts two cheerful black adolescents standing in a downtown area has already been discussed. A similar ambiguity occurs on page 119, where a photograph depicting an African boy playing a penny whistle is printed alongside a poem which describes a conservative father, who “forbids us to dance”. According to the text the father regularly attends church, has a stable job, never gets drunk and is widely respected in the society. The picture seems almost to contradict the picture the poet has painted. One could argue that the authors merely want to show readers what a penny-whistler looks like; it is, after all, a phenomenon which is less common today than it was during the 1960s. But a closer reading of the poem reveals that the photograph is meant to illustrate the father’s spontaneous and involuntary response to the kwela playing on the radio. He loves music, and cannot resist the beat of the kwela, and thus “he wriggles his toes”. The photograph can thus be seen as an illustration of the father’s unschooled and natural response to the beat of the music. Set in a chapter which deals with music (African music in particular) the picture becomes a powerful signifier.

Finally, I would like to point out an inherent limitation in the text. While promoting ethnic pluralism by selecting stories by writers from different ethnic groups, there is a strong male bias in the selection of stories and poems. The text includes only one story from an Indian woman writer, Beverley Naidoo, who is presently residing in Britain. Consequently, the native African and white women writers are completely neglected. The text would gain much by the inclusion of at least a small selection of stories from pioneering African and white women authors such as Nadine Gordimer, Buchi Emecheta and Ata Aima Aidoo.

I would also like to make two recommendations concerning the text. First, even though the text has supported cultural diversity in South Africa however there is a need to

explore cultural uniqueness of white South Africans who form minority groups in South Africa, such as German and French. This understanding will help white students to be proud of their native languages, ancestry and cultural heritage. Second, while selecting stories the authors should not confine themselves to African writers. Instead they should also include works of white African writers that have universal appeal. These works not only fascinate young children's imagination, but can also prove emotionally enriching.

#### **5.4 Content analysis of visuals and text content in *Web of life***

##### 5.4.1 Introduction

In recent decades attempts have been made to break the traditional mechanistic notion of science which meant discovering new things at all times. By contrast, attempts have been made to develop a holistic understanding of the concept of science vis-à-vis its interaction with sociological and cultural aspects of a given society. This led to the development of multicultural science. This concept aims at developing a science curriculum which incorporates political, historical and sociological aspects, combats the ways in which the imperialist ideology pervades scientific concepts, and challenges the ideology of racism, sexism and social class incorporated in the text content. It promotes the concept of interdisciplinary science by recognising the inter-relationship between the natural sciences and socio-economic development and conservation of natural resources and cultural practices (Straker-Welds, 1984; Gill & Levidow, 1987). *Web of life*, is, in some respects, an excellent example of a textbook reflecting this concept.

##### 5.4.2 Analysis of multicultural elements in the text

The study aims at studying text content and illustrations in order to uncover multicultural ideologies embedded in them.

###### *5.4.2.1 Promotion of liberal multicultural approach*

The text subscribes to five major features of liberal multiculturalism, namely global identification, concern for developing nations and their positive achievements in the field

of science, technology and international trade, promotion of inter-cultural contact, and portrayal of the disadvantaged population in a positive light by showing them as active participants in the socio-economic development process.

#### *5.4.2.1.1 Incorporation of a global perspective*

The text follows a global approach by incorporating global examples while discussing the concept of environmental degeneration. The text discusses the adverse effect of global warming on developed nations. By way of illustration, the text claims that many people died in the USA owing to the heat wave in the summer of 1995. Similarly, it also documents the heat wave in Britain in 1995 when the temperature went as high as 35 degrees centigrade. The text also studies the impact of acid rain on the developed nations' bio-diversity. It stresses on page 90 that in the Black Forest in Germany up to 50 percent of trees have been damaged by acid rain. The text also quotes scientists who claimed that there would be no tree in Austria in the next century if the acid rain and air pollution were not reduced.

The explanation of the concept of environmental degeneration through global examples promotes liberal multiculturalism in two ways; first, it helps students to develop a better and global understanding of the concept as the approach applies in the text is not traditional which tends to place emphasis the explanation of the concept of acid rain. On the contrary the approach is more information based as it uses global examples in order to develop a better comprehension of the magnitude of the problem by relating the concept of acid rain with environmental degeneration. Second, it breaks the Eurocentric myth that western countries are more environmentally conscious than the developing countries. For instance, the text details on page 90 that an advanced country like Germany is facing the problem of deforestation.

#### *5.4.2.1.2 Promotion of balanced perspective*

The text adopts a liberal multicultural approach by highlighting both the achievements and the shortcoming of the developed countries within a global perspective rather than

highlighting environmental concerns in developing countries only. In the first instance, the text is very critical of the lack of concern and poor endeavours made by the developed countries to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide or poor air quality. It discusses on page 108 the issue of the illegal dumping by an American steel industry of industrial waste under-ground on the outskirts of the small town of Steelpoort in North West America. This poisonous waste poses health hazards in two ways to this town's people: it contaminates the water from the stream which runs near the dump, and it may leak into the ground water. The text focuses on environmental problems in the context of developed countries such as global warming, air pollution, acid rain and water pollution caused by industries. For instance, the text discusses on pages 86, 84 and 96 different kinds of pollution, such as dirty water and toxic air, that are found in the cities in developed countries often in a concentrated form and in extremely close proximity to the city dwellers. However, on a more positive side, it discusses the invention of the wonder cooker in the middle-income countries, such as Norway, in the 1980s, which if properly used, can help in conserving large amounts of heat energy.

The text promotes liberal multiculturalism through the examples of developed world by showing that the developed world is neither technologically superior nor environmentally more conscious than developing countries. Furthermore, poor people in the developed world can also become victims of environmental hazards. It also promotes critical multiculturalism by showing how the application of science and technology has proved detrimental to the interests of poor people, as they become victims of environmental degradation. These examples also promote another feature of liberal multiculturalism by showing that as far as the application of applied technology is concerned the developing countries are making significant inroads. They are developing new technological means to preserve the environment.

A liberal multicultural orientation is also evident in the fact that the author links environmental concerns in the developing countries with the lop-sided development where poor people are left with little choice but to degrade the surrounding environment in order to fulfil their basic needs. This stand strongly differs from the Eurocentric

approach which tends to blame developing countries for the lack of environmental consciousness rather than studying socio-economic factors and the government policies that lead to it. The rate of deforestation is of particular concern in the text. According to the text, on page 45, deforestation in the developing countries is caused by factors involving increased demand for settlement area, cultivation, fuel wood or a combination thereof. The text in this example also subscribes to the critical multicultural approach by demonstrating that political and economic oppression is incompatible with the sound environmental utilization of resources. According to the depictions, the major cause of environmental degradation is not poor people's inability to use environmental resources wisely, but the unfair, racially skewed distribution of resources in South Africa. It also develops awareness among students of how environmental problems are the result of exploitative societal patterns. It emphasises that these environmental problems cannot be solved by the technological means alone also but that there is also a need to challenge the socio economic conditions that sustain them.

In keeping with liberal multiculturalism, the text maintains a sympathetic attitude towards the difficulties faced by a developing country like Lesotho in finding technologically viable means for protecting the environment, such as generating pollution free electricity from the water resources. The text includes the example of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project which is costing the Lesotho government millions of rands (page 136). Apart from this, new infrastructure needs to be developed, such as new roads to carry equipment.

Through these examples the text makes the point that developing countries are as environmentally conscious as the developed world but they lack proper infrastructure and financial resources to deploy the technological means which could help in conserving the environment. Moreover, some countries like Lesotho are incurring huge expenditure which is far beyond their means to preserve the environment.

To sum up, there are two main reasons why I believe this text to be following a liberal multicultural approach while describing environmental degeneration in developing

countries. First, it shows how poor people are affecting and are in turn being affected by environmental degeneration. Second, the text relates the problems of environmental degeneration to the domestic needs of poor people rather than blaming developing countries for lack of modernisation, lack of environmental awareness, high population growth and lack of appropriate technology. These reasons are often quoted by authors with a Eurocentric mindset.

#### *5.4.2.1.3 Descriptions of positive achievements of the developing countries*

As stated above the text follows the liberal multicultural approach by not only highlighting the predicaments of developing countries but also emphasising the scientific and economic achievements of the developing African countries and describing them as environmentally conscious. In the first instance, I will relate some of the scientific achievements detailed in the text in the context of developing countries.

Page 42 focuses on the case of an Egyptian fisherman who invented the mosquito net to protect himself from mosquitoes in the night. On page 45 the efforts made by the South African Department of Health in introducing in the local rivers and dams in the lowveld of Mpumalanga a new species of fish that eats mosquito larvae are explained. Moreover, it commends on page 146 the attempts made by the Zambian government to protect wildlife by setting aside 21 percent of the land area for developing wild life reserves. Page 8 contains a reference to the flourishing tourist industry in South Africa. Further, the text discusses on page 137 how the production of ethanol as a by-product of sugarcane in KwaZulu-Natal can, to a limited extent, solve the problem of the increasing petrol demand in South Africa. The product is a kind of alcohol, which can be added to petrol or used as fuel on its own. Further, making fuel pellets does not require expensive technology and in addition it also creates jobs for unskilled workers. Thus the text promotes the concept of ecologically viable employment opportunities for local people. Finally, the text discusses on page 6 scientific traditions in the developing countries such as South Africa where traditional healers make medicines from roots and many kinds of barks, herbs and leaves to cure diseases such as cholera, asthma and dysentery.

By discussing developing countries' positive achievements in the field of science and technology and efforts made by them to improve their economic growth and to preserve the environment the text presents a positive picture of developing countries as a whole. This positive portrayal runs counter to the stereotype of poverty, underdevelopment and lack application of science and technology. These examples not only emphasize science and technological developments but also emphasise how these countries are utilising natural resources to promote their economic growth. This undermines the Eurocentric myth that developing countries are dependent on the western world for financial aid and technological know-how. On the contrary, developing countries are shown as countries making attempts to be self-sufficient economically by generating employment for people and by producing their own consumable products cheaply from their own resources.

#### *5.4.2.1.4 Positive portrayal of black people*

There are various illustrations that depict black people in positions of responsibility. For instance, pages 122 and 124 feature the sketches of two black men. The text states that they are a rich citrus fruit farmer and ranger respectively. There are also two drawings on page 123 depicting two black men. The text details that one is the president of local resident association and the other is an official in the Department of Water Affairs. Next there is a drawing on page 108 depicts a black man as the chairperson of a company. The text states that the representation in this position is not, moreover, nominal, and it enumerates the powers of the black man as the chairperson in the company. Finally, there is a drawing of an Indian man on page 92. The text relates that the Indian environmentalist is dissatisfied with increasing air pollution. He is of the view that that the use of hydroelectric power instead of coal burning can help to reduce the air pollution in South Africa.

By presenting black people in a range of position of responsibility the text promotes two aspects of liberal multiculturalism: First, it shows that black people are equally capable of participating in the process of economic development as white people are. Second, it refutes the apartheid structure which promotes the racial division of labour in accordance

with racial factors. Finally, it shows that the placement of black people in professional positions is not nominal as they enjoy all the powers that go with these positions.

#### *5.4.2.1.5 Inter- cultural contact*

The text includes various drawings depicting children from diverse population groups thriving in a co-operative atmosphere. In the first instance, there is a drawing on page 35 depicting both black and white students explaining the biological roles of water organisms. Likewise, there is a drawing on page 65 that depicts five school children climbing a mountain. They are discussing among themselves the ways through which plants get their food and energy. A different drawing on page 12 promotes both cultural pluralism and liberal feminism by showing adult members from diverse ethnic groups holding a discussion on the biotic components of the ecosystem. Among the five members in the group three are women, and their presence is not mere tokenism. They are participating fully in the discussion on the impact of abiotic components of ecosystems on plant life and imparting information on how rotten leaves can be used as fertiliser. Furthermore, a photograph on page 93 depicts a group of children from different ethnic groups chatting on the concept of policy-making. From the photograph one can make out that their economic background is similar. They all belong to higher income-group families. What is unique about this picture is that it portrays an environment of trust and mutual goodwill. In my view such group discussions - apart from promoting positive inter-personal relationship - also help in developing social competencies such as verbal communication, interaction and attitudes of valuing difference of opinion.

Thus, to conclude, the illustrations in this text depict an environment where people experience co-operation and community. A sense of community promotes the feeling of belonging and enhances children's concept of themselves and of others. The visuals also promote an environment where co-operation, trust and equality prevail. In my view these types of photographs promote a liberal multicultural perspective (Prutzman & Roger, 1988). They all depict how children, outside the classroom setting, can develop attitudes and skills to handle situations of conflict in their lives. Through these projects children

develop a sense of self-worth, build community and acquire the skills of higher level reasoning, problem-solving and creative conflict resolution. Further, the projects illustrated teach children to deal with each other in a humane and constructive manner. They promote a feeling of tolerance and acceptance. These field experiences also give students an opportunity to work co-operatively and learn to consider different opinions before making decisions (Banks, 1997). On the national level, the visuals reflect the pluralistic nature of South African society where the worth of students from disadvantaged groups is recognized. Finally, their presence in the group is by no means superficial: it is clear that the contributions they make are constructive and productive.

A similar approach incorporating cooperative learning is encouraged in an activity on page 65. A picture story presents a group of students hiking, sharing thoughts on how plants get their food and energy. Learners are asked to consider their comments critically and “correct” those that are faulty in light of what they have learned in the unit. This activity aims at emulating the discipline of critical dialogue, while also stressing the process of learning as a pleasurable activity. The hikers’ remarks are presented as exploratory observations rather than “facts”, e.g. “I’m not sure whether plants need water to help them digest their food.”

#### *5.4.2.1.6 Promotion of skills*

The text incorporates several activities that develop among students a responsible attitude towards the environment. For example, the exercise on page 32 promotes environmental awareness. It asks students to study different kinds of plants in their area and to calculate the area occupied by each species. Furthermore, the exercise on page 111 directs students to undertake a community project to control bilharzia. The students are also required to make practical suggestions for raising money for the project. There are also several exercises in the text that promote creative writing. To begin with, there is an exercise on page 55 that asks students to compose a rap song on photosynthesis utilising the scientific words from the list given in the text. There is also an exercise on page 94 which asks students to design a newspaper headline to communicate the major effects of global warming. Finally, the exercise on page 131 asks students to write a job application to a

company for the post of planet manager. In this application they have to outline the changes they would like to make to protect surrounding environment if they were appointed to this position. This exercise not only promotes creative writing skills but also thinking skills, as students have to search for new ideas to promote environmental conservation.

Further, there is one exercise on page 77 that promotes decision-making skills. It asks students to visit a supermarket and collect the prices of all items rich in proteins and then decide which items among all the items in the given list are most economical to buy. Exercise 8 on page 79 promotes problem-solving skills among students. It asks students to suggest three solutions concerning the problem of the management of Cape seals, which have become an environmental problem. An exercise on page 115 teaches students how to carry out an exploratory investigation thereby also promoting relevant mathematical and scientific skills. In this exercise, the children are asked to calculate the average daily intake of water used by a South African on the basis of information given in the text. The last question in the exercise asks students to give reasons for the variation in intake of water by the different population groups in South Africa. This exercise promotes critical multicultural approach as it makes student aware of the fact that power relations in South Africa have adversely affected the allocation of material resources to the marginalised black people.

The text also incorporates a range of exercises that promote other important multicultural skills such as analysing problems, forming one's own opinion and thinking critically on issues. For instance, exercise 3 on page 111 asks students to identify states into which the bilharzia life cycle, given in the text, can be broken and to identify which of these would be the most effective in combating the spread of bilharzia.

#### *5.4.2.2 Promotion of critical multiculturalism*

##### *5.4.2.2.1 Concern for African population*

On page 5 the text depicts the poor living conditions of black Africans in South Africa.

Most have no access to electricity so they use wood that provides energy and heat to their homes. They are unable to get food rich in protein. Moreover, in conditions of drought and famine they are also forced to use wild plants for food. The text also depicts on page 7 that black townships have no access to medical facilities. 80 percent of Soweto residents visit traditional healers.

Further, the text stresses on page 144 that the lack of a supply of fresh water is one of the causes of death of many poor black infants as in South Africa. Most often poor black people consume river water which is polluted by human waste (page 101). This is largely due to limited rainfall in many provinces of the country, and the non-existence of the infrastructure required to provide fresh water (page 114). At present about 15 million people in South Africa lack a sufficient supply of fresh water (page 117).

This extract shows black people as the marginalised section of the South African society, who are neglected by the state. They are allocated areas which lack even basic facilities. The text through this extract also criticizes the current government which is not concerned with the welfare of the black majority; townships lack medical facilities and no arrangement is made to maintain adequate food supplies for poor black people in the rural areas in cases of droughts. It also shows how racism in South Africa has led to the exclusion and disempowerment of black people. Apartheid policies forced the poor to live in townships and native reserves that have scarce resources. They are also disempowered as they are denied the privilege of enjoying the same civic and medical facilities which were available to whites.

#### *5.4.2.2.2 Wide discrepancy in the lifestyle of black and white people*

An inadvertent outcome achieved in an activity on pages 126 and 127 is worth noting. The activity on these pages encourages visual literacy. Having dealt with issues of water from a variety of points of view, the authors here test learners' ability to "read" photographs and draw conclusions about water usage, storage, and other related matters. Whilst the writers' intention is clearly simply to stimulate discussion on the topic of

water, the sub-text of the photographs also draw attention to the contrasting lifestyles of the black and the white people in South Africa. For instance, a photograph on page 126 depicts a coloured farmer digging a trench for water in a field. Similarly, a photograph on page 127 shows an African woman collecting water from a dam in a plastic container. Both of these photographs help to reinforce the notion that blacks are impoverished, disempowered and lacking in more sophisticated access to basics such as water. By contrast, three photographs appearing on the same pages paint quite the opposite picture of whites. On page 126, a white boy is shown drinking fresh water from a tap. On the following page there is a photograph of a young man taking a bath. A well-dressed white woman is seated beside him on a chair. The walls of the bathroom are tiled. Similarly, another photograph on the same page portrays a young white man as a scientist taking a sample of the polluted water from a nearby river. He is a well-dressed, educated, young man wearing sunglasses. These visuals inadvertently support a critical multi-cultural position. My opinion is that the authors were so intent on finding visual material which suitably illustrates the theme that their own critical faculties were perhaps not focused enough to realise that their choice of pictures serve to support racist and classist stereotyping. This example is similar to one discussed earlier, on page 162, in which the authors could perhaps have exercised more care in their selection of visuals.

This text clearly indicates exacerbated material inequality between two cultural groups in South Africa in terms of property ownership, education and access to basic facilities. It shows how resource distribution was affected by the cultural membership. People belonging to dominant cultural group have access to high paid work, education and housing facilities which are not available to black people. Thus the apartheid system instead of valorising cultural diversity promoted a societal pattern in which economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect intertwine with and support one another. It also shows how non-recognition of black groups as a distinctive part of the South African society resulted in their economic subordination.

#### *5.4.2.2.3 Apathy of South African government towards black people living near national parks*

Moreover, the text points out on pages 146 and 147 apathy of the South African government concerning the economic conditions of the local black populace surrounding the national parks. For instance, the South African government has made ample provision for public and other luxury facilities in the Kruger National Park for tourists but has left millions of people to fend for themselves on limited resources in areas surrounding the national park (page 149). The text also points out how government policies concerning the conservation of wild -life in South Africa have resulted in the large-scale removal of indigenous people from their native lands to make way for the natural reserves.

The text follows a critical multicultural approach by portraying how government conservationist policies had a critical impact on their means of livelihood of the local black people. The illustrations on page 147 show that black people's resentment to South African government conservation policies. They feel that wild life preservation is given preference over their interests and in long term these policies shall not benefit their future generation. The speech bubbles, accompanying the sketch makes it clear that South African government's conservation approach aimed at maintaining bio-diversity militates against the idea of empowerment of African people. It has caused only resentment among the people living in rural areas, who have found themselves deprived of a means of livelihood. The accompanying text, in contrast, indicates that conservationists assume that wildlife should be protected from people, who are seen as a prime agent of destruction of bio- diversity. On a more positive note, the text takes the example of two national parks on page 148 namely Richtersveld National park in South Africa and Purros National Park in Namibia where the conservationists are soliciting the support of local population to save the wild life.

The text, in the first case, promotes critical multiculturalism by showing that black communities interests were neglected and they were excluded from participating in the

process of wild life conservation. In the second case the text promotes liberal multiculturalism by showing how the national parks have worked towards improving the life of people in surrounding areas by generating employment for them and further allowing them to participate in the process of game preservation in the position of game warden. The Richtersveld national park went a step further and made local people shareholders in the profit from the park which not only ensured game protection but also provided an additional source of income for people whose land have been taken away. Thus the text by relating both approaches to wild life preservation demonstrates how the colonial approach works towards disempowerment of black people while the second approach which is democratic in character not merely recognises the personal contribution of the local people towards the wildlife protection but also works towards their economic empowerment.

The text further typifies a Eurocentric approach by incorporating the concept of environmental conservation as visualised by a particular group of professionals. There is no reference to the views of the rural black population in the policy making process on the wild life preservation, whose lifestyle, customs and means of livelihood are intrinsically connected with the environment. Thus, from a liberal multicultural perspective, the term environmental conservation needs to be defined more widely, taking into account the economic concerns and cultural ethos of the people of surrounding areas.

#### *5.4.2.2.4 Promotion of a feminist perspective*

The science text advocates a liberal feminist approach by reflecting on the changing role and status of women in Africa within the context of politico-economic transformation. For instance, on page 92, an African woman is depicted as a health-worker in one of the black provinces in South Africa. She is depicted as working against the problem of air pollution and for the people who are suffering from bronchitis in her area. As a representative of the local people, she expects the government to find an alternative means to provide electricity to the local people rather than relying on the existing power station.

This extract promotes radical feminism as the woman health worker is depicted as a well-informed assertive worker who is dissatisfied with the existing government arrangement of environmental conservation such as developing power station to provide free electricity as they are causing health hazard. Further it promotes liberal multiculturalism by showing her as a committed health worker who is concerned about the welfare of her community.

The illustrations in the text also promote liberal as well as black feminism by displaying African women in multi-faceted and varied roles. They show self-reliant and self-assertive aspects of women's role in South Africa. Furthermore, the visuals demonstrate a deep awareness of the social, economic and psychological impact of environmental degradation on the local populace. For instance, there is a sketch on page 92 that represents an African woman as the president of a local community association. The accompanying text indicates that she is concerned about the problem faced by the local residents in fetching water, as they have to spend many hours fetching water. She recommends that the government should supply each household with pipes, taps and good sanitation.

One unusual feature in the text is that one sketch on page 122 subscribes to both liberal feminism, as a critical multicultural feature, and cultural pluralism, an aspect of liberal multiculturalism, by depicting a white woman in a positive light. It depicts her as the manager of a paper and pulp company. She is opposed to the diversion of water to the Tzaneen dam. She is concerned about vital economic issues such as the occurrence of unemployment among rural people and poor procurement of foreign exchange for the country. She claims that the diversion of water may lead to reduction in the growth of trees which shall adversely affect the paper and pulp industry, resulting in less work for the poor local people, as well as a loss of foreign exchange. In short, the sketch, promoting a liberal multicultural perspective, suggests that women are perfectly capable of holding managerial positions responsibly. This extract promotes liberal multiculturalism by countering the patriarchal approach that subscribes to gender division

of labour by asserting that women can only conduct semi-skilled jobs efficiently and they lack aptitude as well potential for handling high status professional jobs.

Furthermore, the text subscribes to radical feminism by depicting how economic conditions mediated by cultural practices in South Africa have negatively influenced the opportunities available to women and entrenched the role which they perform in the countryside. Men are still perceived to be responsible for social and economic security. There is a collection of drawings on page 118 that depicts the daily routine of a traditional, black rural woman. The captions accompanying the sketches tell that she has to get up early in the morning to fetch water for the family, walking a long distance. She also has to fetch wood for the family to make a fire to cook their food. The text, on the adjacent page, also incorporates a pie chart depicting her daily schedule. From the pie chart it becomes clear that her working hours are unreasonable and she is not getting co-operation from her husband in completing her daily chores.

The text presents a critique of the prevailing sexual division of labour where males take the role of breadwinner and the woman's role is confined to fulfilling the traditional obligations of house keeping. This approach not merely reflects the oppression and disempowerment of the rural women but in economic terms also depicts them as cheap, docile domestic labour force who lack an independent will and personal identity.

#### 5.4.3 Findings and discussion

In this section, I shall discuss the multicultural positions subscribed to by the selected extracts in the science text. To begin with, In the first place, a large section of the text closely complies with the liberal multicultural approach. The following features of the text make this approach evident: first, the text elaborates on the environmental concerns from a global perspective, by using examples from both developed and developing countries in the discussion of the environmental issues (section 5.4.2.1.1). Second, the text promotes a balanced perspective by showing concern about growing environmental degradation and government environmental policies in the developing countries which adversely affect the surrounding environment and by placing a premium on exploring

positive developments in several fields in the developing countries (section 5.4.2.1.2).

Finally, it incorporates learning activities that promote multicultural skills such as decision-making, critically analysing issues and creative writing (section 5.4.2.1.6). The text further adheres to liberal multiculturalism, firstly, by showing people from disadvantaged groups as qualified professionals;(section 5.4.2.1.4) secondly, by promoting cultural integration in depicting children and adults from different ethnic groups relating positively to each other; (section 5.4.2.1.5).

The text complies with a critical multiculturalism; first, by depicting economic inequalities within South African society in relation to access to economic resources and basic facilities. It indicates that disadvantaged groups of population lack water at a reasonable distance, electricity and effective means of communication; second, by showing how the process of environmental degeneration and poverty has affected poor people's access to basic facilities such as a water supply and health care and finally by critiquing government policies as well as its indifference towards poor people living in areas surrounding nature reserves (section 5.4.2.2.1). The text also conforms to critical multiculturalism by showing how contemporary government policies concerning the preservation of wildlife have proved detrimental to the interests of people living in surrounding areas (section 5.4.2.2.3).

The text further follows the critical multicultural approach by subscribing to liberal and radical feminism. It highlights black women's participation and contribution in the process of socio-economic development in South Africa and in the same vein, assuming them as disadvantaged section in the African society; it also discusses the rural South African women's predicament. The text claims that in the South African rural areas, in a male-dominated society, women constitute the class of unpaid workers. As a result, they end up performing most of the cleaning, cooking, childcare and other unpaid household tasks (section 5.4.2.2.2). The text further follows liberal feminism by depicting women as enjoying positions of seniority and responsibility in South African society. The women are depicted as trustworthy, as in positions of authority, as active participants in the

economic construction process, and as catalysts of social justice (Leslie, 1994).

Finally, there is a marked absence of radical multiculturalism as the text primarily concentrates on elaborating the problems of black people and the developing countries rather than finding any solution for them by suggesting a radical transformation in the socio-political structures.

#### 5.4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to share what I found unique in the text from a liberal multicultural perspective: that it has beautifully linked science and technology with the environment and human society. It has voiced contemporary environmental and human concerns in the context of abuse of scientific technology by both developed and developing countries to alter the life support systems to such an extent that all living beings are threatened by environmental disaster. This is done by way of promoting industrialisation and initiating power-generating projects. Finally, the text suggests an ecologically-oriented science and technology education, as a viable solution to combat environmental degradation. Conversely, I have also observed that the text, to a limited extent, succumbs to an eurocentric viewpoint by exhibiting a tendency to emphasise the contribution of the national factors such as population increase and lack of scientific and technological development and poverty in promoting environmental degradation in African nations. In my view it would have been worthwhile if the text had subscribed to a global multicultural perspective by discussing the same issue while considering historical factors such as prolonged subjection to colonial domination, perpetuation of ethnic conflicts by former superpowers in various parts of Africa and geographical factors such as the promotion of cash crop plantations as a result of international pressures.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion of findings**

### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I illustrated the extent to which the text and visual content in the selected four texts support selected multicultural ideology in all its forms. Based on this, in the forthcoming discussion an endeavour I study the relative position of diverse multicultural orientations of multiculturalism in the text content and in the visuals in four selected texts.

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section demonstrates to what extent the selected texts have prescribed to liberal, critical and radical multicultural perspectives. The second section evaluates the relative position of diverse multicultural perspectives in the text content, in order to assess which of the texts incorporates a maximum number of themes emanating from diverse multicultural approaches.

### 6.2 Analysis of multicultural elements in the texts

In order to study these orientations in the text content and visual orientations in each text in the forthcoming discussion I examine to what extent the texts subscribes to the number of themes selected from each of the selected multicultural approaches. On the basis of this analysis I determine the relative position of multicultural approaches in the text content.

#### *6.2.1 Liberal multicultural approach*

In the first instance, I examine three major aspects of liberal multiculturalism in the texts. The first theme of liberal multiculturalism that I consider in relation to the texts is the incorporation of a global perspective. Almost all the texts have subscribed to this aspect of liberal multiculturalism. The history text discusses the living and working conditions of the working class from a global perspective by including the life experiences of the working class in Britain and South Africa (section 5.1.2.1.1). Similarly, the geography text studies natural disasters in a global context and also discusses various climatic regions in the world. The geography text also deals with global concerns such as flood

devastation and oil-spills in reference to both developed and developing countries (section 5.2.2.1.1). The English text reflects a global perspective by incorporating the works of authors from different African countries (section 5.3.2.1.2). The science text covers environmental problems such as global warming, acid rain, deforestation and air pollution by taking examples from both developed and developing countries (section 5.4.2.1.2). The incorporation of a global perspective has also been a dominant theme in the texts. Three of the texts - the English, history and geography books - reflect a global perspective. The issues presented in these texts include working class life experiences, environmental concerns, and science and technology development (sections 5.1.2.1.2, 5.2.2.1.1 and 5.3.2.1.2).

Interestingly, only one text, the English text, subscribes to two basic tenets of liberal multiculturalism, that is the promotion of cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. It incorporates instances of diverse religious beliefs, modes of worship, tales from holy scriptures and stories and extracts depicting the cultural make up of diverse ethnic groups in South Africa (section 5.3.2.1.3).

Skills development is another aspect of liberal multiculturalism that is incorporated by all selected text. All four texts combine exercises promoting multicultural skills such as creative and critical thinking, creative writing, problem-solving, and communication. The geography text's exercises focus on promoting citizenship skills through exercises on national environmental issues and developing awareness of the painful living conditions of refugee population from a global perspective by studying living conditions of refugees from Mozambique and Bosnia. (section 5.2.2.1.2). The science text's learning activities encourage students to become more informed, reflective and involved citizens and to be more effective in meeting social and environmental questions. The science text also includes exercises that help students to develop multicultural skills such as decision-making and problem-solving through group interaction (section 5.4.2.1.4).

The English text depicts an unusual feature in its learning activities. It promotes some of the major aspects of liberal multiculturalism, namely multilingualism, cross-cultural

understanding and an awareness of the social lives of indigenous groups in addition to the skills related to a critical multicultural approach such as sensitising students towards the role of political power in promoting racial oppression (section 5.3.2.2.1). The history text, in a different way, sets exercises to help students to analyse social inequality and oppression by developing skills of social action. These exercises are intended to increase students' sensitivity to cultural differences and motivate them to recognise disempowerment, discrimination and deprivation (section 5.1.2.1.4).

Another representative feature of liberal multiculturalism - the adoption of a balanced perspective in the presentation of different ethnic groups - is present in the history text only. It adopts a balanced perspective by detailing the poor living conditions of not only the black population in South Africa, but also details the economic problems that Afrikaners had to face in job situations as they were comparatively less skilled than the black workers (section 5.1.2.1.3). The history text, following the liberal multicultural approach, also incorporates descriptions of scientific and economic achievements in pre-colonial South African society rather than referring them as barbarian and primitive societies as is commonly done in texts subscribing to an eurocentric approach (section 5.1.2.1.1).

The visuals in the English, science and geography texts also promote gender-mixed learning and socialising situations. The sketches display students and adults working harmoniously in a multicultural setting in several contexts, including field trips, office situations and in the classroom situations. In these texts the schools are treated as catalysts for change in attitudes about race, ethnic and class differences and work toward helping each child to develop self-respect and respect for others both through the celebration of differences and the development of a strong sense of community (sections 5.2.2.1.3, 5.3.2.1.5 and 5.4.2.1.5). The sketches in the geography and science texts also show that there was meaningful contact between adults from diverse racial groups. The whites' contact with blacks is depicted in the sense of co-workers and not as employees (sections 5.2.2.1.3 and 5.4.2.1.5).

The other liberal multicultural themes - such as the positive portrayal of developing countries, the positive portrayal of the black population and recognition of cultural diversity - have also found a place in the photographs and sketches incorporated in the texts. The photographs and sketches in the English text help to create an appreciation of different cultures and to break down stereotypes by highlighting similarities among people. They publicly acknowledge various cultural traditions and praise cultural symbols such as mode of worship, festivals, and religious places (section 5.3.2.1.3).

The science text adopts a liberal multicultural perspective as it shows genuine interest in the problems confronted by emerging countries, such as environmental degradation. It relates this problem to poverty and geographical conditions (section 5.4.2.1.2). This approach differs from the ethnocentric approach in two respects. First, it concentrates not merely on the accomplishments of the developing countries but takes a balanced perspective, also pointing out environmental problems that developing countries like South Africa face in the contemporary era. Second, the aim of the text is not to show developing countries in a negative light by relating these problems to a lack of environmental awareness and a lack of scientific and technological development only.

Among the selected texts the photographs in the history text follow only a liberal multiculturalist principle in having a balanced perspective while dealing with different ethnic groups. They do not show the life experiences of white people only from a position of strength but also as ordinary people struggling for basic necessities by reflecting on the powerlessness of the poor white population. They depict how rural transformation pushed white farmers off the land and reduced them to proletarian status in the cities. Further, apart from facing problem in attaining suitable jobs the white farmers had also to cope with housing shortage problems in the cities. Finally, the text and the illustrations also depict the plight of young Afrikaner girls who were streaming from the countryside to escape rural poverty and depression without education or marketable skills (section 5.1.2.2.5).

Finally, only the photographs in the science texts comply with one of the important dimension of liberal multiculturalism which stresses that the achievements of people

from disadvantaged ethnic groups should be given due recognition. The science text depicts black people as enjoying positions of power (section 5.4.2.1.3). Similarly, the geography text is the only text that emphasises the achievements of developing countries in promoting environmental conservation. The global maps incorporated in the text depict varied climatic regions through numerous examples from the developing countries (section 5.2.2.1.4).

#### 6.2.2 Critical multicultural approach

The texts incorporate three major aspects of the critical multicultural approach, namely: a critique of policy initiatives undertaken by both the apartheid regime as well as the contemporary government that resulted in the oppression of black disadvantaged groups; second, the portrayal of a realistic picture of the socio-economic reality of disadvantaged groups in both the apartheid and the contemporary era, and finally, in three of the books, the promotion of a feminist perspectives, a tradition closely associated with the critical multicultural approach (for details see section 2.2.6). Visual data in all the texts subscribe to the critical multicultural approach. Four features of the critical multicultural approach namely, the promotion of a feminist perspective, concern for the disadvantaged population, oppression of the disadvantaged black population by the apartheid government and the authentic portrayal of the socio-economic reality of disadvantaged people receive paramount attention in the visuals in all the texts. Oppression of the black peasantry is a recurring theme in the sketches and photographs in the geography, history and science texts.

The geography text criticises apartheid policies for promoting various forms of racial discrimination to maintain white supremacy. The core of these measures was those that restricted the access of Africans to the means and possession of economic power. This was done through restricting black people's access to the urban areas and by ensuring, through the Group Areas Act, that social contact between communities remained minimal. (section 5.2.2.2.1). In like manner, the history text is also critical of the racist colonial government's attitude towards the black population. The history text argues that apartheid policies of racial discrimination were the major cause of black poverty, and that

black people faced discrimination in housing as well as at the work-place and were thus reduced to cheap labour by securing supervisory, administrative and other highly skilled jobs for whites only (section 5.1.2.2.4). It particularly refers to government legislation after the Land Act of 1913 that restrained the life opportunities of blacks. Further, apartheid policies left blacks with no economic alternative but to work as unskilled workers in the mines and factories (section 5.1.2.2.4). Finally, one of the important measures to resist black empowerment was the government's refusal to legally recognise the African trade unions. Thus strikes by Africans were declared illegal. These measures acted as obstacles to the rise of middle-class blacks in the industrial and commercial life of South Africa (section 5.1.2.2.2).

The second feature of critical multiculturalism stressed by all four texts is the realistic portrayal of the oppressive living conditions of black people in both urban and rural areas. The history and the geography text incorporate a detailed description of the living conditions of the urban black poor in both informal settlements and the townships (sections 5.1.2.2.3 and 5.2.2.2.1). The geography text also discusses the situation of black Africans in the former homelands that lack basic infra-structure, and provide limited employment opportunities. The science text discusses the impoverished living conditions of black people in the contemporary era. The black people suffer from malnutrition and water-borne diseases (section 5.4.2.2.1). The poverty among black people threatens the prospects for environmentally sustainable development as rural poor blacks are left with no choice but to degrade and destroy natural resources such as trees and marine life for domestic requirements and for their livelihood (section 5.4.2.2.1).

The history and geography texts also discuss how the apartheid laws, along with adverse living conditions affected the life opportunities for black people in rural and urban areas. The geography text details the impact of the growing unemployment in the cities on poor blacks, as they have to seek employment with very low wages in the informal sector (section 5.2.2.2.1). The history text stresses that in homelands the desperate peasants left behind in declining economic circumstances had to work for white farmers as labour tenants (section 5.1.2.2.2).

Unlike the latter two texts, the science text is very critical of the environmental policies initiated by the present government policies. It stresses that on one hand the present government display concern towards the preservation of wild life, and on the other it left disadvantaged black people to fend themselves on limited resources in surrounding areas (section 5.4.2.2.1). Here it is useful to point out that this text differs from the others in its application of a critical multicultural approach as it also tended to suggest ways and means by which the oppression of black people could be redressed. For instance, the science text not only points out how the conservationist policies proved counter-productive for poor black people but it also suggests measures to improve the living conditions of black people living near natural reserves. It suggests that the revenue earned from wild-life should be fed back to the community bearing the cost of development of natural parks in the form of sequestered resources.

The other features of a critical approach, such as the refutation of imperialist ideology, find a place in the history text. This text is very critical of British imperialist policies, which led to the subjugation of independent African republics. It is also critical of the diplomatic policies initiated by the British government and its indifferent attitude towards blacks who had helped them to conquer the Afrikaner (Boer) republics (section 5.1.2.2.1).

#### *6.2.2.1 Feminist orientations*

Finally, apart from subscribing to critical multiculturalism, the text content in three of the texts - history, English and science - is also informed by feminist orientations. Among them liberal feminism stands pre-eminent as all three texts have subscribed to it. It is followed by radical feminism which is subscribed to by two texts. Black feminism enjoys the last position as it is subscribed to by only one text.

To begin with, three of the texts incorporate liberal feminism. The English and the science texts subscribe to liberal feminism by emphasising the positive achievements of both black and white women in diverse fields. They reject the cultural stereotypes of

women that confine them to the role of housewife, mother and sex objects, and represent them in senior positions in political, professional and public life (sections 5.3.2.2.1 and 5.4.2.2.2). Only the history text subscribes to black feminism by describing how ordinary, black, rural women attain autonomy and financial independence in the cities (section 5.1.2.2.5). The history text incorporates liberal feminism, through the discussion of how poor Afrikaner women also had to struggle to sustain themselves and their families in the cities. It promotes a positive and independent image of women. In it, women emerged as free participants in the public life and local workplaces. They were able to break down social barriers that restricted women from pursuing careers and being politically active (section 5.1.2.2.5).

The pictorial elements in all the texts, largely following liberal feminism, incorporate an impressive description of South African women making their living by a range of commercial activities. They depict an emancipated society in which women are utilising broader social and economic opportunities rather than merely being limited to fulfilling their traditional social roles. For instance, the photographs in the history text and the sketches in the geography text display that in the urban areas the ability of women to gain access to wage employment or self-employment give them a personal sense of independence (sections 6.1.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.1.1). In addition, the photographs in the history text also illustrates that these new economic opportunities gave poor Afrikaner girls a degree of independence within their families as whole families were subsisting on the earnings of these working girls (section 6.1.2.2.1). Correspondingly, sketches incorporated in the science and English texts place women in senior positions and depict them as increasingly entering professions that often still are domain of men. The sketches in the rural arena in the science text present women as the producers of food and other goods to gain income for their households (sections 6.3.2.1.1 and 6.4.3.1.1). Apart from caring for the family, women play a pivotal role in the social and economic life of rural areas. The role of women in these areas no longer followed the traditional pattern as women's activities are not restricted to bringing up children.

Apart from studying the role of adult women in contemporary society from a liberal

feminist perspective, the geography text, similarly, highlights another strong feature of liberal feminism that demands the creation of anti-sexist practices in schools in which both female and male students should be given equal opportunities for personality development. The visuals in this text depict girl students displaying assertiveness and competitiveness, and participating in all school activities on an equal footing with the boys (section 6.2.2.1.1).

Finally, the history and science texts follow the radical feminist approach. The history text stressed that white women factory workers, even in the apartheid era, were actively conscious of their rights. They were aware of their role in the transformation of the nation. They mobilised themselves to fight against factory owners for legal wages. The History text further followed radical feminism by demonstrating that Indian and Afrikaner women had to confront gender discrimination in the work-place (section 5.1.2.2.5). To conclude, one can say that the history text has incorporated a feminist approach with cultural pluralism, an aspect of liberal multiculturalism, by discussing the struggle for survival of Indians, Africans and Afrikaner women. The photographs in the history text subscribing to radical feminism exhibit the large-scale participation of women in radical politics such as the labour revolts. They show how African women conducted fierce campaign against the widespread drinking among male workers (section 6.1.2.2.1). Finally, the visuals in the science texts promote black feminism by presenting examples of black women as well-educated and environmentally conscious persons actively involved in the debate and processes of change themselves (section 6.4.3.3.1).

The science text subscribes to radical feminism in a more rural setting. It emphasises that rural women, owing to the prevalence of the patriarchal system which promoted the sexual division of labour, had to cope with all the household tasks. The rural women were thus, in effect, excluded from public life. The science text also refers to this issue in the context of rural black women. It states that the placement of the African population in areas which get below average rainfall had a negative impact on black women. They had to trek long distances to obtain wood for cooking and heating (section 5.4.2.2.1).

The texts treat the issue of the impact of apartheid legislation on the black people in rural and urban areas very differently. For instance, the visuals in the geography text specifically address issues such as racial discrimination in housing and the impact of apartheid legislation on the location of housing and the lack of healthy living conditions owing to the absence of basic facilities in black areas both in urban and rural contexts. They relate the experiences of a major section of the population in apartheid South Africa to that of outright poverty. Poverty is linked to a lack of access to clean water at reasonable distance, sanitation, healthcare, vulnerability to environmental disasters and the location of housing in economically and environmentally disadvantageous areas and away from the main city centre. The history text concentrates more on how the apartheid policies have led to the regression of black people from self-sufficiency to dependence on white agriculture. Furthermore, a range of photographs and sketches in the history text study black poverty in the context of the accrued impact of apartheid rule. According to these visuals, the material basis of poverty and wealth was the access to agricultural land. Owing to apartheid rule the big white landlords profited from the black peasants' as cheap labour. The history text further studies the combined impact of influx control, dispossession of land, and the neglect of social services on the urban black population (section 6.1.2.2).

Moreover, sketches in the science text subscribe to the critical multicultural approach in a different manner from the way the geography and history texts have subscribed to it. The history and geography texts show how the apartheid regime oppressed the black population by executing legislation that promoted racial discrimination and exclusion of black people from power and economic resources. These visuals demonstrate that the environmental policies of the present democratic movement are proving detrimental to the interests of the local black populace. The visuals depict the imposition of the informed middle class professional solutions concerning wild-life preservation on indigenous black people which led to their economic disempowerment as they lured tribal people away from their land and means of livelihood (section 6.4.3.1).

However, all the texts compile a common description as far as the portrayal of the socio-

economic situation of black people in the urban and rural areas is concerned. For instance, the visuals in the geography book showed poverty emerging from apartheid rule in the rural context as the former homelands had scarce economic resources. They show that a large section of the black population in rural areas lived in conditions which were inadequate and intolerable in terms of their access to shelter, energy and water and rural women are a particularly vulnerable group. The photographs and sketches in the science text indicate that the experiences of poverty in South African rural areas are multi-dimensional. Poverty is experienced in terms of lack of social and infrastructure facilities as the black rural areas were characterised by a lack of basic facilities such as transport, adequate water supply and electricity. Further, these areas are subject to environmental degradation. Visuals in the science text, further added the dimension of poor health facilities to these characteristics by depicting the dependence of the rural population on traditional medicine owing to the lack of health centres in the villages. In addition, the visuals in the geography text depict that black people are marginalised. They were deprived of land and these areas provided limited employment opportunities. Hence there is no source of cash income (sections 6.1.2.2, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1 and 6.4.3.1). Visual representations in the history texts are particularly critical of the imposition of apartheid laws on the already disempowered black population. Furthermore, according to visual data in the geography and history texts the apartheid policies also profoundly affected the course of black urbanisation resulting in the urban sprawls at the edges of cities as well as the development of unhygienic informal settlements (sections 6.1.2.2 and 6.2.2.1).

Finally, the geography text is the only text that delineates how the apartheid regulations have adversely affected the lifestyle of Indians. An array of photographs and sketches in the geography text studies the adverse impact of apartheid laws on Indians from a sociological perspective by conveying that the artificial separation of black and white people through the Group Areas Act not only subjected Indians to sub-standard living conditions but also led to the disruption of social contact between people of different ethnic groups (section 6.2.2.1).

However, while subscribing to a critical multicultural approach, the photographs in the

English text took a different line from the above outlined texts. The visuals reflect on other non-materialistic aspects of the experiences of poverty in townships in contemporary South Africa. The visuals primarily concentrate on how the desperate living conditions in the township had an adverse effect on the psychological make up of the young black generation. They exhibit a culture of poverty, growing violence and psychologically deviant behaviour displayed by the black youth in public transport. The visuals also stress the lack of opportunities for optimum development of black children in townships as poverty was the overriding aspect of township life (section 6.3.2.1).

The visual representations further studies critical multiculturalism by depicting inequality in ownership of physical and financial assets among the black and white population groups. Visual representations in the science and geography texts indicate that there still exists a high level of inequality in South Africa resulting in a highly differentiated experience of poverty - a relatively rich wealthy minority with European life style and a mass of migrants living in the shantytowns on the outskirts of the sprawling industrial cities. The township areas were poorly serviced. In the rural areas, however, wealth is evident in good housing, ownership of land and the possession of basic facilities and material goods and poverty was manifested in the dispossession of land, inadequate and overcrowded shelter, lack of civic facilities and low income. In South African villages white families had large landholdings and large houses. In the urban areas these houses were made of modern materials with well-furnished bathrooms. The discussion above suggests (sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.4.3.1).

### 6.2.3 Radical multicultural approach

Only the history text also adopts a radical multicultural approach by appreciating blacks' struggle against racial discrimination during the apartheid regime. It details the contribution of black trade unions in helping black people in their struggle for better wages, better housing conditions and reasonable taxes. In fact, the whole text is devoted to explaining how black people were oppressed by whites with the help of state power.

### 6.2.3.1 *Afrocentric approach*

Unlike radical multiculturalism, its constituent approach, afrocentrism, receives support in three texts. The history, English and the geography texts incorporate three major tenets of the afrocentric approach. The first tenet of afrocentricity, that of perceiving white dominant groups as oppressors is subscribed to by two out of the three texts. In the history and the geography texts whites are depicted as the chief beneficiaries of the apartheid system while blacks are treated as subjugated oppressed groups. The history text show white people in a negative light: they are blamed for promoting domestic slavery in the form of child labour and racial discrimination (section 5.1.2.4.2). Whites are depicted as maintaining a lavish lifestyle while a large section of black people are shown as living in slums. The geography text also emphasises the inequality in access to resources: whites could maintain an affluent life style in the rural areas, while Africans in the reserves had to cope with a lack of basic facilities, poverty and the poor transport systems as social services rarely reached these areas (section 5.2.2.3.1).

Three features of the afrocentric approach are highlighted in the geography and English texts. They include illustration that depict the suffering of black people under the white government, the distorted representation of the white population and disparity in the lifestyles of the black and white population (section 6.2.2.3.1). According to the photographs in the history text, disparity in the income levels and opportunities, authoritarian government and the concentration of ownership in the hands of the white elite and poor blacks deprived of even the basic needs. The visuals reveal that apartheid policies culminated in rising unemployment, severe discrepancy in living standards and made black people vulnerable to exploitation (section 6.1.3.3.1). Visual materials in the geography text also depict that most of the black peasant families were not entirely self-sufficient and unlike white people lacked provision of social services (section 6.2.2.3.1).

The geography and the history texts advocate a basic tenet of afrocentrism, which is to give primacy to African experiences over those of other ethnic groups. The history text for example, presents historical events from a black perspective. The text treats the black working class as the main character in the industrial history of South Africa between the

1890s and 1940 (section 5.1.2.4.2). Likewise, the geography text only concentrates on the experiences of black people in both urban and rural contexts while the experiences of other ethnic groups (such as Indians) of apartheid rule remained limited to two pages. The English text promotes afrocentrism differently from the first two texts.

Negative portrayal of the white groups is another afrocentric theme commonly found in visual materials in two selected texts. Only in the history book was the interracial contact between the whites and blacks shown at only at the level of employers and workers. This level tended to perpetuate all the existing stereotypes. They depict how the socio-economic standing of whites in the apartheid era raised them far above the level reached by blacks (section 6.1.3.3.1). The photographs in the geography text assume that within the white groups there were virtually no unskilled labourers or so called lower classes. They visualise them as large-scale landowners (section 6.2.2.3.1).

Finally, the English text promotes a third feature of afrocentrism by showing up the positive achievements of black people and incorporating a range of black life experiences in the text by selecting a range of black fiction in its story section (section 5.3.2.3.1). The geography text subscribes to the afrocentric approach by depicting the wide disparity among black and white people in relation to the possession of material and physical resources and facilities (section 5.2.2.3.1).

To sum up the discussion, taking all the texts together, the liberal multicultural perspective has a pre-eminent place in three texts as they have incorporated two major features of liberal multiculturalism. Apart from this, other aspects of liberal multiculturalism are also present, such as cultural pluralism in the English text, the positive portrayal of developing countries as well as a balanced view of developing countries environmental problems by the science text, and a positive depiction of the pre-colonial state in South Africa in the history text. The other approach that has been adhered to in the text content is the critical multicultural approach. All texts have tried to raise consciousness concerning the poor living conditions of black people and have promoted the black feminist perspective. Subscription to radical and liberal feminist

approaches remains confined to the history and the science texts. The radical multicultural approach is advocated only by the history text. However, both the English and geography texts have also adopted an afrocentric approach (section 2.2.5).

In fact, three texts subscribed to two liberal multicultural themes namely, incorporation of a global perspective and the depiction of adults and children in a multicultural setting. The critical multicultural approach has been eminently promoted by the history and geography texts as they emphasised how white oppression had an impact on the living conditions both in rural and urban areas and on the job prospects of black people. The radical multicultural approach was evident in the history text. The growing poverty among blacks owing to the institutional racism and the inequality in lifestyle of the black and white groups are the predominant themes in the visual representations in the texts.

### **6.3 Findings**

In my opinion, based in my analyses of these texts, the history textbook, *All that Glitters*, reflects the most comprehensive range of multicultural approaches. It is the only text that incorporates features of the liberal, radical and the critical multicultural approaches in its visual representations.

However, the visuals in the geography text reflect far more features of the liberal multicultural approach than the history text. Apart from this, they also highlight features of a critical multicultural approach that were incorporated in the history text. The history text incorporates elements from liberal, critical and radical multicultural approaches along with feminist and afrocentric approaches. In the first place, it subscribes to liberal multiculturalism by narrating historical experiences concerning the impact of the industrial revolution in a global context, and in the second, by studying the problems of the urban poor, both black and white, from a balanced perspective. It also subscribes to a critical multicultural approach by exposing as well as condemning the racist practices and policies that were used in the apartheid era to subdue black people and by incorporating a detailed descriptions of the desolate living conditions and predicament of the urban migrants as the rural black population. Further, it subscribes to radical, liberal and black

feminism by portraying women from different ethnic groups maintaining their independence by being financially independent. Moreover, it is the only text that subscribes to the radical multicultural approach by showing black people's struggle during the colonial era for better working conditions and wages. Finally, it also subscribes to an afrocentric approach by discussing the disparity in the lifestyle of black and white population groups in the colonial South Africa.

The second text that can be taken to as a good example of subscription to multicultural approaches is *New Successful English*. First, it was the only text that incorporates a maximum number of liberal multicultural themes. Beyond this, it studies critical multiculturalism by depicting how economic distortion created by the apartheid government has led to increasingly violent tendencies among the black youths. It incorporates almost all the elements of the liberal multicultural approach. Apart from this, it also reflects the critical multicultural approach by developing awareness of the poor living conditions of black people and by promoting the liberal and black feminist approaches. In addition, this text also reflects an afrocentric approach in the selection of stories and in the portrayal of characters.

The geography text, *Living Geography*, is unique in its advocacy of an important aspect of critical multiculturalism, racial discrimination. The text documents the impact of racial discrimination on almost all aspects of black people's lives including housing, employment, social interaction and the living conditions in both urban and rural areas. Apart from this, unlike the English text, it also includes only three features of liberal multiculturalism and subscribes in a limited way to feminist and afrocentric approaches.

Finally, it is quite difficult to discard the science textbook as it is the only text that follows the critical multicultural approach by portraying not only the apartheid policies but also the present government's responsibility for the continuing oppression of black people. It depicts the indifference of the government policy-makers towards the welfare of poor rural blacks in contemporary South Africans who do not taking into consideration their interests and problems while formulating national policies. It does not, however,

incorporate either radical multiculturalism or an afrocentric approach. It also includes only two features of a critical multicultural approach. Yet one cannot discard this text as it is the only text among the texts that has made explicit that the situation of ordinary black people, even in the contemporary era, is quite similar to that which pertained in the apartheid era, as the current government has made little effort to either develop infrastructure in rural areas or to improve economic conditions for these people.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it may be both interesting and valuable to explore to what extent the selected texts depart from textbooks published during the apartheid era in the context of incorporation of multicultural elements, and to explore the extent to which the selected texts incorporate some of the fundamental principles underpinning Outcomes-Based Education and the new curriculum.

In the following discussion, I shall be making comparative reference to eight randomly selected school textbooks published during the apartheid years. These are:

*History Alive Standard 8* by Lamplough, Machin, Prosser & Sellers (1988)  
*Successful Science* by Clarke, Hurst, Thoka, & Van Stormbroek (1988)  
*Our Living Past* by Van Niekerk, Lintvelt, & Kennedy (1980)  
*English 6* by Spicer, Wanliss, Barnard, Bayes & Ontong (1992)  
*Successful English Grade 10* by Parkin & Blunt (1988)  
*Senior Geography, New Syllabus* by Swanevelder, Van Kradenbury and Hattingh (1985)  
*Science Focus 7 General Science for standard 7* by Ayerst, Deoda & McNought (1984).  
*Geography 5 New Syllabus* by Gear, Watermeyer, Bodemer & Shah (1992)

As I have pointed out, the selected texts have made a concerted effort to reveal how the apartheid policies have adversely affected the living conditions, employment opportunities and social status of disadvantaged ethnic groups in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, an endeavour has also been made in the selected texts to expose the excesses committed by the apartheid government on the black population through forced removal, spatial segregation, social alienation and political subjugation through the imposition of unjust laws and the denial of political rights.

This is not the case with the earlier texts. These texts do not explore how racial attitudes played a determining role in the shaping the historical events such as slavery system, the unification of South Africa, and the development of the mining industry in South Africa in 1910. The earlier history texts in fact deliberately promote the Afrikaner version of South African history. They incorporate impressive descriptions of the Great Trek, the establishment of Boer republics and the battle of Blood River. These texts present the story of South Africa's past almost exclusively from a white Afrikaner perspective. The history of cultural minorities in South Africa is ignored and undue emphasis is given to the contribution of Afrikaner heroes in building South Africa (Lamplough *et al.*, 1988; Van Niekerk *et al.*, 1980).

Furthermore, the selected texts have, to a great extent, explored the life experiences of ordinary people who form the margins of South African mainstream society owing to their culturally contextualised group membership. These texts have study the desperate living conditions of black people, particularly the working class, and the impact of apartheid policies of racial segregation on Indian families in South Africa. The earlier history texts ignore these issues and focus on South African history in the context of political and military events.

The selected English text differs strongly from the earlier English texts as far as the issue of the portrayal of life circumstances of black people is concerned. It studies aspects of the lifestyles of black people, particularly their political and economic subjugation in the apartheid era and demonstrate concern over degeneration of the traditional value system the contemporary black society. Further, it also incorporates narratives describing the life struggle of famous black personalities. The earlier English texts, by contrast, support various features of a euro centric perspective. For instance, it incorporates only two illustrations depicting African people. In the story section it concentrates on the life experiences of white people. There is a range of stories which describes the problems confronted by white people in their daily lives. It also includes a poem describing the accomplishments of an American scientist and a British musician. It does not include any story which may give a glimpse into the lifestyle, cultural practices, frustration and

dissatisfaction in the lives of black people due to economic hardship and oppressive state machinery (Spicer *et al.* 1992).

The selected texts also study geographical historical phenomena from an international perspective. The major difference between the selected geography text and the earlier one is that the selected text incorporates descriptions revealing the scientific and technological development in developing countries as well as their endeavours in improving the economic situation through optimum utilization of their natural resources. Moreover, it discusses environmental problems confronted by the advanced nations. The earlier geography texts (Swanevelder *et al.* 1985 and Gear *et al.* 1992) subscribe to a euro centric viewpoint towards developing countries. For instance, developing countries are depicted as lacking the necessary capital experience of large-scale industrialisation to explain their inability to use their water resources. Further, in its chapter on India, one of these texts (Swanevelder *et al.* 1985) has details a range of problems that India is confronting including illiteracy, high population growth, shortage of food, poverty, famine, a technically unskilled labour force, under-nutrition, lack of effective family planning and dependence on foreign countries for technical assistance. There is not a single photograph in the text depicting technological advancements in India (Swanevelder *et al.* 1985). Further, in studying diverse geographical features, the other earlier text exhibits a tendency to depict developing countries as technologically backward. For instance, in chapter four the text states that South Africa has a conventional train system while Japan, the USA and other European countries have a high-speed rail system. Finally, even though it has discussed the problem of pollution and the measures taken by the developed countries to combat it, it does not study the phenomenon of pollution in reference to environmental degradation or its adverse effect on human health (Gear *et al.* 1992).

Feminist orientations are another feature of the selected texts. The endeavours of both black and white women to attain economic self-sufficiency are highlighted. The earlier texts, however, suffer from limitations in this regard. One of them includes extracts from novels that reveal a patriarchal viewpoint. Both show a high dependence of women on

men for emotional security and men maintaining an indifferent attitude towards them (Parkin *et al.* 1988). The earlier history texts are also silent on the contribution of women in the making of South African history (Lamplough *et al.* 1988, Van Niekerk, 1980).

A major part of the old science texts discusses major characteristics of scientific concepts such as electric current, plant life, energy and force (Clarke *et al.* 1984). For example, one of the old texts, *Science Focus* only incorporates one chapter entitled "Insect and man" which discusses a range of insects which have proved both useful and harmful to mankind. It takes the example of the tsetse fly and mosquitoes which have an adverse effect on human health. The selected science text (*Web of Life*) also deals with this topic. But *Web of Life* incorporates major dimensions of multiculturalism, incorporating a global perspective by studying the harmful impact malaria parasite on a world-wide basis. With the help of a map on page 39, the book depicts malaria hot spots in South Africa and neighbouring countries.

Finally, the selected texts have incorporated a range of exercises that promote multicultural attitudes and skills. They include developing environmental consciousness, empathy towards disadvantaged groups and competency to comprehend how racial, social and economic factors such as racial discrimination and unjust distribution of resources have shaped the social reality of disadvantaged people. Apart from this the learning activities have promoted diverse skills such as creative writing, critical thinking, problem solving, visual literacy and co-operative learning. The exercises incorporated in the earlier texts aim at content assimilation. The exercises merely consist of question testing. Students in most cases are asked to reproduce data from the given text. None of the exercises helps students in developing their critical faculties, problem-solving skills, or social competencies through interviewing or group projects or in acquiring an ability to think independently through open classroom discussions. There is no critical or creative thinking involved. Hence there is no room for either creativity or individuality development. Similarly, they lack exercises that promote political awareness or critical consciousness by asking them to work on research projects on social and economic issues concerning various oppressed groups in South Africa. They lack exercises in role

playing, conducting interviews and working on community projects, which would help students to develop an appreciation of others. There are also no exercises which may encourage students to develop positive feelings of tolerance, national unity, or social equality, help them to recognize stereotypes and encourage black students to feel good about themselves and their people. Thus it is clear that these texts fail to comply with any of the multicultural dimension under consideration.

I now move to the second issue, namely to what extent the selected texts reflect fundamental principles incorporated in the National policy documents, such as non-racism, cultural awareness, national integration and promotion of feminism. It is clear from the above assessment of the selected texts that the selected texts reflect South African society as an emerging democratic society where people from different ethnic groups are participating in the national development process. The selected texts recognise the strength of disadvantaged groups - including women - by depicting them in socially influential positions or as professionals actively involved in the fields of social welfare and policy making.

While it is true that the selected texts tend still to depict South African society as polarised and deeply divided, one has to applaud the authors' efforts at showing that, in the post-apartheid era, South Africa is transiting towards a non-racial, culturally diverse and democratic society that appreciates and respects the cultural practices, beliefs, perspectives and lifestyle of people from different ethnic groups. They also recognise - through examples of classroom situations - that black people should be treated as full members of South African society as opposed to people who must be tolerated. Finally, they reflect the democratic character of South African society by not merely concentrating on the desperate situation of black people in South Africa but by displaying how black people have constructed their lives and maintained a healthy sense of self by making efforts to attain economic self-sufficiency and independence through engaging in informal activities in the cities. They also appreciate their revolt against political injustice and economic oppression during the apartheid rule.

Finally, a few observations on how the learning activities incorporated in the selected texts may have helped in attaining the Critical Outcomes specified by SAQA (South Africa, 1997b) for education and training in South Africa. I believe that the learning activities discussed earlier (chapter 5) will be successful in promoting an atmosphere of co-operative learning. The geography and the science texts have incorporated exercises where students from different ethnic groups undertake outdoor school projects, or research projects within a classroom situation concerning vital social and economic issues. These exercises not merely promote thinking skills but also interaction, collaborative competencies and positive peer relationships as students get an opportunity to socialise and accept each other's ideas and generate discussion and reflection on the given issue. These activities also show control shifts from the teacher as an arbiter of knowledge to the students as makers (and consequently owners) of knowledge.

The selected texts also include ample opportunity for students to go into the field and collect information and then write a report adding their own personal interpretations to the findings. These activities promote the ability to critically evaluate information and then organise it in the form of a report, one of the critical outcomes. Further, there are exercises in the history and science texts that expect students to critically evaluate historical evidence or to analyse and to research ways and means to minimise environmental problems that South Africa is currently facing.

One of the critical outcomes is using science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards environment and health of others (Education Information Centre, 1996:10). Some of the learning activities in the English and the science text have particularly aimed at developing environmental consciousness among students by undertaking scientific projects that may combat soil erosion and spread of infectious diseases such as bilharzia.

The learning activities incorporated in the selected texts may also help students to develop the skill of effective communication, frequently through creative writing. This critical outcome features in numerous exercises in the selected text, where students are

invited to compose songs, letters, life histories of famous personalities, job applications, research reports, or a paragraph on a given subject. Further, the selected texts also incorporate exercises related to role playing which may help students to communicate their views clearly in front of an audience.

Finally, the exercises in the English text are aimed at sensitising students to different cultural contexts by incorporating exercises that may help students to develop a respect for African languages and inter-cultural understanding and developing a positive attitude to people from disadvantaged social groups. They may also help students to appreciate how the apartheid government utilised the concept of cultural difference to marginalise black people from securing economic benefits.

In the final analysis, one cannot fail but to be impressed by the four textbooks I have analysed. The fact that I have, in the course of this analysis, pointed out weaknesses in each of the four texts in no way detracts from the obvious truth that these texts are creative and bold attempts to break with the past in a variety of ways: ideologically, politically, culturally and methodologically. One should also take into account the fact that these texts have not necessarily been written with a multicultural perspective in mind. Further, certain other factors such as their prescription for specific age groups, their compliance to specific syllabus guidelines and the market demand influence the selection of subject content. Considering these factors, throughout my analysis I have maintained a liberal rather than a critical attitude towards texts concerning their compliance to the multicultural ideology.

I would like to conclude this chapter on a positive note. I firmly believe, with a fair measure of optimism, that these texts will, in the future, prove to be powerful vehicles for promoting multicultural orientations among students, and will help them in constructing South Africa as a rainbow nation.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations**

### **7.1 Retrospection on the research**

#### **7.1.1 Comments on aims, assumptions and objectives**

In this chapter I attempt to re-evaluate how far this study has been successful in attaining the objectives of the research incorporated in Chapter 1 of the study. To begin with, the single major aim of the thesis was to explore the extent to which contemporary school textbooks from several learning curriculum areas have incorporated multicultural elements. Concerning the analysis of the multicultural approach in the texts, I feel it is pertinent to reassert that within the multicultural orientation the study aimed at exploring the major perspectives, namely liberal, critical and radical multicultural approaches in the texts. Here I have included the feminist perspective as a part of the critical multicultural orientation and the afrocentric approach as a part of the radical multicultural approach. This dissertation has demonstrated that multicultural approaches have dominated the text content of selected texts under consideration.

In the initial stage the aim of the study was studying the cultural issues related to critical and radical multicultural ideology such as institutional racism, unequal distribution of power and economic resources and oppression of socially and economically disadvantaged sections. However, subsequently it went beyond these parameters to study general issues related to the liberal multicultural paradigm such as issues concerning the environment, skills development and the developing countries. Sexism in textbooks has also been one of the aims of this study. In this sense this study is different from many earlier studies as it studies sexism in textbooks while in both Britain and America researchers (Broderick, 1973; Stinton, 1979) have focused on sexism in children's fiction rather than in textbooks. Furthermore, in the studies conducted on children's textbooks, the primary emphasis was on the negative images of the developing countries in the texts (see for example, Mc Diarmid & Pratt 1971; Nash, 1972; Preswerk and Perrot, 1978). In this study the primary aim has been to explore all major themes emanating from the liberal, critical and radical multicultural approaches as they are reflected in the texts

particularly concerning women, other disadvantaged people in South Africa, ecological issues and the portrayal of the developing and developed nations.

Of course this study has limitations. The research aims have concentrated on the exploration of critical, liberal and radical multicultural themes while other multicultural orientations such as the corporate, conservative, polyvalent and post-modernist multicultural approaches have been ignored. Furthermore, the aims of the study have also neglected elements of other ideologies such as eurocentricism and the patriarchal approach. During the course of my study I discovered that to a large extent the texts have subscribed to these approaches too. An exploration of these approaches could have helped in attaining a better understanding of the place of a multicultural approach as compared to other approaches in the text. The reason behind my neglecting them is that it was simply not feasible to address so many ideological underpinnings in the texts within the scope of the study. Moreover, I chose to focus on the orientations evident in educational policy documentation of the last few years, as discussed in Chapter 3, as these are likely to have shaped the thinking of materials writers.

#### *7.1.1.1 Assumption*

The aim of this study is based on an assumption which is both valid and questionable. The assumption is that the selected textbooks have incorporated the multicultural perspective in an implied manner as the authors of various selected texts have mentioned in their preface that the texts are based on guidelines provided by the Interim Core Curriculum (1995) and Curriculum 2005 (1997). The Interim Core Curriculum to which the texts have subscribed has initiated learning programmes which help students in “reaching their expectations for the future and about their responsibility as citizens in a democratic multicultural society” (South Africa, 1995a: 6). In sum, the Interim Core Curriculum has visualised South African society as a multicultural society. Apart from this, the Interim Core Curriculum has emphasised many aspects of multiculturalism in its learning programmes such as development of skills, promotion of social justice, understanding of the relationship between society and the natural environment and lastly developing cultural sensitivity across social contexts (sections 3.6.2.1, 3.6.2.2, 3.6.2.3

and 3.6.2.5). At the same time, this assumption is also questionable in the sense that the concept of culture was treated as a problematic issue in the South African context. It was used as a tool to promote ethnic differences rather than to preserve cultural diversity. Hence, only the divisive character of culture has gained prominence in educational debates. Many contemporary political activists and educationalists (Gilroy, 1990; Muller, 1992; Mbigi, 1997) have serious misgivings about the implementation of multicultural ideology in the educational arena. They claim that the implementation of a multicultural approach in the educational arena may give rise to a neo-apartheid state in South Africa (sections 3.5.2.2 and 3.5.2.3).

#### 7.1.2 Comments on research methods

In this study the selection of a research method for analysing the text content and illustrations remained a problematic issue for a considerable period of time. I have treated illustrations as an integral component of the text-content because they help in making the text more meaningful to the reader. They contribute to the communication potential of the text in accomplishing the task of representing of socio-economic realities to the readers (Chaplin 1994). Hence I utilised qualitative content analysis for text content in conjunction with visuals (see section 4.4). Here I would simply like to point out that I think there was still scope for the application of discourse analysis along with content analysis to study the text content. The non-inclusion of discourse analysis in this study primarily emanates from my limited knowledge of linguistics.

The application of content analysis on selected texts has proved quite problematic in places. To begin with, the very process of analysing visuals became quite difficult as in some places the visuals incorporated into the text could be interpreted as conveying a message which is contradictory to the multicultural orientation identified. Two examples have already been discussed (pages 161 and 182). Another problem that I faced while analysing visuals was relating visual data and the surrounding text to multicultural orientations under consideration. It was quite difficult to place an illustration under one particular multicultural orientation as it could frequently reveal more than one orientation. For instance, it was difficult to decide whether to place an illustration

depicting the oppression of peasantry particularly in the history text in a radical or a critical paradigm as it reflected features common to both orientations.

The task of exploring different multicultural perspectives in the texts also raised a few problems. The problem was that the text content at times tends to subscribe to other approaches. For instance, in the history text certain sections dealing with the working conditions and exploitation of migrant labour in urban areas and the subjugation of rural peasantry tend to subscribe to the classical Marxist doctrine. Thus it became difficult to select as well as to interpret the textbook material within the multicultural paradigm. Further, there is some text material in the texts that combine elements of two different multicultural approaches. For instance, the history text in certain descriptions concerning the impact of industrialisation in South Africa on rural African and Afrikaner women promotes cultural pluralism, a feature of liberal multiculturalism as well as liberal feminism, a tradition associated with critical multiculturalism (section 5.1.2.2.5).

### 7.1.3 Comments on content and findings presented

There are both strengths and deficiencies in this aspect of my work. The study's strength lies in its being experimental and innovative. This study has for the first time explored a range of multicultural ideologies along with traditions closely related to these ideologies in selected South African school texts (section 1.2). Most of the earlier studies on the application of multicultural approaches in children's books have explored liberal multiculturalism in the texts (Preswerk & Perrot, 1978; Dean and Hartmann, 1983; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991).

Concerning the selection of the multicultural themes, I have largely studied the disadvantaged black population that forms a major section of the South African population along with the dominant white groups. I have concentrated on the life experiences and the socio-economic problems of the black population in my textbook analysis. I have also considered the predicament of the Indian community. However, the study has not considered linguistic issues concerning liberal multiculturalism, such as ethnic language maintenance and revitalisation, promotion of indigenous knowledge and

viewpoints and multilingualism.

There is also a need to attend to the issue of the reliability and the validity of the findings of this study. This study, as the very name of the research method used suggests, is qualitative in character. The character of the research does challenge the positivist notion that claims that 'valid knowledge is restricted to empirically testable propositions arrived at through disinterested value free inquiry' (Grady & Wells, 1986:34). Simultaneously, this research is incompatible with non-conventional conceptions of validity as exemplified in the work of prominent ethnographers. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), for example, a research study should comply with four kinds of trustworthiness; truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Truth-value refers to the accuracy of the findings for those being studied; consistency refers to reliability in experimental terminology, and neutrality refers to objectivity. By the term applicability they mean the likelihood that the findings would pertain to other groups in similar situations (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). Clearly this study, being a study of textual material rather than human behaviour and attitudes, cannot be measured by these criteria. I do believe, however, that this research has managed to satisfy the qualitative criteria of validity extended by Erickson (1986) and Greene (1990). The qualitative criteria include richness of the detail or thick description and clarity and the appropriateness of the research (section 4.7.1).

This study cannot be termed value-free, objective, or detached, as the elements of subjectivity arising from my personal experiences, emotional reactions and predisposition have affected the data interpretation in a fair measure. Thus, needless to say, throughout my research work I grappled with my subjectivity. In these circumstances, I reformulated my analyses of visual representations in the texts a number of times, taking into account the recommendations made by my supervisors in order to curb the reflection of my personal emotional reactions. Here my aim was not to satisfy the criteria of validity extended by the above-mentioned qualitative researchers, but to ensure that the inferences were in line with the theoretical framework under consideration, were supported by evidence from the primary data, and that the results were recorded fully and accurately. In short, my emphasis throughout has been more on the technical correctness of

inferences from a qualitative viewpoint than on their credibility or generalisability. Another reason that I would suggest for ignoring the issues of validity and generalisability in my research was that I am of the view that a research study is not primarily an academic activity and its aim is not merely to produce accurate predictions. It is expected to make a contribution, perhaps in very small measure, to the ongoing process of social and economic transformation in any given country. An attempt at disassociating personal elements from the research may end up in producing a sterile study lacking transformative character.

#### 7.1.4 Comments on conclusions based on the research

There is one major conclusion in the thesis. However, several other conclusions are subsumed in it. The major conclusion responds to the primary research question of the study, which is to what extent the texts incorporate diverse dimensions of the multicultural approach. The study has demonstrated that selected texts have pre-eminently subscribed to critical multiculturalism. However it will be interesting to study the position of diverse multicultural orientations in the texts.

##### 7.1.4.1 Position of different multicultural approaches in the texts

A closer examination of the assessment of analyses of the texts demonstrates that it produced to a large extent similar results to those recorded in the assessment of the analyses of the text content. For instance, in the history and geography texts the critical multicultural approach received paramount attention followed by the liberal and radical multicultural approaches (sections 5.1.3 and 5.2.4). However, this is not the case with other texts. The English and the science text predominantly subscribe to liberal multiculturalism (sections 5.3.4 and 5.4.3).

The other multicultural orientations that were addressed in the texts were the afrocentric and the feminist approaches. Three of the four texts adopt an afrocentric approach (sections 5.1.2.3.1, 5.2.2.3.1 and 5.3.2.3.1). The afrocentric approach is not represented in the science text.

Apart from the major multicultural orientations it would be interesting to study the position of different feminist approaches in selected texts. In all the texts liberal feminism is most popular as all the texts subscribe to it (sections 5.1.2.2.5, 5.2.2.2.5 5.3.2.2.1 and 5.4.2.2.2). Radical feminism is prominent in the science and the history text (sections 5.1.2.2.5 and 5.4.2.2.2). The black feminist approach stands last is subscribed to only by the science text (sections 5.4.2.2.2).

In conclusion I would like to point out one unusual feature as far as the subscription to diverse multicultural themes is concerned. There have been common multicultural themes such as the incorporation of a global perspective. However, there were exceptions. For instance, the depiction of school children and adults in a multicultural setting is the liberal multicultural theme subscribed to in the geography, science and English text (sections 5.3.2.1.4, 5.2.2.1.3 and 5.4.2.1.5) while themes such as the positive portrayal of black people occur only in the science text (5.4.2.1.4).

## **7.2 Concluding remarks**

### **7.2.1 Limitations of the research**

This study suffers from several limitations. Some of them I have already mentioned. Nevertheless, in this section, I would like to discuss three further limitations of the study.

The first two limitations emanate from the aims of the study. First, the aims of the study constrained me to select textbooks from just two major South Africa publishing houses namely Oxford Publishing House and Maskew Miller Longman. Available publications from other publishing houses were not selected for this study. For instance, a science textbook entitled *Science: An investigation*, a popular Lexicon publisher's publication was not selected for this study as its text content largely deals with the description of scientific concepts such as electric current, vegetative reproduction, alkalinity in soil and so forth. Moreover, a large section of its illustrations depicts plant life and animal life and scientific experimentation. Thus after studying the content in the text I decided that although it might be possible to study the liberal multicultural approaches in these texts it

would be difficult to explore elements of critical or radical multicultural approaches as they explore politicisation of cultural differences, systematic patterns of inequality structural patterns of differential power relations and hegemonic forms of domination in a given society. Further, radical multiculturalism aims at challenging material structures responsible for over determination of differences in the direction of oppression, injustice and human suffering (Goldberg, 1997) (for details see section 2.3.3).

Second, in terms of my aims, I was confined to choosing books that were presented at the secondary level. Obviously if I had included both primary and higher secondary books there would have been scope for conducting a comparative study concerning the incorporation of multicultural elements in textbooks prescribed for different grades and to get a more inclusive picture of the incorporation of the multicultural approach in the currently available school textbook material in South Africa. Clearly, though, this would have resulted in a study of a different nature, one which far exceeds the scope of my investigation.

Third, this study is based solely on the researcher's interpretation of the texts. No doubt the research could have been enriched by incorporating the views of concerned teachers, authors and prominent educationalists. This would have helped in providing a more comprehensive picture of the responses to the multicultural approaches in the texts. Further, the study has also made no attempt to explore the views of the students on the texts while fully recognising the fact that they form a section which will be most strongly influenced by the ideologies incorporated in the text. The decision not to interview authors, students or teachers was prompted by the need to keep the study manageable. It was felt that adding considerable amounts of empirical qualitative data would detract from the focus of interpreting multicultural features against defined criteria.

A final limitation of the study is the size of the sample. One of the reasons for having a small sample for this study was the non-availability of contemporary texts published during the years 1996-1998 in the relevant curriculum areas. The reason for the non-availability of books was that at present books published during the early 1990s are still

being used in the schools. The state simply does not have the money to make it possible for schools to update their textbook stocks. Hence publishers are reluctant to publish new material. All the efforts are concentrated in upgrading the old textbooks. Allied to this point, as discussed on page 110, few textbooks seem to have embraced the selected multicultural approaches. The final limitation is related to the research methodology applied in this study. Since this is a qualitative study, I have aimed at an in-depth investigation of small amounts of data, rather than a survey of a sample that could in any way be regarded as statistically representative. I trust that this “limitation” may well be one of the study’s strengths, since an in-depth view of a small sample may prove to be more revealing and informative than a superficial survey of a large sample.

### 7.2.2 Recommendations

The recommendations listed in this section are placed in two categories. The first category - recommendations (1 to 4) – relates to the possibilities of exploring other critical dimensions of multicultural approaches in future research. The second category constitutes recommendations of a general kind visualising the possibilities of research into technical educational resources including videos and multimedia packages potentially of use in the South African classrooms.

All the recommendations are based on the assumption that in future textbooks will be easily available for conducting extensive research on educational resources, and that universities will also encourage research on the technical educational resources such as videos and multimedia packs. Further, students will be able to seek the co-operation of teachers in schools in the relevant curriculum areas. Most importantly, they will also be in a position to obtain the support of popular publishing houses in South Africa to obtain relevant textbook materials and will have access to concerned authors and editors for research purposes.

In the following discussion, I make six recommendations for students who would like in the near future to work in this research area.

#### Recommendation 1

Future researchers can explore other rival ideologies ranging from environmentalism, feminism and ideologies emerging from the liberal tradition. I am referring to these ideologies because in the course of conducting an in-depth study of educational policy documents I discerned that these perspectives have played an important role in shaping the general and specific aims of several curriculum areas in the Interim Core Curriculum and Curriculum 2005.

#### Recommendation 2

In this study I have concentrated on textbooks. In my view, in future, there is enormous scope for conducting a similar study on other children's reading materials such as children's fiction. Furthermore, a comparative study of the incorporation of multicultural elements into children's fiction and in textbooks can further enrich the research field.

#### Recommendation 3

In this study I could only explore the representation of African, Indian and white communities in textbooks as there has been scant descriptions of other groups in the texts (section 5.2.2.3.1). In future, studies on the portrayal of other ethnic groups - such as Malays and Jews as well as various African tribal communities - can also be undertaken within the multicultural paradigm.

#### Recommendation 4

There is also scope for conducting an exhaustive study of the incorporation of multicultural elements in the textbooks prescribed for different grades in only one subject area.

#### Recommendation 5

In the contemporary era educational resources are not limited to published material. There is ample scope for conducting research on technical educational resources, particularly videos and multi-media packages, used in the classrooms, as an alternative to textbook material in the field of literature and science.

## Recommendation 6

Finally, from my experience of analysing textbooks, I would like to suggest some guidelines for future textbooks writers. In my view the following guidelines could help them to produce a textbook which shall delight children and teachers from all ethnic groups in South Africa:

- The textbook should relate experience common to all children of all ethnic groups.
- The illustrations and text depicting the black population should not over-emphasise their poverty-stricken lifestyle but should show them in important social roles or as holding positions of responsibility.
- The language of the text should not evoke gender stereotypes and should lack racist overtones.
- The text should not encourage stereotypical views of white dominant groups as exclusively rich oppressive people but as ordinary South Africans facing problems such as unemployment and insecurity arising from the rising crime situation.
- Writers should try to ensure that all ethnic groups are represented accurately in the text. Further, authors should not attempt to put all black groups under one umbrella as the problems faced by the coloured and Indian population are quite different from the problems confronted by African people hence they require separate treatment in the texts.
- The author, throughout the text, should adopt an analytical rather than the usual descriptive approach, and should try to present controversial issues such as apartheid policies, crime and violence, wealth distribution, exploitation of labourers, from diverse perspectives rather than from the popular black perspective.
- The author should promote anti-sexism by providing a more positive and active image of women.
- The author should make use of pertinent, unbiased and contemporary sources while exploring controversial issues. The use of biased resources, particularly, should be minimal as they tend to colour the perspective of the authors themselves. For example, if one tends to study apartheid policies from books primarily written by

black political leaders who have participated in anti-apartheid movement one tends to get a one-sided picture of whites as they were often described in these texts as brutal and segregationist.

### **7.3 Postscript**

By way of a postscript I would like to share some of the insights that have occurred to me during the whole process of conducting this research. It took me a long time to come to terms with the fact that this study was an academic task which required rigorous study and a serious, non-involved and impartial analysis of factual information and viewpoints gathered from several sources, and that there was no place in it for my personal ideological leanings and comprehension of material and social realities that were shaped by my deep emotional longings unsupported by the existing documented experiences.

Furthermore, more than an academic journey for me, this research has been a spiritual journey. Spiritual in the sense that, through the narration of personal experiences of my close African acquaintances and also through the wide reading of documents dealing with atrocities committed against the black population during the apartheid era, for the first time I got an opportunity to acquaint and identify myself closely with the magnitude of physical and psychological oppression that a major section of black humanity experienced in the apartheid era. This realisation, no doubt, has left me a sadder person, but I am glad that it has given me a heart to understand what their heart used to be. To sum up, I would also like to take into account the personal losses in the form of solitary confinements in the computer labs and libraries and prolonged separation from my home country and family acquaintances in order to achieve this task within the scheduled time. I would like to recollect this hard and frustrating journey that I undertook for the gains of which I am not yet sure, through the concluding lines of Robert Frost's 'The Road not taken':

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

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