

Hédi Bouraoui, ed. *The Canadian Alternative: Cultural Pluralism and Canadian Unity*. (Downview, Ontario: ECW Press, 1980) 110 pp., \$4.95.

“Alternative” might be defined as “proving or necessitating a choice between two (or, loosely, more than two) things.” The reader with an active interest in the theme expressed in the sub-title will readily perceive, as did the writers of the papers included in this interesting little book, that its main title must be understood in the looser meaning.

This volume reports a Conference on Cultural Pluralism and Canadian Unity held at Stong College, York University, in October, 1979. As the editor states in the introduction, the aim of the Conference, sponsored jointly by Stong College and the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism, was “opening dialogue between the various communities concerned,” and the speakers had not read each others’ papers in advance. Each speaker/writer was an independent explorer, concerned with the general theme but developing a particular facet from a stance differing widely from those of other conferees and using an individual approach and method.

The range and diversity of the papers is best conveyed by listing the essays included:

Towards New Options for Confederation.	(H. Ian Macdonald)
Ethnocultural Groups and the Problems of Unity	(George Korey)
Cultural Diversity and Canadian: Unity: The Political Imperative.	(Stanislav J. Kirschbaum)
Quebec Separatism and Christianity: or A Highly Successful Cultural Pluralism: 2,000 Years of Roman Christianity	(Leo A. Brodeur)
A Human Look at the unity Question. The Canadian Polish Community in the Light of the 1976 Census Results.	(Rudolph K. Kogler)
On Multiculturalism as a Limit of Canadian Life.	(James N. Porter)
Relevance of Unity to Multiculturalism	(Alex Shumak)
The Individual of a Multicultural Society	(Jamshed Mavalwala)
Sociobiology, Prejudice, and Ethnocentrism	(Teresa Kott)
Unity and Diversity in a Transcultural Context	(Hédi Bouraoui)

A brief review does not permit a critical evaluation of so many independent presentations. Bouraoui’s Introduction offers concise summaries of each, comparisons and contrasts, and adds responses to the papers at the Conference. The Introduction presents an excellent overview of the Conference in a clear, effective manner.

In the concluding essay, “Unity and Diversity in a Transcultural Context,” Bouraoui is an eloquent critic of ethnicity as well as of assimilation. He is an ardent advocate of transculturalism, which he sees as tolerance, the acceptance of the otherness of others. “If we grant everyone the right to be different,” he concludes, “we will benefit from cultural enrichment and construct a unique, creative, tolerant Canadian identity.”

—George F. Theriault
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