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Chapter Three

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In John Sayles's movie *Lone Star*, one painfully funny scene takes place in a heated parent and teacher meeting. The subject is history. More precisely, it is the history taught in the high school in the bordertown of Frontera, Texas. Students at the school reflect the town's mix of Anglo-Americans, Tejanos (Texans of Mexican descent), and Mexicans, but also African Americans ("the smallest group except for a couple Kickapoo kids"), and (as mentioned) a few Native Americans. One angry mother, a white woman, says that Pilar, the history teacher and a Tejana native of Frontera, has "got everything switched around" in the history she's teaching. Pilar replies that she's trying to get across "some of the complexity of our situation." When another teacher agrees with Pilar that they are only "presenting a more complete picture," the white parent bursts out, "And that's what's got to stop!"

The moment is funny but nicely ambiguous. Pilar is a central and sympathetic character in the film, so it is easy to see the encounter as Pilar's standing up for teaching the actual complicated truth while the angry parent opposes teaching a completely truthful (and so necessarily complex) picture; some parents don't want the whole truth, or certain truths, to be taught. The woman says she doesn't mind cultures coming together when it's about "music and food," but she is indignant "when you start changing who did what to who." She complains to Pilar that "You're just tearin' everything down! Tearin' down our heritage, tearin' down the memory of people that fought and died for this land." A Chicano father interjects that his people also fought, but they fought *against* the U.S. Army and the Texas Rangers. An Anglo father replies that "winners get the bragging rights." One white parent calls the teaching "propaganda," acknowledging that "they got their own

account of the Alamo on the other side, but we're not on the other side, so we're not about to have it taught in our schools!" Perhaps the original complaint is that what is being taught is simply false as well as disrespectful. Other comments suggest other views. One is that winners have the right to tell the story their way, to have, in effect, the history they prefer among those that are possible. Another is that a community is entitled to transmit a heritage it treasures and wishes to bequeath to its children, whether or not it is the whole or the only truth. But who is "the community" here? Who speaks for Frontera? The discussion ends inconclusively. At the center of the confrontation is the importance that something is *taught*: that it carries authority, that it comes from an institution that serves and represents its community, and that it might shape the way the next generation sees that community and sees themselves. Or, as that angry mother puts it at one point: "Now, you people can believe what you want, but when it comes to teaching our children."¹

Lone Star is about history, collective and intimately personal, and about mythologies and legends, revised or selected memories, and just plain secrets and lies. In *Lone Star*, hidden truths that transform local and personal histories do come out, but only to a few. We don't know at the end of the movie which discoveries will be shared and which truths will be re-interred so that certain lives or legends can more easily go on. The viewpoint of the film is not a post-modern repudiation of truth as simply narratives all the way down. It begins with a piece of (literally) hard forensic evidence, the discovery of a metal badge in the desert. There are facts to be discovered about whose badge it was and how the badge—and its owner—got there. Eventually the sheriff discovers that a killing was buried with the badge and the remains. Here as elsewhere there are facts that can refute certain stories, including some people's understanding of who they or other people are and what they did. But some facts, including facts about why people acted and what we should think about it, or do about it, are compatible with varied interpretations and explanations. History is facts, but not only facts; that is why it is also an argument and, not infrequently, a struggle among individuals and within and between communities.

I want to talk about the moral stakes in communities and societies that do not seek the truth about their own pasts, where their denied, buried, edited, or confabulated history is one of grave injustice, violence, or oppression that still shapes the way people live together now. I argue that societies have a duty to be historically accountable, to aim at truthful representations of their history, and that it is a virtue in citizens to see that their societies strive to be accountable in this way. Historical accountability matters because of its impact on our interpersonal, social, and political relationships, especially when it concerns the acknowledgment of the troubling, shameful, or sordid aspects of a society's history that often have enduring effects. This societal obligation, I will argue, entails the importance of a civic virtue that is little re-

marked but central for a citizen of a liberal democratic society committed to the civic and political equality of its members. I call this liberal virtue "civic integrity." While civic integrity is wider than the part of it that concerns me here, I will focus on this aspect: a resolute disposition of citizens both to demand that their society be accountable to them for truthful histories and to assume the responsibilities—epistemic, moral, and political—that truthful histories might imply. When citizens are instead indifferent or actively resistant to attempts to achieve a truthful history, or to its implications, they show a lack of civic virtue of a particular kind. They will fail to support an honest and responsible self-understanding of and within their community. Worse, this failure can be a form of disrespect to some of their fellow citizens, whose status as truly equal members of the polity or community may be challenged.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a relation, a form of relationship in which A is accountable to B in the matter of those aspects of A's conduct concerning which B has legitimate interests and expectations. Accountability, in fact, is *the* relation at the core of morality as a living institution rather than a theory. Whatever the particular substance of our moral beliefs (beliefs about what is obligatory and forbidden, or what is best and what is bad), the motor of moral relations—how we keep them going among us—is the insistence on and acceptance among individuals of mutual accountability under the standards for how to behave. Accountability ranges more widely than morality, however. It connects individuals to others through the recognition of their responsibilities under shared norms of many kinds: we are accountable to each other under norms of law, morality, agreement, institutional roles, or common understanding. In holding each other accountable, we invoke, and so assert and reinforce, norms that we assume are relevant and recognized between us. Within this form of relationship, we are entitled (and in some contexts, we are obliged) to demand an accounting of others (or at least some others, at some times, and with respect to some matters) when their conduct appears to transgress a shared norm. Just by requiring someone to answer for conduct, we call attention to the existence and authority of a norm that we presume applies to that conduct.

Calls for accountability can be rejected or rebutted, but not in just any way. Practices of accountability are themselves constituted and regulated by norms—norms for when it is acceptable to call others to account, and for appropriate responses to the accountings of others, or to their refusal to account. If one does not accept someone's demand for accountability, there is something in the situation or in the relationship that one does not accept. One either denies the reality or interpretation of what one is asked to account for,

rejects the validity or application of the norm supposed, denies that one is properly or fairly called to account in this instance, or denies that the one demanding an account is entitled to it. To respond to demands for accountability is to acknowledge a kind of relationship and its implications; to refuse demands for accountability—or simply to ignore them—is either to deny that kind of relationship or to posit another kind. Thus, the call-and-response of accountability relations presumes both shared *norms* and assumptions about *relationships*. Demands for accountability and replies to them, in turn, can assert, reinforce, or reject norms, but also invite, confirm, or reject relationships. In this way, practices of accountability are dynamic: they can presume or reject norms or relations or propose new ones. If people succeed in holding people newly accountable, or become newly responsive to certain calls for accounting, new norms or new relationships are being brought into play. Accountability relations are symmetrical when A is accountable to B in exactly those ways that B is accountable to A; relations between superiors and subordinates in a workplace, or parents and children in a household are asymmetrical in many ways. But where we interact as equals on moral terms, we are answerable to each other under at least the most fundamental moral requirements.

Accountability, in its core and basic sense, means a presumption that someone can be called to answer, to stand before others for an examination of and judgment upon his or her behavior. I call this *answerability*. Answerability is an interpersonal standing, a way of being regarded by others, what the philosopher P. F. Strawson called a “participant” attitude. If someone submits herself to the examination and judgment of her conduct, she makes herself *actively* accountable. If someone refuses to accept that she is rightly placed under others’ scrutiny and judgment, she may still be *held* to account; that is, others may put her under scrutiny and pass judgment despite her indifference or resistance.

Beyond this basic meaning of being or being held accountable—being called to *answer* and to endure the judgments and attitudes that ensue—accountability can have the further meaning of *liability* to penalty or punishment. In many contexts, when people speak of accountability, they mean exposure to punishment (or penalty) for wrongful conduct, for which criminal prosecution and legally imposed punishment are a paradigm. This is certainly a very consequential kind of accountability, but it would be a mistake to think of it as the only kind. It is surely not the kind that makes the gears of everyday moral relationships engage. Indeed, precisely what makes these recognizably *moral* relationships is that they are sustained by our reciprocal acceptance that we are answerable to each other in certain matters whether or not anyone has the authority or ability to impose penalties other than reproaches or altered attitudes.

Answerability might seem like a weak form of accountability, but consider what its absence or rejection means: to refuse to answer is either to reject shared norms or to deny a relationship. If wrongful harm has occurred, and human agents are responsible, for those agents simply to refuse to answer is to hold themselves above or outside moral relationship to those they have wronged, either denying the authority of basic moral requirements or denying that those wronged are entitled to hold them to account. This amounts either to a threat (they are not bound by rules) or an insult (you lack the standing in their eyes to hold them accountable). More commonly, however, accountability demands are not flatly refused but are dodged by excuse, evasion, or indifference, without outright denial of norms or relationship. Dodging accountability might be identified more precisely as a lack of *integrity*, a concept to which I return later.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

If accountability is a relation, who is accountable to whom, and for what, in the relation I am calling "historical accountability"? I mean by historical accountability a moral obligation of communities, societies, or nations to aim at a truthful version of events in their own history. In some cases this might include an obligation to other communities, societies, or nations involved in that history, but it is always an obligation to the members of the community whose history it is. I am concerned with historical accountability as it pertains to grave wrongs and systemic injustice that are part of a society's history. I draw here on ideas behind an international norm that has emerged in recent decades: that there is a "right to the truth" of victims and societies about gross violations of human rights and serious breaches of humanitarian law, and a corresponding obligation of states to investigate and make available the results of investigations of such offenses to their victims, the relatives and representatives of victims, and to society as whole.²

A 2006 "Study on the Right to the Truth" by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sums up a broad consensus of international law, practice, and jurisprudence that there is a right to such truths, that it is both an individual and collective right, and that it is an inalienable and autonomous right.³ Access to the truth is seen as a profound need of victims, victims' families or representatives, and their societies. Victims and families need to know the truth to avoid torment and to have their dignity and the wrongfulness of their suffering officially acknowledged. But the study also refers to United Nations principles to combat impunity, which affirm the right of a people to know the "history of oppression" that is "part of its heritage," and the corresponding duty of the state to preserve "collective memory from extinction . . . guarding against the development of revi-

sionist and negationist arguments.”⁴ The study concludes that the right to the truth is “closely linked to the rule of law and the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance in a democratic society.”⁵

My aim here is not simply to appeal directly to an international norm. Instead, I appeal to the understanding out of which this norm has evolved: that there are additional and severe harms and dangers of ongoing injustice and abuse that befall victims when societies resist an honest accounting of their past and gross wrongs are not acknowledged. There are interpersonal, social, and political goods at stake in whether societies undertake to be, or refuse to be, historically accountable in such cases.

Interpersonally, individuals who suffer current injustice or are aware of continuing effects of past violence, oppression, or injustice in their communities face a double burden in living among others who do not share or understand their experience and who may either complacently ignore it or actively deny it. Those others will fail to recognize the harms and disadvantages, individual and systemic, that injustice creates or imposes. Claims for reform or redress will be resisted or discredited, provoking disbelief, mistrust, and resentment. But resistance and resentment will likely extend beyond the claims to those who make the claims. If they insist that their situation of injustice and its consequences are real, they are likely to encounter skepticism or denial of their credibility, honesty, loyalty, patriotism, or belonging. It is not only that their complaint will be discredited, but that they themselves will be; they are likely to be seen as losers or whiners, as people who do not love their country, or people looking for special advantages rather than justice, as people who cannot be trusted and are not really one of “us.”

Socially, members of groups that have been stigmatized, mistreated, or persistently disadvantaged will find that a burden of proof, or even of comprehensibility, falls upon them to overcome widespread skepticism, defensiveness, or suspicion that is, in a sense, not unreasonable in their fellow citizens. If the most widely *believed* histories, the ones that are taught, repeated, and assumed, are ones that are incompatible with, or even just silent about, the actual historical experience of their group, their fellow citizens may find it difficult to believe what is in fact true. Politically, members of groups that have been favored in projects of nation-building, reflected in ideals of national identity, and placed at the center of official or popular narratives in roles of accomplishment, leadership, or heroism are unlikely to recognize the same history as members of groups that have been, in comparison, excluded, marginalized, or demeaned in their society’s self-representation.⁶ Groups with histories that differ in these ways are likely also to understand power, responsibility, justice, and citizenship in very different ways, and the understandings common in one group may seem obtuse, incomprehensible, arrogant, or threatening to other groups.

Societies, I suggest, are under an obligation to be historically accountable, by aiming at and propagating truthful histories, because without this effort, grave and systemic past injustices to some of their members are not only unlikely to be recognized and redressed but are likely to be compounded with burdens of amnesia, denial, and resentment that demean or exclude them. Recall that to refuse demands for accountability—or simply to ignore them—is either to deny the fact that there is something to account for (especially a wrong), to reject a norm, or to disavow the kind of relationship in which accountability has a role. When a society, through its major educational and civic institutions, shirks accountability to its citizens for an honest history, it effectively denies the reality of the history and experience of some, rejects the application of norms of justice in their case, or fails or refuses to support a relationship of due recognition of and respect for them. It further deprives all citizens of the information that makes it reasonable for them to believe what is true, where that truth matters for basic relations of recognition and respect among them. In doing so, it contributes to relationships of unequal respect among citizens and relationships deformed by misrecognition, contempt, resentment, and alienation. The truth also matters so that citizens' loyalty to and pride in their nation is merited and not the result of childlike or childish illusion.

The work of truth and the play of falsehood in these matters, however, is complex. For example, a 2009 report of the Consultative Group on the Past in Northern Ireland, an official investigative body, gives this explanation of how a shared history can be a source of division and struggle: "Divided communities carry different experiences and understandings of the past in their minds and indeed it is this that divides them. Their accounts of the past differ deeply. They are used as a marker to determine and make positive, but more frequently negative, moral judgments on each other and so continuing the legacy of suspicion, mistrust, and hatred."⁷ This is an excellent description of a certain kind of case, for example, the case of Northern Ireland and many others. Yet it cannot simply be generalized. For one thing, the Irish conflict is one that exists for many in living memory, and with highly politically defined "sides"; for another, many events that are hotly debated concerning rights, wrongs, and responsibilities are events that are widely known in society. Yet in many other situations, especially ones with intergenerational histories, much of the actual history of peoples or communities is buried and unknown, or is represented only in fragments of odd fact. Key events or continuing practices that were parts of people's everyday lives may be enclaved in "pockets of memory" that hold local histories not known more widely.⁸ Sometimes these histories are remembered in the oral traditions of communities that are without public recognition.

The complications go deeper. Many segments of the public in societies that contain unknown, submerged, or enclaved histories will not simply fail

to know things; they are also very likely to have general and vague beliefs that are not neutral with respect to the histories they do not know. In many cases, it is unhelpful to speak of "conflicting" histories, or even of "denial," for these terms denote well-defined positions: A or not-A. Instead, there are many varieties and modalities of "unknowing" and "misknowing." There are silences where there is something important to say. There is selective appropriation of facts to fit a pre-existing story line, or some events, narratives, or sources are made prominent in a way that effaces or displaces others. This leads to history as a kind of fable, where a simpler and (to some) more acceptable story—often self-serving or even glorifying, but sometimes mitigating or redemptive—is constructed out of incomplete, altered, or edited truths as much as lies and falsehoods. The problem for societal truthfulness can be conflict or denial, but it is often silence, euphemism, selective attention, redemptive framing, or fables where truths should be.⁹

The creation of edifying fables is a constant temptation and can be intended to inspire. In a recent *New York Times* article, Julian Bond, civil rights era activist who now teaches at American University, is quoted on his students' grasp of the struggle for racial equality. They think, Bond says, that "there used to be segregation until Martin Luther King came along, that he marched and protested, that he was killed, and that then everything was all right."¹⁰ The fable is that racial progress is long and hard but moves continuously forward, either by increments or sudden leaps. The reality is that the movement from slavery toward fair life chances for African Americans in the United States is not linear and not without constant resistance and significant regression. Emancipation and Reconstruction are followed by Jim Crow laws, white riots, racial expulsions, and violently policed racial segregation in the North as well as the South. Legal barriers fall but economic inequalities, residential segregation, and racial stereotyping and stigma persist. The real history gives hope but provides no bland guarantees of simple or steady advancement.¹¹

Sometimes the issue is one of emphasis or significance, a question about which facts are given most weight or prominence in telling an historical story. The 1995 implosion of a planned exhibit of the fuselage of the *Enola Gay* in the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum is instructive in this regard. The B-29 aircraft that dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima fifty years earlier was to figure as the physical and narrative centerpiece of an exhibition that would begin with the context of the war in the Pacific, lead the visitor through a reflection on the decision to use nuclear weapons to hasten the end of the war, and focus on the technical achievement and valor of the crew in delivering this new and terrifying weapon. The fourth and penultimate section of the exhibit, however, ended up creating a political firestorm by attempting to suggest the reality of the explosion on the ground, using horrific photographs of Japanese victims and disturbing every-

day items (including clothing, hairpins, and a schoolgirl's lunchbox). The exhibit was cancelled after rounds of increasingly acrimonious debate with military and veterans organizations, repeatedly rejected revisions of the plans, and threats to the museum's funding.¹² The historian Richard Kohn writes that the exhibition plans ignited, not because of historical interpretations, which represented scholarly consensus, but because of "the omission of material, the emphasis on other material, the order and placement of facts and analysis, and the tone and mood."¹³ The decision to combine a scholarly treatment raising critical questions about the decision to use and the consequences of using the bomb with an emotion-laden commemoration, Kohn suggests, was a fatal error. This tale is cautionary concerning how and where fuller or more closely examined truths need to be and can be told. Yet if the truth should be told, these are questions about effective ways and places to tell the truth not reasons to forego telling it.

Historical accountability requires a society's commitment to more complete, accurate, and representative histories. In particular, it is a commitment to histories that are required in actual contexts in order to make it *reasonable* for people to believe what is in fact historically *true*. This is crucial where the truth matters for basic relations of recognition and respect among members of society. It also matters to a society's ability to understand itself, which understanding includes a grasp on how some people within and outside might or do have reason to see it. I hasten to add that there can be more than one truthful version of events, so long as the most readily settled factual truth of any one of the versions is compatible with the factual truth of any other. I do not mean to pretend that there are bare facts without interpretation, nor do I mean to deny that the significance of facts is dependent on some narrative which combines and interprets them, and which can make some apparently important facts turn out to be trivial, or apparently trivial facts turn out to be important. And I do not mean that it is always easy or obvious to know what is factually true. I mean to suggest that it is possible in many particular contexts to establish facts using repeatable methods and public standards, as is done every day in law courts, labs, and ordinary practices. If facts are compatible with more than one interpretation, they are not compatible with all interpretations. Such facts are the starting points for what might, not without contest or debate, turn out to be a shared history or a set of overlapping but not identical historical narratives.

Historical accountability is unlikely to occur spontaneously or consistently in any kind of political order. Manifestly corrupt and violent regimes have typically relied extensively on lies, fabrications, euphemisms, and disinformation. Yet societies that pride themselves on their adherence to the rule of law and democratic values also engage in these self-flattering and self-justifying narratives, partial truths, or strategic silences. Maintaining deniability about manifest wrongs in a relatively open society usually requires that a

large part of the public chooses not to know, or not to know more, or not to know certain details about what has happened, or that what is very wrong is still going on. Wherever social arrangements violate basic standards of justice, decency, or a society's own cherished and self-professed values—whether in repressive circumstances or ones facially more just—denial and deniability serve essential purposes in shielding institutions from the view of citizens, but also in shielding citizens from acknowledging and understanding what is going on. Denial or evasion shields institutions from accountability to citizens and citizens from accountability to each other. Thus is a society cut off from its own present and its history, as the members of society are cut off from each other.¹⁴ Truthful accountings endanger convenient and absolving fictions. Sometimes the exposure of particular facts precipitates a cascade of revelations, especially where relatively discrete events have simply been covered over and denied. But when it comes to national mythologies and deeply seated attitudes bound up with the identities of citizens, it will take a more extensive renovation of social presumptions and a sea change in burdens of proof to allow the truth to be durably established. Truth recovery concerning unsavory parts of a society's history will require not just a new look at the discrete facts, but also a reconsideration of how citizens see themselves, their national and personal identities, and their civic and personal loyalties. So it will typically, even naturally, provoke defensive anger, dismay, fear, and disorientation, often in very combative forms. The mirror held up to a society in these cases forces revision in mutually supporting beliefs about who “we” individually and collectively are, what is good about how we live, and for what and to whom we are responsible. There is much to tempt us to avoid or resist confronting uncomfortable historical truths, and to make us angry at those who would thrust these truths upon us. Virtues, it has been said, provide valuable correctives to human tendencies that, however natural, are not conducive to good lives, both individually and in community.¹⁵ In the face of predictable resistance to historical accountability, and in light of the many ways there are to avoid knowing or telling truths, there is a role for the virtue I will call “civic integrity.”

CIVIC INTEGRITY

In accountability relations, we keep each other responsive to moral (and other normative) demands and responsive to each other as rightful judges of our conduct. Integrity is the virtue of accountability relations. Integrity is the firm habit in thought, feeling, and action of being appropriately responsive to demands for accountability. This means being willing to give accountings of oneself, where they are properly called for; to accept the implications of the judgments and attitudes that properly ensue; and, where accountability de-

mands are out of place—where they involve invasions of privacy, or illegitimate assumptions of authority, or false presumptions of relationship—to refuse them, with a willingness to explain why.

To lack integrity is to fail to be reliably responsive to legitimate demands for accountability. By civic integrity, I mean the integrity appropriate to individuals in their role as citizens, and in particular, as citizens of a liberal democratic society that is committed in principle—whatever its failings in fact—to the individual dignity, freedom, and equality of its citizens. Civic integrity is broader than the aspect of it that I am trying to capture in my discussion of historical accountability. I would describe civic integrity in general as the firm disposition of citizens in thought, feeling, and action, to insist that their society is accountable to them under basic standards of honesty and truthfulness, and so to disapprove actively of hypocritical, dishonest, evasive, or corrupt activities of their society. Understood this way, civic integrity extends to protesting one's own society's engagement in covert agendas that are covert precisely because they cannot be publicly defended (such covert support of abusive dictatorships). It refuses and confronts rationalizations of official practices that violate basic values to which the society claims to be committed, such as the justification of torture based on appeals to fear and expediency. It resists temptation to shirk or evade historical obligations, such as treaty obligations or unfulfilled obligations of reparation for enduring injustices, when they are inconvenient or unpopular. Most obviously, it condemns endemic or systemic corruption, such as bribery, cronyism, nepotism, and influence peddling as ways of doing business or opportunistic lies in political discourse and debate.¹⁶

The aspect of civic integrity that I am thinking of in connection with historical accountability is distinct from these. It involves, on the one hand, a firm desire to want a truthful history and to be open to both welcome and unwelcome findings, and, on the other, a settled disposition to value and support the institutions and social practices that engage in the search for truthful histories. In other words, it is that aspect of the citizen's integrity concerning her society's historical accountability. Where society owes its citizens, individually and collectively, a truthful account of difficult and deplorable historical events and practices that grossly violated the dignity and rights of individuals, citizens show civic integrity in knowing that this part of history, too, must be acknowledged, its implications (political, moral, and social) explored, and its consequent responsibilities accepted. To wish not to know or to continue to believe what is more comfortable or pleasing to believe is the temptation against which civic integrity pulls.

Sometimes the temptation is to enjoy a romantic fantasy or an edifying history that would be spoiled by a broader and more accurate view. Monticello, the stately home that Thomas Jefferson designed for himself in Virginia, offers tours. Monticello was also the home of Jefferson's six hundred slaves.

A tour guide remarks in an interview: "It can be a painful process for some visitors. I've had some people say, 'I don't want to hear about slavery. I didn't come here for that.'"¹⁷ In other contexts, fear of information that could expose one to danger or impose responsibilities is avoided in favor of incuriosity, rationalization, or intentional avoidance. During the Argentine dirty war, it is reported that many Argentines said "*Por algo era*" ("There must be a reason") when hearing about or seeing acts of repression by the military government, including the abduction into disappearance of neighbors or relatives.¹⁸ In that same time of repression, Alejandra Naftal, a woman who as a high school student was disappeared by the government for nine months but was fortunate enough to have made it out, reports that when they were alone in the house her parents said, "Don't tell us anything."¹⁹ There are many situations in which it is hard or disheartening to know what is true.

All virtues entail practical wisdom about the limits of the possible and about reasonable responses to conflicts of goods. Civic integrity must combine a resilient admiration for truthfulness with an understanding of its complexity and the social costs and conflicts it might entail. Historical accountability involves an openness to evidence, to amended beliefs, and to truths that are always being placed in new context by additional information, novel context, and shared scrutiny. But we cannot simply suppose that truth is likely to emerge and survive through relatively unconstrained public debate. The speech of those least powerful is often publicly inaudible or socially overwhelmed. A great deal of speech in many modern democratic societies is likely to have as much volume as it can pay for or as much subscription as it can recruit among a self-selected audience of willing believers who are shopping for the beliefs they want. This is a kind of "marketplace of ideas" but not one that allows us to be confident that truth will survive in the clash of opinion.²⁰ The citizen with civic integrity is committed to sustain multiple institutions and access for many voices willing to engage around some common standards of evidence in order to eliminate clear or egregious falsehoods and leave the space open for sustainable versions of the truth. This citizen will support such characteristic institutions of liberal democratic society as freedom of speech and association; public and private institutions (including universities) with diverse research programs; strong primary and secondary public and private education to produce a literate citizenry; and free and competitive media with wide public access, as well as nonprofit sources of information dedicated primarily to the common good. But these institutions are meant to carry and respond to our best-tested standards of reason and evidence, not to replace them.

I have not found something distinctively like civic integrity in prominent lists of civic virtues of the citizens of a liberal state. John Rawls mentions fairness, civility, tolerance, and public reasonableness. William Galston adds virtues of independence and initiative, as well as specifically political virtues

of patience, respect for others, and a disposition to engage in public discourse by both contributing and listening. Richard Dagger, in his distinctive brand of republican liberalism, includes fair play and cherishing civic memory.²¹ Both Galston and Dagger include tolerance and a kind of public reasonableness among civic virtues. So does Stephen Macedo, who also emphasizes moderation when "public reasonableness has done its work, and plural and divergent views remain."²²

Civic integrity can produce some points of tension with some often-cited civic virtues, but also helps define their nature and limits. Civic integrity requires citizens to support a societal commitment toward truthfulness and avoidance of myth, fable, unreality, or dishonesty about a society's history, supporting institutions and practices that lend social authority to truthful accounts. Tolerance requires letting others have their own opinions and practices or respecting their exercise of autonomy in forming them, yet any defense of liberal tolerance must at the same time mark its public limits. Civic integrity might suggest some of these limits, at least concerning which views are taught and endorsed through public institutions.²³ Civic integrity would ask that the public reasonableness of which contemporary liberal theorists like to speak be held to a discipline of basic truthfulness in those areas where evidence (testimonial, documentary, and forensic) is available and standards of evidence (both commonplace and in some cases expert) are well-established as reliable. Otherwise, truth in these areas yields to popular epistemic consensus which may not be reasonable at all. Moderation ought not to suggest compromises with respect to truth nor condescending attitudes to the epistemic competence or responsibility of fellow citizens. Moderation seems most appropriately applied to the manner in which one engages with others when the determination of truth is at issue, especially when truth is unwelcome and is fought.²⁴

I do not pretend to settle these vexed questions, but to suggest that civic integrity in its aspect of the commitment to social truthfulness marks a distinctive territory and protects a fundamental moral and political value that requires to be harmonized with others. Civic integrity is likely to be a hard virtue because it wills the truth where the truth may be profoundly unsettling to the understanding of one's society, and understanding that may be bound up with aspects of one's identity, civic pride, and loyalties. It is a hard virtue for liberal societies to decide how to cultivate, given the core liberal values of freedom of thought, speech, and association, and the role of toleration as a liberal value. But if historical accountability has the importance I have suggested, and civic integrity is the virtue that protects it, this sets a task of deciding how to design and support the institutions and practices that embody the former and that cultivate the latter within a society committed to the equal freedom and dignity of its citizens.

Writers on liberal virtue do identify the importance of truth. William Galston concludes his book *Liberal Purposes* with a brief discussion of the goods "latent" in liberal practice, and one of the goods he lists is "openness to the truth."²⁵ Famously and disappointingly, however, Galston argues that civic education should aim at the support of the political community, not at truth. He advocates a "rhetorical" rather than rational pedagogy that offers the student a "nobler, moralizing history" rather than a historically accurate one, because it is "unrealistic" to expect more than a few citizens to move beyond this moralized message.²⁶ Putting aside his low opinion of the people's epistemic capacity, I am surprised that he seems to suppose a society worth preserving will have so little good to say about itself, or to recommend itself to its citizens, once its worst deeds are exposed. A society that finds this is true is not, in fact, worth preserving *at least as it stands*. Part of the virtue of civic integrity is grasping precisely this. If one believes one's society is worthy, then one must believe it can stand its own truths.²⁷

Melissa Williams offers one alternative view of accurate historical education as liberal education. Children need to appreciate themselves as members of "a community of shared fate" by "telling ourselves (true) stories about how we came to be connected to particular other human beings, and believing that we are responsible for constructing that connection in a manner that is justifiable to them."²⁸ So, too, "Children need to understand that these rights and practices [of a liberal democratic society] are the product of struggles, ideas, experiments, and more struggles. In other words, they need to see democratic institutions as an *achievement* whose current form is not entirely accidental or arbitrary, and whose imperfection requires their efforts at improving upon it."²⁹ Williams proposes the exploration of local histories that are immediately present in our shared lives as a fertile starting point for developing children's senses of political agency and mutual responsibility. What she suggests as an education for citizenship for children is also a model for historically informed public conversations in a democratic polity through which we come to know who we have been and how we arrived there. The virtue of civic integrity gives us a taste for these inquiries and conversations about our actual histories and what they mean for us now.

CONCLUSION

There is a good deal of evidence that if one generation fails to demand and support historical accountability for the wrongs of the past, the truth they refuse will not go away with time, but will persist in waiting. Today, Argentina has resumed criminal trials for human rights crimes committed in the 1970s and 1980s that were once amnestied. The villagers of El Mozote in El Salvador waited out decades of government denial to exhume and properly

rebury their dead massacred in 1981 in civil conflict. Spain's post-Franco *pacto olvido*—the pact of forgetting—has crumbled as Spain initiates reparations and memory projects over a half-century later for the crimes of the fascist dictatorship that were supposed by consensus to be forgotten. In the late 1990s, Australia investigated decades of coercive removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their communities and eventually issued a public apology in 2008. Canada is currently conducting a truth commission on abuses in its residential schools system for First Nations children, a system that embodied denigrating views of native cultures that have persisted for hundreds of years.

The past is not guaranteed to sink without a trace. This is in part due to the dedication of a few who continue to demand due attention to a history that is theirs or to which they are heirs; these few show what civic integrity looks like in action. It is also because of how the past abides in our present, not only in street signs, place names, and monuments but in ways we live, how we speak, in what and whom we believe, and in the questions we ask and do not think to ask. Yet only some of us have the power to determine the history we teach and the history we don't. In one of his eloquent and moving books on historical memory and political forgiveness, Donald Shriver affirms "[t]he duty of citizens to pay attention to the unjust, yet-to-be acknowledged historical suffering of some of their fellow citizens."³⁰ I have placed the *duty* in question with the institutions of society as a whole and have instead suggested that it is a *virtue* of individual citizens to demand, support, and value an accurate history that allows them to live together in and with the truth. This collective self-understanding is not something citizens can achieve or aspire to individually. It is a work of many, and one that goes on over generations. Where we find ourselves at any point in it, however, conditions the basic respect and recognition that citizens owe to each other in our ostensibly liberal but very imperfect societies with their difficult legacies and their struggles over hard truths.

NOTES

1. All quotations are from an undated draft of the screen play of *Lone Star* available at www.imsdb.com/scripts/Lone-Star.html, accessed 28 May 2013.

2. See Juan Méndez, "Accountability for Past Abuses," *Human Rights Quarterly* 19 (1997): 255–82; and Juan Méndez, "The Human Right to Truth: Lessons Learned from Latin American Experiences with Truth Telling," in *Telling the Truths: Truth Telling and Peace Building in Post-Conflict Societies*, ed. Tristan Anne Borer (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press), 115–50.

3. United Nations Commission on Human Rights, "Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," United Nations Document E/CN.4/2006/91, 8 February 2006.

4. United Nations, "Impunity: Report of the independent expert to update the Set of Principles to combat impunity, Diane Orentlicher, Addendum, Updated Set of Principles for the

protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity," United Nations Document E/CN.4/2005/102/Add. 1, 8 February 2005. See in particular principles 2, 3, and 4.

5. The Study on the Right to the Truth, article 56.

6. See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

7. Report of the Consultation Group on the Past, page 24, docs.google.com/file/d/0ByYFyegKZxncRE5QS015QWhMdHc/edit?pli=1, accessed 28 May 2013.

8. The nice phrase "pockets of memory" comes from Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86. I do not mean to diminish the complexities of attempts to achieve and share truthful histories among groups with deeply different cultural approaches to history and memory. Here the demand for truth exclusively on one party's terms and in their formats can be a bludgeon. See, for example, Brian Atwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History* (Crows Nest, New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 2005), for examination of one such deeply challenging case.

9. See Elliott Jaspín, *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 238, on the "fable involving" white racial violence.

10. Sam Dillon, "Students' Knowledge of Civil Rights History Has Deteriorated, Study Finds," *New York Times*, 28 November 2011.

11. The history of race and racial inequality, even as it applies only to African Americans, is voluminous. A classic on civil war remembrance and its racially divisive implications is David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001). Eric Foner's *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 2006) documents the violent retaliation prompted by Reconstruction. The persistence of deliberate patterns of racial segregation well into the later twentieth century is examined in James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: Touchstone Books, 2005). Elizabeth Anderson argues for the current harms of continuing segregation in *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

12. Historians tell the story and reflect on its significance in Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996).

13. Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 1036–63, 1043.

14. The most extensive examination of societal denial in its many variants is Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

15. See Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 8–14.

16. M. Victoria Costa presents an idea of "personal justice" as a liberal virtue that overlaps with my idea of civic integrity. Personal justice concerns avoiding complicity in current instances of injustice (including crime, dishonesty, or corruption). Costa's account of personal justice is in the present tense, but might extend to what I call historical accountability. See her "Political Liberalism and the Complexity of Civic Virtue," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 42 (2004): 149–70, see 163–65.

17. Todd Pitcock, "Nation Shapers, Singly or by the Thousands," *New York Times*, 3 October 2013.

18. Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and The Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 54.

19. Ksenija Bilbija, "Story is History is Story . . .," in *The Art of Truth-Telling about Authoritarian Rule*, ed. Ksenija Bilbija, Jo Ellen Fair, Cynthia E. Milton, and Leigh A. Payne (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 115.

20. Frederick Rosen argues that John Stuart Mill's position on this is commonly misinterpreted; the function of liberty for Mill, he argues, is to preserve truth and broaden access to it, not to discover truth. My point is that unconstrained debate is not necessarily either truth-discovering or truth-preserving. See Frederick Rosen, "J. S. Mill on Truth, Liberty and Democ-

racy," in *Truth and Democracy*, ed. Jeremy Elkins and Andrew Norris (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 181–96.

21. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 194; William Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221–27; and Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 196–97.

22. Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 71.

23. The literature on tolerance is vast. One helpful overview of rationales for liberal tolerance is Mark Mercer, "Grounds of Liberal Tolerance," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 33 (1999): 319–34.

24. See Eamon Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) for extensive discussion of the need to set boundaries to "reasonableness" and the problems of responding to the persisting unreasonableness that is always a fact.

25. Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, 303.

26. Galston, 244. Galston's views do not seem to have altered significantly. In a recent article, he talks about the need for social forgetting as well as remembering, even where forgetting involves "great crimes" in the history of a nation but where the truth would in some cases yield "little except outrage and resentment." I wonder whose outrage and resentment matter to this determination, and how. See William Galston, "Truth and Democracy: A Theme and Variations," in *Truth and Democracy*, ed. Elkins and Norris, 130–45, 144.

27. For a general argument against using history to teach patriotism, see Harry Brighouse, "Should We Teach Patriotic History?" in *Education and Citizenship in Liberal-Democratic Societies: Teaching for Cosmopolitan Values and Collective Identities*, ed. Kevin McDonough and Walter Feinberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 157–75. Eamon Callan, *Creating Citizens*, chapter 5, addresses Galston's view at some length.

28. Melissa Williams, "Citizenship as Identity, Citizenship as Shared Fate, and the Function of Multicultural Education," in *Education and Citizenship in Liberal-Democratic Societies*, ed. McDonough and Feinberg, 231.

29. Williams, "Citizenship as Identity," 236.

30. Shriver, *Honest Patriots*, 13.