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# Civic Virtue Out of Necessity: Patriotism and Democratic Education

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# Civic Virtue Out of Necessity: Patriotism and Democratic Education

## **Abstract**

In this paper I argue for considering patriotism as a civic virtue, and in particular I defend the view that patriotism should be endorsed under certain conditions as a perspective suitable for teaching in public schools.

My argument begins with an exposé to the debate on patriotism as virtue between those who endorse it as a requisite of morality and those who reject it as an abomination. I defend a position which describes patriotism as a civic virtue rather than a primary moral virtue. ['why a virtue?']. Next I consider what it means to be a citizen in times of war, focusing on the changing conceptions and manifestations of patriotism under fire ['why a necessity?'] I proceed to suggest that the qualified notion of patriotism which I defend should affect the way public schools create citizens, particularly in times of war ['why in schools?']. By 'affect' I do not mean a wholehearted endorsement; rather I mean a sincere consideration, which starts from public schools' basic democratic commitments, but nonetheless acknowledges the moral realities of a society at war, among them the heightened sense of the love of country.

## **Comments**

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## **CIVIC VIRTUE OUT OF NECESSITY: PATRIOTISM AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION**

Sigal Ben-Porath

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In this paper I argue for considering patriotism as a civic virtue, and in particular I defend the view that patriotism should be endorsed under certain conditions as a perspective suitable for teaching in public schools.

My argument begins with an exposé to the debate on patriotism as virtue between those who endorse it as a requisite of morality and those who reject it as an abomination. I defend a position which describes patriotism as a civic virtue rather than a primary moral virtue. [‘why a virtue?’. Next I consider what it means to be a citizen in times of war, focusing on the changing conceptions and manifestations of patriotism under fire [‘why a necessity?’] I proceed to suggest that the qualified notion of patriotism which I defend should affect the way public schools create citizens, particularly in times of war [‘why in schools?’]. By ‘affect’ I do not mean a wholehearted endorsement; rather I mean a sincere consideration, which starts from public schools’ basic democratic commitments, but nonetheless acknowledges the moral realities of a society at war, among them the heightened sense of the love of country.

### **Why a Virtue?**

The suggestion that patriotism is a virtue, I sense, requires immediate qualification: I do not argue here for patriotism as virtue the way most famously MacIntyre (1995) does – I do not suggest that patriotism is a moral requirement. When I

propose that patriotism be identified as part of a list of *civic* virtues, I qualify it as a special or derivative virtue, namely, a virtue that is dependent on place and time rather than a universal moral characteristic worthy of pursuing in most all human contexts. The virtue of patriotism is correlated with what Scheffler (2003) calls ‘associative duties,’ which are a subclass of ‘special duties.’ MacIntyre like Scheffler, describes patriotism as a derivation of associational duties: the nation has bestowed on me certain goods, both material and other, and therefore I owe the nation my gratitude and loyalty. These are expressed by a patriotic attitude, which is the preference for my nation over others.

Like other civic virtues, patriotism is dependent on a democratic context; like tolerance it is best practiced in the context of a group which endorses democratic premises. My current argument for patriotism as virtue goes against portrayals such as Nussbaum’s who famously stated that an “emphasis on patriotic pride is both morally dangerous and, ultimately, subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve -- for example, the goal of national unity in devotion to worthy moral ideals of justice and equality.” (Nussbaum 1994) Contrastingly I suggest that patriotism should be acknowledged by philosophers, educators and public intellectuals for what it is in this and other countries, namely, a moral reality worthy of recognition, consideration and endorsement into a democratic public sphere, including a comprehensive curriculum.

Simon Keller has recently suggested in an *Ethics* article that patriotism is a form of loyalty not grounded in “neutral judgment that its object has certain valuable characteristics,” although it is based on an *assumption* that its object – i.e. the nation – does have those valuable characteristics. Thus the valuable characteristics, which could include high moral standing, commitment to noble values etc., are not neutrally judged to

be presented in the nation's acts or inclinations. Rather, they are merely presumed, and patriotism is deduced from these unfounded presumptions. This logically shaky structure provides the basis for morally weighty decisions, some of which are expected from nation members (or the patriots among them). Consequently Keller concludes that patriotism is bad faith, and suggests that any of its possible instrumental values (such as generosity or a sense of belonging) can be outweighed by instrumental disvalues (such as war and stupidity).

I believe Keller misses the point by focusing on patriotism as an individual judgment. First, because patriotism is not a judgment but rather a sentiment. As such, it does not require sound logical justifications, just as other sentiments we have are not expected to be soundly justified by logical argumentations or factual references. What needs to be justified is not patriotism itself, but rather its social repercussions (or as Keller refers to them, values and disvalues). By contrast, racism can be rejected based on an argument such as Keller's. Racism is indeed a contention that one race is better than the other, based on assumed superior characteristics of that race, and without any reference to the actual justifiability of this assumption. In addition, racism carries grave social consequences. We condemn racism because of its 'bad faith' constitution as well as for its negative consequences (or disvalues) to the democratic public sphere, and to individual members of the state. This comparison clarifies the weakness of Keller's argument against patriotism. While my nation may not indeed be morally superior to other nations, it is very often superior to other nations *for me*. In espousing positive sentiments to my nation as a home, I do not generate any moral and logical fallacies. As for the social repercussions of my love of country, most of them can be amended by a

qualified construction of patriotism in the public debate. The notion of patriotism I wish to justify is less open to Keller's criticism about social disvalues, as it regards patriotism not as an individual requisite but rather as a commitment to a shared project. This approach to patriotism is distanced from Keller's, without going all the way toward MacIntyre's claim that patriotism is one's duty of loyalty and gratitude. Similarly Nussbaum's concern that patriotism goes against striving for justice could as well be eased if patriotism is viewed as a shared project rather than as a moral requirement. What I offer is not so much a middle way, as a contention that there is something to be taken from each of the two perspectives (represented here through MacIntyre and Keller) when considering the teaching of civic virtues in public schools.

Civic virtues are often regarded, mainly for educational purposes, as supplements to civic knowledge and skills. Citizens need to know their government's structure and procedures; they need to acquire the skills to take part in these processes through civic means. Some argue for the development of civic virtues to complete the set of requirements for the formation of civically minded citizenry. Many liberal political theorists tend to avoid the discussion of civic virtues, preferring to focus on qualities of the state and social procedures rather than on the soulcraft of citizens. This by no means is a general reluctance: Rawls for one identifies a number of civic virtues, including reasonableness and fair-mindedness. More recently, Richard Dagger described republican liberalism as a civic approach that is founded on civically minded citizens who have developed a set of civic virtues, first among them the respect for each other's rights. But even among those philosophers who cite civic virtues as part of their perspective, the love of country is not usually considered a virtue. Nussbaum and other liberals reject

patriotism in favor of universalism, cosmopolitanism or other related values, suggesting that “justice and equality... would be better served by an ideal that is in any case more adequate to our situation in the contemporary world, namely the very old ideal of the cosmopolitan, the person whose primary allegiance is to the community of human beings in the entire world.” (Nussbaum 1994) Following the Kantian tradition some contemporary liberal (and radical) authors suggest that education should aim at overcoming national attachments, whether in favor of cosmopolitan affiliation or of an individualized, ‘unencumbered’ self (Yack, forthcoming). For some critics, patriotism is merely “a primordial attachment to a territory and a society” (Janowitz 1983, 8) Many argue for mutual respect, tolerance, an ability to compromise and other attitudes or sentiments as virtues that offer a sound basis for the proper functioning of civil society. To include patriotism in this list means to suggest that the love of one’s particular nation is another such component, and that in order to be a good citizen of this particular nation-state one should preferably develop a sentimental affiliation with the nation. Some authors indeed suggest that patriotism (or devout membership in a nation) is compatible with liberalism, although they do not always view it as a virtuous position. Miller, Tamir and others try to interlace national sentiments with liberal values, to the point of suggesting that the two can be mutually reinforcing. Some suggest that ‘liberal nationalism’ is not only desirable but also possible, as the affiliation with one’s nation can support a commitment to the liberal values which one associates with the nation-state. In this they share Gutmann’s perception that patriotism should be constrained by democratic or liberal values. Patriotism, Gutmann (1999, 312) maintains, “is a sentiment rather than a moral perspective.” To properly respond to this sentiment in the context of

education, theorists must explicitly discuss civic virtues as part of the broader picture of a just society. They should not (and usually do not) defend it in its basic expression of “my country, right or wrong.” This would create a risk of uncritical acceptance of wrongful actions by the state. “A democratic education opposes this kind of patriotism when it encourages students to think about their collective lives in morally principled terms.” (Gutmann 2002, 49) Thus democratic education constrains patriotic education with the principles of a democratic polity.

By contrast, MacIntyre suggests the possible endorsement of patriotism as a moral requisite of a good citizen, and indeed of a moral human being. He contends that if it is a virtue, “patriotism is one of a class of loyalty-exhibiting virtues” (1995, 4) in which an individual is committed to develop an appreciation of her nation because of particularized goods she has received from it. The depiction of patriotism as a sentimental commitment arising from past goods bestowed on one by the state equates the nation to a family in which children owe their parents gratitude for their contributions to their growth and well-being. This equation is justifiably rejected by many theorists as unfounded, inaccurate and misleading. Let me point to what most theorists miss in their critique, and what seems to me to be the weakest aspect of this strongest description of patriotism, and than try to amend it. This characterization of patriotism as an associative virtue related to gratitude is what draws most of the criticism against describing it as a civic virtue. The distinctive feature of this defense of patriotism which sets it apart from other civic virtues is its temporality. While other civic virtues are described and justified in a forward-looking manner, patriotism is defended by turning to the past. Other virtues – fair mindedness, or respect for rights – are considered to be tools for generating a desirable



public sphere, for example, or as attitudes that support the possibility of a civil form of deliberation. They are virtues in both a contextual and an instrumental sense – they are desirable if they are developed in a social context of democracy (or liberal democracy); and they are desirable only inasmuch as they support and enhance the possibility of a stable, flourishing civil society and democratic governance. I suggest that this temporal difference is the main weakness of the patriotism of the sort that MacIntyre and Scheffler defend (and Keller and Nussbaum criticize). And it too can be corrected by considering patriotism as a commitment to a shared project, a forward-looking civic virtue. By describing patriotism as a future-oriented civic virtue arising from a commitment to a shared national project, it can be introduced into the sphere of liberal civic virtues, along with fair mindedness, a public spirit, mutual respect and the other more widely accepted virtues. Much like the other virtues, a certain form of patriotism is required for the preservation and thriving of a democratic society. A stronger case can be made for this claim in times of war (as I argue in the next section). Thus, whereas Keller would rid the public sphere of patriotism altogether, and Gutmann would constrain patriotism by the principles of liberal-democracy, I would offer it an equal standing among the civic virtues. When properly developed and manifested, patriotism supports some of the aims of a democratic polity, much like tolerance, concern for the public good, or respect for rights.

Patriotism as I understand it is a sense of affiliation with one's nation as an actual geopolitical phenomenon from which one receives various material and other goods, as well as a commitment to this nation as a shared project with one's fellow countrymen. This sentiment is woven of past experiences, present perceptions, and future expectations,

and it relates to one's understanding of her identity as well as to her beliefs about her relations to others (who she perceives of as nation members).

Patriotism is thus an element of personal identity, as Richard Rorty suggests, much as it is a component of political organization and mobilization; it is comprised of a sense of personal gratitude for past acts (owed or offered) but also as importantly a commitment for common participation in the continued shared project, based on a perception of shared fate. It is thus a civic virtue, constrained like other virtues only by its perceived effects on the constitution of a desirable public sphere.

Just like tolerance could be abused to pursue inappropriate goals, so patriotism can be the last refuge of the scoundrel. However, theorists and politicians do not abandon tolerance in the face of its abuses but rather strive to both cultivate and constrain it in an effort to best apply it to the democratic circumstances at hand. Tolerance can be abuse to promote illiberal or even anti-democratic activity; it can allow for groups who oppress their own members to freely do so; it can let groups who preach discrimination against other individuals and groups to flourish. The common response among citizens and theorists who care about democracy is not to forgo all attempt to argue for and implement tolerance. Rather the common, and justified, response is to clarify, qualify and implement tolerance in ways that would support rather than hinder the democratic aims of justice.

Similarly patriotism should be viewed as a special virtue, aiming to point at its moral and political instrumental significance while preventing some of its less desirable repercussions. Patriotism is indeed a sentiment, as Gutmann claims, but so is respect. When considering civic virtues, including sentiments and attitudes, we are interested in the public manifestations, and their effects on the democratic character of the state.

When patriotism is properly conceptualized as a shared project, contributing to the generation and preservation of a democratic public sphere, it supports deliberation, mutual respect and stability. It thus becomes part of the package of civic virtues that support a democratic public sphere.

I now consider why during times of conflict this virtue stands out as deserving stronger public and scholarly attention.

### **Why a necessity?**

The conflation of patriotism with liberal values is doubtful in peaceful times, and the circumstances of an armed or a protracted conflict clearly do not support this portrayal. To the contrary, war, security threats and protracted conflicts generate a narrow, often illiberal form of patriotism which is part of what I call ‘belligerent citizenship.’

In wartime more than in other time, certain forms of patriotism may in fact be part of the manifestations of good citizenship, and indeed that it could be described as a virtue, because of its contribution to the maintenance of a flourishing, stable democratic society. Patriotism is both a moral reality and a valuable factor in a democratic polity, and more so in times of conflict.

Wartime generates a set of social processes which can result in reconceptualization of the relations between individual and state, termed here ‘belligerent citizenship.’ This conceptualization of citizenship can be described as a return to a crude Hobbesian model of the state, as a protector of individuals’ lives from the dangers embedded in the ‘state of nature’ and provide them with an opportunity to live more

peacefully. The expectations of citizenship in times of war narrow down to resemble this type of relations with the state, in which government can expect much of its citizens in exchange for their protection from violent death.

Thus a belligerent conceptualization of citizenship emerges as a response to perceived threats to national security. Regarded through this narrow lens, the first responsibility of the state toward its members, as it is quickly reconfigured in the public sphere, is to protect their lives. This responsibility overrides the demand for civil liberties, and those are often steamrolled over by the overpowering sense of urgency to fight for survival (see Hardin 2004). The support of free speech diminishes, both through the criminalization of incitement, and through the suppression of deviating opinions via social mechanisms which command unity of voice and subscription to a narrow form of patriotism.

Belligerent citizenship is distinctly characterized by a reinterpreted notion of three key components of democratic citizenship, namely participation, unity and solidarity (also known as patriotism) and public deliberation. In times of war these take the form of an emphasis on citizens' contribution to the country rather than on voluntary participation; support for social unity and patriotism over diversity; and consequently, the discouragement of deliberation. (In Israel, see Barzilai 1992; Kimmerling 1993)

This description of belligerent citizenship does not seem to coincide with the liberal values of democratic citizenship, nor does it seem to support the outline I described of patriotism as civic virtue. By presenting the least favorable depiction of patriotism, I hope to render my consequent defense of it as civic virtue more credible and less suspect of sentimentality and bad faith. Thus, before I go on to defend patriotism in the context of war despite these apparent inadequacies, let me expand a little more on what I view as the

most significant disvalue of belligerent patriotism, namely, its incongruence with autonomy.

Acting autonomously, Rawls (1971, 516) tell us, “is acting from principles that we would consent to as free and equal rational beings.” Joseph Raz suggests that autonomy is comprised of the ability and the opportunity to choose among morally significant options. One of his counter examples is particularly helpful for my discussion. Raz describes a woman on a deserted island, who is hounded by a fierce beast (Raz 1988, 373-4). All she can do is plan the next step of her escape. Although no visible coercion is involved, we still cannot describe her life as autonomous. Raz’s view is that a life of struggle and suffering, with no morally significant alternatives to choose from, cannot be an autonomous life.

This view has some productive implications to a variety of human circumstances, including extreme poverty, abuse and various forms of social coercion. Here I focus on the question of developing a sense of affiliation with the state, or national membership, which make up the required attitudinal basis for the development of patriotism. This is the case both in peaceful times and in times of war, or a protracted conflict. Ongoing circumstances of conflict tend to generate a sense of vulnerability, fear and sometimes despair. It posits the state as a benevolent benefactor, who can potentially save the group or its members from immediate threats.

Can the development of patriotic sentiments in these circumstances be considered autonomous? Brighouse (2000, 66) discusses the requirement of free formation of preferences, and suggests that “it is true of the highwayman’s victim that she genuinely

wants to give up her worldly wealth when presented with the options ‘your money or your life’. But her preference, while genuine, is not fully autonomous.”

Consequently, some criticize the belligerent forms of patriotism as unreflective, uncritical, jingoistic and illiberal. Many are concerned with the priority given in the belligerent public sphere to security and national sentiment over individual rights and liberties. Although I share many of these concerns, I believe the desirable response is more complex than the one offered so far in the scholarly and public debate. I suggest that at least the type of patriotism that is part of the knee-jerk response to conflict – the rally around the flag, the sense of unity, the feeling that ‘we’re all in this together’ – should more accurately be portrayed not as bad faith, as Keller suggests, but rather as tough luck. In other words, wartime patriotism is not a simple jingoistic uncritical response, worthy of dismissal or harsh criticism, but rather a moral reality which arises from socio-psychological needs, and demands our attention and public philosophical consideration. Analyzed carefully, it can be shown to carry significant socio-political repercussions, including a host of potential advantages and civic opportunities.

Wartime creates a special need to protect democratic commitments in a contextual way, responding to the unique social circumstances of war. It creates a greater need to foster and enhance civic relations among members of the nation, to expand the public agenda, to encourage participation and engagement, and to support an inclusive conception of citizenship. The ways in which civil society and the education system perceive of citizenship and national membership can affect their ability to foster these commitments. It is thus crucial to maintain that the special identification with one’s country is not only a sentimental response to security threats (although it is partly that

too). It is also a mechanism for sustaining the strain conflict creates. Dismissing these sentiments or ignoring them in the public sphere and in the classroom may create antagonism, it may backfire, or it may render the civic educational effort detached and irrelevant. It would be more useful as well as justified to work *with* the national sentiments (rather than against them or apart from them). This is even more important in wartime than in peaceful eras, for those emotions take a more central place in the public life of a nation at war, serving the needs of endurance through periods of uncertainty and threats.

Of course, not all moral realities should be endorsed. Racism is a constant moral reality in this country as in many others. The mere fact that some people – maybe many people – strongly support racist views and hold them as defensible and even indispensable, does not turn them into virtues in any way. They remain abominations that deserve nothing but rejection as they are inherently contradictory to democratic values. Some theorists like Keller seem to regard patriotism as belonging to the same class of moral realities that need to be uprooted. They seem to equate the love of country with chauvinism and uncritical endorsement of the nation. But if we accept political-psychological evidence (Bar-Tal 1996) on the merits of this sense of patriotic unity to endurance in wartime we need to develop a more careful approach that does not reject patriotism, particularly in times of conflict when these values become stronger and more urgently needed. At the same time, we should not assume a compatibility of patriotism and liberalism, as this assumption is not readily warranted by wartime expressions of belligerent patriotism. We need to recognize the problematic nature of wartime patriotism while acknowledging its value to the individual and to the short-term endurance goals of

society. From there we need to structure a political educational process that would expand these values to the long-term, democratic (and possibly peaceful) vision of the state. In other words, we need to find ways to overcome the disvalues of wartime patriotism and to reconcile its immediate advantages with the long term aims of democratic, peaceful existence. By so doing, as I hope to demonstrate, we can also ease the tension between patriotic unity and the facilitation of autonomy.

The instrumental emotional and social values of wartime patriotism warrant a serious consideration by the main social institutions, in particular the public education system. Most theorists regard the conceptualization of citizenship as identity not solely as a descriptive project, but rather as an educational endeavor. Schools, like other public institutions, need not endorse this stance uncritically, for it carries significant instrumental disvalues as well, in particular, a diminished regard for individual liberties, and a narrowed public agenda. However, they need to find ways to foster and expand it, in order to allow for it to be expressed alongside the other civic virtues, thus supporting the flourishing of a democratic society even in times of war.

One of the most greatest challenges to expressing diverse conceptions of patriotism in schools arises in the field of social studies, and particularly in the study of national history (see discussion in Smith 2003). Let us take a look at the debate over teaching history in public schools, and how the notion of patriotism as a shared project which I defend would affect it.

### **Teaching History in Times of War – The Post 9/11 American Debate**



The challenges educators and scholars regularly face in the realm of patriotic education, are posed with a greater sense of urgency in times of conflict, when patriotism is perceived to be a national security matter. As is stated in the opening remarks of *Education for democracy, After September 11* “The issue of defending our democracy was no longer an abstraction, the question of civic education no longer an option.”(Albert Shanker Institute 2003, 3) “It may be” the study continues, “that September 11 presents us with a moment, an opportunity for civic renewal.”(ibid., 9)

In a review of history textbooks published by the conservative Fordham foundation, Finn laments the use of third person language in describing historical events, such as when portraying 9/11 as a “tragedy” that “happened”:

I've dubbed such verb usages the "irresponsible impersonal" voice and, regrettably, they're more norm than exception in U.S. history textbooks... things happen in these books (though not necessarily in chronological order), but not because anybody causes them. Hence, nobody deserves admiration or contempt for having done something incredibly wonderful or abominably evil ...The result: ...a collective loss of American memory (Ravitch 2004).

Finn is disheartened by this form of history he finds in high school textbooks because he worries that these book commonly fail to “establish a narrative of events with a strong sense of context.” Other studies expressed similar concerns before 9/11: “Faith in progress and patriotic pride have vanished,” bemoans a 2000 report on history textbooks (Sewall 2000)

On the other hand, authors like Chomsky and Giroux have been warning against the stifling effects of the same patriotic pride that Finn wishes for, at times of peace and even more urgently in times of conflicts. Where Finn (and other conservative commentators) finds no sense of cause and an alarming loss of national pride, Chomsky (and other left wing commentators) sees a vehement attack on democratic ideals through uncritical endorsement of patriotism. Chomsky (2000, 28) commented: “True democratic teaching is not about instilling patriotism.” In a similar vein, Giroux criticizes the blunt response of the American administration and the public sphere to the September 11 attacks, and the fear and hatred they brood. In an all-encompassing critique of the rise of patriotic pride, the attack on free speech, the threat on academic freedom and other disconcerting effects, Giroux (2003) argues that “ignorance and arrogance are no substitute for reasoned analyses, critical understanding, and an affirmation of democratic principles of social justice.” (25)

These two contrasting perspectives suggest that the teaching of patriotism should either be endorsed without questions, through the narrowest understanding of the term, or it should be rejected as a jingoistic attempt to quell legitimate political criticism and independent thought. Because these are some of the most visible perspectives in the field, many history teachers and school administrators find it hard to navigate between the two, sensing that these are the only alternatives. Teachers considering the liberal perspective such as that of Giroux or Loewen (1995) and the more conservative one such as Finn’s or Ravitch’s (2003) have a hard time figuring out what students should ideally know about the nation’s history. The first accuses existing history textbooks and standards as over-patriotic, shallowly optimistic and hero-worshipping; the second warns from a tendency to

reduce history to a narrow list of disconnected facts which are so focused on equal representation that they fail to convey any sense of national narrative. Both reject 'ideology' as an unfit component for textbooks and classroom interaction, and insist that teaching materials should stir clear of ideological partialities. The navigation between the bluntly termed 'liberal' and 'conservative' conceptions of history and history-teaching becomes more acute in times of national conflict, when the pressure to teach 'the correct form' of history or to inculcate the 'required values' – be them liberal commitments to civil liberties, or conservative forms of patriotism – are deemed essential to national survival. The more professionalist view, such as Schlesinger's plea to teach history for its own sake, its tangibility questionable even in peaceful times, becomes impossible (and, I suggest, not altogether desirable) in times of conflict. In another widely-circulated publication of the Fordham foundation, the author claims that "In the wake of September 11" the influence of liberal scholars and authors is "more destructive than ever." He explains:

Young Americans are being consciously taught to hate and be ashamed of their nation's history and to believe that America is a uniquely evil and oppressive society. (2003)

Thus most available texts, including the publications cited above, offer a strict choice between "moral relativism" and "moral clarity" if they are conservative; or between "critical thought" and "jingoism" if they are liberal. There is no need here for a detailed exploration of the reasons why critical thinking does not have to amount to moral relativism, in which any "opinion – your, mine, Osama Bin-Laden's" (Stern 2003, 35) is similarly respected; and why a call for a contextual understanding of history through

various tools, including heroic tales, does not have to amount to “lies my teachers told me.” Clearly what educators and educational administrators could use is a nuanced, contextualizes discussion of patriotism in times of conflict and beyond them. When teaching patriotism as civic virtue, we should heed Murphy’s warning about textbooks’ tendency to distort, sanitize or falsify history in order to advance particularistic (or bigot) ideologies. Not only does a sanitized version of history (or literature, or biology) subvert the truth, proving it intellectually problematic, it also stands the risk of creating an attitudinal backlash, generating an abandonment of the desired approach (such as patriotism) altogether.

In the context of conflict the need to endorse an expansive notion of education is more pressing, as the list of topics considered worthy of public debate narrows down, along with the scope of perspectives on those topics. The expansive form of civic education is aimed at strengthening attitudes necessary for national survival, both in the short- and the long term sense. The more immediate or short-term aim of survival and endurance requires learning to feel and be united as a nation, believe in the just causes that guide the nation, and endorse a positive version of its narrative – in short, they require patriotic unity. The long-term values and perceptions required for national endurance in times of conflict are primarily related to democratic principles, practices and commitments. Both types of aims must be endorsed for civic education to be worthwhile, particularly in times of war. Abandoning the short-term aims may increase society’s vulnerability and weaken the perseverance powers of the nation and its members. Abandoning the long term aims may render the nation vulnerable to a

diminished sense of purpose, a decline in civic engagement, and a lack of common political basis.

The teaching of a sentimental history or a national narrative may seem to offer a satisfactory response to both liberal and national demands. It could focus students' attention on the national story of their community, while encouraging them to endorse their existing affiliation to the group. Such endorsement, according to defenders of the compatibility thesis, should not take place at the expense of democratic affiliations. Kersh (2003, 1) for example suggests that "any project promoting responsible citizenship must address issues of *national* belonging in explicit detail." However this perspective cannot offer an appropriate solution to the problem at hand, namely, the inclusion of both democratic perspectives and patriotic affiliations in the teaching of civics and history. First, the teaching of sentimental history goes against teaching critical thinking, and even against the very notion of autonomy. As Brighthouse convincingly claims, "[the state] wrongs the child by conditioning his or her consent to the state, thus jeopardizing his or her ability to give the freely offered consent that is the marker of liberal legitimacy." (2003, 165-6) Many have argued similarly about the teaching of patriotism as well as autonomy, that by cultivating it the state may undermine its own legitimacy. That is because legitimacy has to rest on a consent given autonomously by the citizens. When the conditions for this consent are instilled by the state, the consent can hardly be regarded as free, and thus does not suffice as a legitimizing factor.

In addition, teaching sentimental history is both politically and pragmatically flawed. It is politically unwarranted because it tends to silence dissenting perspectives of history, and thus suppress pluralism for the sake of expressing a narrow and shallow

notion of patriotic pride. It is pragmatically flawed because teaching a noble version of history, creating a pantheon of heroes that are expected to confer legitimacy on the state's institutions (as Galston suggests) stands a grave risk of promoting, in the long run, the very opposite sentiments than it sets up to promote. The "spirit of detached spectatorship" which Rorty (1999) laments, the "cynicism that sugar-coated history produces when youngsters get older" (Nash, 1999, 15) results from the sobering realization of the complexities of history which were concealed by the teachers and textbooks. This change of perspective that occurs to students often in a later stage of their studies can render them cynical, detached or hostile to the aims of their patriotic education.

So much may be true in peace as much as in wartime. But wartime creates further challenges to the possibility of convergence among civic education, patriotic education (or the inculcation of national sentiments) and democratic education. The fundamental challenge that wartime presents to the education system is that of preserving democratic commitments. The propensity of citizens and government alike during wartime is to waive or suspend some of their democratic commitments in lieu of security concerns. The focal point of the relations between government and civil society changes in the direction of heavier expectations from citizens to contribute to the state; a diminished public agenda and a restricted public deliberation; lack of transparency and a weakened commitment to civic liberties. Confronting these problematic aspects of democratic citizenship with a sentimental version of national history does not seem to be a promising educational endeavor. The attempt to unite the citizenry in patriotic allegiance presupposes a conception of citizenship as a given aspect of personal and group identity. It assumes a unified understanding of national identity, history and tradition (see also

Archard, 1999). This presupposition goes not only against pluralism, but also against the democratic aims of expansive education. If we are to teach citizenship as shared fate – a basic requirement of expanding the study of civic education to include both patriotism and democratic values – we cannot rely on the determinate traditions which provide the basis for the sentimental teaching of history.

Moreover, teaching sentimental versions of history goes against the common good and national interests, by way of enhancing the endorsement of the war culture. The education system has long been charged to be a leading cause for the perseverance of war (Marsden 2000). In 1926, Scott wrote: “It may be that nationalistic education is the chief underlying cause of the war.” (255) A decade later, Schlesinger observed: “Among the possible causes of war, education holds a particular and significant place . . . for in so far as it embodies dangerous nationalistic prejudices, it is a means of disseminating them constantly to all the people. It is the seed of international discord for both present and future generations.” (1938, xiii) Ruth Firer eloquently demonstrates how education, as a “part of any hegemonic culture, very often reflect(s) and reproduce(s) it.” (2002, 56) Firer demonstrates how Israeli textbooks and curricular guidelines have such perpetuating effect in circumstances of war. By failing to balance the social need of unity and mutual support, expressed by the narrowing conception of patriotism, with the requirement of preserving a democratic public sphere, the education system contributes to the war culture, and thus betrays the long-term perseverance interests of society.

Alternatively, by teaching citizenship and nationalism as shared fate, the public education system can endorse the long-term democratic aims of public education along with supportive the short-term needs of belligerent citizenship. This approach would

mandate teaching history through a nuanced understanding of nationhood as a mutual social construct that is both informed by and constructive of individual and group identity (see also Smith, 2003). This constructive suggestion is meant to foster unity without abandoning critical perspectives, and to teach wider, more open forms of patriotism that still satisfy the moral realities and social expectations of wartime. Teaching a pluralist version of history that endorses national identification has to be practiced with a background understanding of nationhood as a communal historical enterprise of shared fate. In this sense, the teaching of a ‘usable past’ (to use Fullinwider’s term) would constitute the study of history as a continual interpretation of nationality as a shared project. It requires constructing the curriculum with an understanding of citizenship and national affiliation not only as a given, essential part of an individual’s identity, but also as part of her fate as shared with other members of her community. As this is a more flexible conception of national affiliation, it allows for accommodations of various sub-groups and diverse narratives into the teaching of history (and civics). While pluralistic and diverse, it does not shun away from fostering patriotism as an integral part of public education, with the understanding that some periods in a nation’s existence – such as wartime – give rise to further emphasis on this aspect of education. Even in such times, however, critical thought and even more so pluralism need not be abandoned, for the shared fate of the national group corresponds with the diverse aims of the groups that make up the nation. In other words, when patriotism is derivative not solely of identity but of shared fate, it can be taught as a flexible notion that accommodates qualified both liberal-democratic perspectives and conservative ones.



### **Why in Schools?**

What should school children be expected to know about their nation, its culture and norms? Should history and social studies instill patriotism or, alternatively, offer an exercise in critical thinking? Similarly divisive questions arise in the context of civic studies: should students focus on the formal functions of government and the technicalities of democratic processes - relatively manageable and measurable tasks? Or should they devote their time to 'learning the conflicts' (see Graff 1992) and try to unravel the development of ideas such as freedom or democracy in American history (or globally)? Should teachers inculcate virtues, or teach an appreciation of complex meanings and manifestations of ideas?

These and other related debates have been brewing for decades in the academe and the public and have spiked after 9/11. The changing conceptions of citizenship, civic virtue, patriotism and national affiliation that are characteristic of wartime are reflected in books and mass media discussions. (Giroux 2003; Ignatieff 2004; Ravitch and Weiner 2005) As in many other public debates, perspectives often collapse to fit familiar conservative-liberal lines. It is common to hear the one side advocating the stressing of American virtues and the great heroes of the past, and blaming the other side as moral relativist, unpatriotic and demonizing the nation; while the other side focuses on critical capacities and multiple perspectives, depicting the former perspective as jingoistic and nurturing unrightful sentiments.

Some of them strive to unpack the question, what are the needs of a society at war as they pertain to the education system? If my argument for regarding patriotism as civic virtue is correct, does it necessarily follow that it needs to be taught in schools? I would

like to suggest that it is so, and that schools indeed can provide a valuable service to society at war if they sensitively navigate their way between society's pressing demands (or interests) and its longer term needs (again, or interests).

Perseverance can be determined as any society's first need. However, in war the implications of this need to the political sphere are blurred; additionally, the educational implications of this prerequisite can vary widely. What does it mean for a society to survive? The survival of a group is in a sense a metaphor, as long as physical extinction of all members is not an immediate threat; the focus of the discussion of group survival is commonly cultural rather than physical. What is at stake is the survival of the national or cultural group as it exists at present. This is the source of the prerequisite to preserve the social structure, the core values or the political ideology that represent the group's 'spirit.' The need to preserve society as it is, including the social ability to reconstruct and critically reform itself through its proper institutions, is part of the quest for survival, second only to actual physical survival of the nation.

The crude educational interpretation of the quest for national survival is manifested in the wartime argument that the state, in order to survive, needs to cultivate in future citizens the emotional disposition that would enable them, even compel them, to defend their country. It is based at minimum on the suggestion that even if patriotic education is objectionable in times of peace, the social needs during conflict call for its endorsement because it may help support the country through the challenges of war. This argument represents one of the undesirable aspects of belligerent citizenship. The espousal of unifying patriotism and other aspects of belligerent citizenship by the public schooling system is perilous, for it impedes democratic justice, as well as replicates the

circumstances of conflict. Democratic education entails facilitating democratic inclinations, not enlisting students for their future roles as fighters. The pressures that the public puts before the education system to produce citizen-warriors, to inculcate the values of narrow patriotic unity, to suppress dissenting voices, should be faced with an expansion of public education's focus on the love of country, along with an unwavering commitment to democracy. This dual focus is properly manifested in the endorsement of a public historical understanding of national membership as shared fate. It should be understood and practiced in the context of war as a commitment of the public education system to work with the more productive aspects of belligerent citizenship to support endurance while maintaining democratic affiliations.

Teaching patriotism in a way that will expand its limits and enrich it with further perspectives supports the immediate needs of society to unite in order to endure conflict, as well as its longer term aims of preserving democracy and its basic value structure. In addition, the educational effort to expose future citizens to the broader possibilities contained under the umbrella term 'patriotism' can promote the democratic educational aim of autonomy as well. As I suggested, wartime or belligerent patriotism is analyzed by some social and political psychologists as an uncritical response to fear and the sense of vulnerability to impending threat. The rally around the flag effect after 9/11, for example, was an attempt to make sense of the unfathomable violence and destruction; uniting as Americans gave political meaning to the attacks. In addition the patriotic unity made it possible to exchange the feelings of vulnerability and fear with those of bravery, camaraderie and hope. With the continuation of the conflict, and the ensuing belligerent

conceptualization of citizenship, the narrow form of patriotism lost some of its rigid aspects as well as its social value. Still it defines to a large extent the ways in which social institutions, and parts of the public, envision membership in the nation. Hence patriotism, ideally characterized as an aspect of one's identity as well as a shared project one participates in, should be more autonomously chosen for it to properly correspond with the requirements of democratic education. Choosing among varied understandings and manifestations of the love of country provides a way out of the 'hounded woman' problem, by providing us with options that go beyond the confining conceptualizations which impede our autonomy.

Expanding the notion of patriotism as reflected and molded in the educational process can provide the conditions for realizing this demand. By presenting students with a more varied notion of patriotism, and soliciting from them a host of perspectives on the relations between citizen and nation-state, teachers can support its autonomous acceptance (or rejection). They can simultaneously support the infiltration of expanded notions of patriotism into the public sphere, which would be both accepting of the need to unite in times of war, and of the democratic claim for diversity and inclusion.

The teaching of national sentiments and patriotism should thus be accepted as part of the curriculum, much as deliberation on forms of patriotism should become part and parcel of the discussions of democratic affiliations and commitments. Creating citizens is the first and foremost responsibility of a public education system in a democratic country. A country that aims to maintain the democratic commitments of its citizenry in order to ensure the perseverance of democracy through times of conflict can never subordinate its "long range values," even in the face of the "life and death needs of today or tomorrow."

Moreover, the pressures that the public puts before the education system to produce citizen-warriors, to inculcate the values of narrow patriotic unity, to suppress dissenting voices, should be faced with an unwavering commitment to democracy on the part of the education system. Preserving democracy can go hand in hand with endorsing a public historical understanding of national membership as shared fate. It should be understood and practiced in the context of war as a commitment of the public education system to work with the more productive aspects of belligerent citizenship and patriotism to support endurance while maintaining democratic affiliations. Thus the teaching of patriotism should not be abandoned, but expanded to include further perspectives into a wider framework of democratic education.

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