

Liberalism and Civic Education

Unitary versus Pluralist Alternatives

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The importance of education policy to the establishment of a well-ordered society has been evident at least since Plato's *Republic*, wherein Socrates provides an elaborate state system of elementary and higher education, even requiring that everyone above the age of ten be sent from the city so that legislators could educate the young toward the Good and the city's needs and away from the particular loyalties and beliefs of their parents (1991, sec. 541a). Whether Socrates was serious about this proposal or intended it ironically is a debated question.¹ Nonetheless, Plato points to a fundamental problem of education policy—whether, when educating children, the interests of the state should take precedence over parental interests. In America, the primacy of the state's interest in education is affirmed, for example, in the stern republicanism of a founder such as Benjamin Rush. In "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," published in 1786, Rush argues that children need to be instructed not only in republican principles but also in the community's primacy over the individual. "Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself," Rush writes, "but that he is public property" (1974, 760).

In current writings on civic education, one finds views on the education of children similar to those of Rush. These writers do not go so far as to claim that children are public property, but they agree with Rush's assessment that when it comes to education policy, the state's interests generally take priority over the interests of parents. This is so, it is argued, because the health and well-being of liberal society depends on children receiving an education in certain liberal values. Parents and private schools, the argument continues, cannot be trusted to inculcate these values. It is therefore the state's responsibility to ensure that children receive

such an education, and this is best accomplished through a unitary, state-controlled system of education where most public funding goes to state-run schools.

Amy Gutmann and Stephen Macedo are perhaps the current leading advocates of the unitary approach. Gutmann's writings on civic education derive from an understanding of liberalism that is "comprehensive" in character, whereas Macedo's spring from an understanding of liberalism that purports to be only "political" in character and, as such, less partisan than comprehensive liberalism. As Gutmann notes, "political liberalism is a distinctly political doctrine. Its principles are limited to politics, and their justification does not depend on taking a position with regard to competing conceptions of the good life." Comprehensive liberalism, on the other hand, is a "comprehensive moral doctrine" presenting "not only political principles but also a conception of the good life, typically as a life of individuality or autonomy, that complements its political principles" (1995, 558). As comprehensive liberalism offers an all-inclusive moral doctrine, the plan of civic education borne of it aims not only to prepare children for citizenship but also to choose rationally among different ways of life. The aim of Gutmann's comprehensive plan of civic education is thus to develop individuality or autonomy in children. To this end, it is necessary that civic education foster in children the ability not only to think critically about politics but also to think critically or skeptically about values and beliefs inherited from parents and local communities.

Macedo's plan of civic education, based on political liberalism, stresses the need to teach children to think critically only about politics, to be educated only in those liberal values necessary for good citizenship. On Macedo's account, good citizenship does not require the state to take a position on ultimate beliefs, whether they are Gutmann's individuality and autonomy or ultimate religious beliefs. Consequently, Macedo contends that skepticism toward inherited beliefs need not be developed in children. This is not to say that Macedo is opposed to children learning to

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think critically about received beliefs. His hope is that children who learn to think critically about politics will then proceed on their own to think critically about all spheres of life, thereby weakening illiberal beliefs, including those that arise from strong religious convictions. A key difference, then, between Macedo and Gutmann is that Macedo wants to accomplish indirectly, if at all, what Gutmann insists must be approached directly.

However meaningful the differences between Gutmann's and Macedo's views,² both writers regard civic education as an important objective of public schooling, and both deny any vital role for either religion or private schooling in such education. They are "unitary" in their approach to civic education in the sense that they believe that, in the interest of social unity, the state's monopolization of education funds is necessary to ensure that most children are drawn into state schools so that they can receive the education on which liberal society supposedly depends.

My thesis is that the unitary approach to education is mistaken and that neither Gutmann nor Macedo is persuasive in claiming that the success of liberalism depends on a unitary system of education. In fact, their plans for civic education, rather than promoting unity, virtually guarantee civic strife by attempting to undo or roll back a deeply felt, historically rooted religious diversity. Moreover, their plans presuppose narrow commitments that many people reasonably might reject without thereby lessening their attachment to liberal democracy.

I will begin by closely examining the writings of Gutmann and Macedo on the issue of civic education, pointing out weaknesses in their arguments along the way. I will then briefly lay out an alternative understanding of the liberal political tradition and its meaning for civic education—what may be called, in contrast to the unitary approach, a pluralist approach to education.

AMY GUTMANN'S PLAN OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

According to Gutmann, Americans strongly disagree about the nature and aims of education. Some believe that children should receive an education in virtue, toward the one true good as defined by the state; others emphasize the importance of the freedom of parents to pass on their beliefs and ways of life to their children; and still others stress the need to educate children in a way that allows them the freedom to choose the life that they themselves believe to be best. The central difficulty in American schooling for Gutmann, then, is reconciling the tension between individual freedom and civic virtue. Most theories or philosophies of education, Gutmann believes, try to deal with the tension between freedom and virtue by eliminating it. In other words, these theories stress either freedom or virtue to the exclusion of the other value to such a degree that no conflict remains. Instead of dissolving the tension between freedom and virtue, Gutmann seeks to combine them. But given that people disagree strongly over the aims of education, attempting to combine freedom with virtue raises a problem: "[W]hich freedoms and what virtues?" Gutmann's

response is that "[w]e must focus not just on the future freedom of children but also the present freedom of parents, not just on the virtues necessary for a good life but also those necessary for a just society" (1990, 11). Her solution is what she calls a "democratic theory" of education, by which she means educational policies and pedagogies that focus on "'conscious social reproduction'—the ways in which citizens are or should be empowered to influence the education that in turn shapes the political values, attitudes, and modes of behavior of future citizens" (1987, 14). To prepare children to engage in conscious social reproduction requires that they receive an education not only in citizenship but also in autonomy or individuality in the Kantian and Millian senses.

Establishing conscious social reproduction as the educational end will not resolve disagreements in American society "over the relative value of freedom and virtue, the nature of the good life, and the elements of moral character," but it is responsive to our desire "to find a more inclusive ground for justifying nonneutrality in education" (1987, 39). This desire "presupposes," in turn,

a common commitment that is, broadly speaking, political. We are committed to collectively re-creating the society that we share. Although we are not collectively committed to any particular set of educational aims, we are committed to arriving at an agreement on our educational aims (an agreement that could take the form of justifying a diverse set of educational aims and authorities). The substance of this core commitment is conscious social reproduction. (39)

Conscious social reproduction is thus the appropriate end of education, but this end is attainable through a certain range of means. It is a necessary common ground from which a "diverse set of educational aims and authorities" might emanate. Gutmann's point is that commitment to democratic education, that is, the commitment to individuality or autonomy, leaves room, within certain bounds, for a diversity of pedagogical aims and practices.

One difficulty with Gutmann's plan of democratic education, however, is that in the quoted passage she presupposes what she already has denied. She already has acknowledged the profound disagreements that individuals have over the shape and aims of education, yet she nonetheless "presupposes" that "we are committed to collectively re-creating the society that we share," that "we are committed to arriving at an agreement on our educational aims," and that "we aspire to a set of educational practices and authorities . . . [to] which we, acting collectively as a society, have consciously agreed." If Gutmann is right about the deep disagreements that exist over education, which I think she is, how can there be a "we" that agrees with the aim of conscious social reproduction? How and by what means is there now an established common ground? Asking this question also leads us to ask who comprises Gutmann's "we." The answer to this question is revealing, as we shall see below. Although she maintains that her plan of democratic education is responsive to "common commitments," it turns out that this is not necessarily the case.

Gutmann grants that democratic education, as she conceives it, is not uncontroversial, but she maintains that "it is

a minimally problematic end insofar as it leaves maximum room for citizens collectively to shape education in their society" (1987, 39). We are left to ask, of course, "minimally problematic" for whom? We also must ask, again, how democratic education can be minimally problematic when Gutmann has already acknowledged much disagreement over education, to say nothing of her conviction that many parents are opposed to allowing their children to develop skills conducive to rational deliberation (29–30). Will not at least these parents find democratic education more than minimally problematic? Gutmann anticipates that some families will indeed object to democratic education on the grounds that it conflicts with their moral or religious commitments, but for her this does not appear to be a serious complaint. The appropriate response to parents who would object to democratic education, she writes, is that the moral character that democratic pedagogy creates is indispensable if children are to have the "chance collectively to shape their society," whereas the virtues and values that dissenting parents would cultivate deny children this chance. The problem with Gutmann's response, besides the fact that it does not seriously engage the complaint, is that it is circular. From the beginning, she constructs her argument in such a way as to rule out of bounds any objections to democratic education as the appropriate end of education. If one objects to democratic education, Gutmann assumes that one also supports values inimical to participation in shaping society. But why does one have to follow the other? Could parents not object to democratic education and still wish for their children an education that helps prepare them to be, among other things, thoughtful, responsible, law-abiding, engaged citizens? Democratic education thus proves minimally problematic for those already committed to rational deliberation, as Gutmann understands it, as a way of life. Without getting very far into Gutmann's arguments, then, we find warrant for skepticism regarding both the inclusivity that she claims for democratic education and the breadth of the common ground on which it is said to rest.

According to Gutmann, the principles of nonrepression and nondiscrimination are the constitutive components of democratic education. These principles are "necessary and sufficient for establishing an ideal of democratic education" in that they "limit democratic authority in the name of democracy itself" (1987, 95). Gutmann's point here is that although it is not inappropriate to bias children toward particular ways of life, it is inappropriate to impose "a noncritical consciousness" on them. Conscious social reproduction requires critical deliberation or "the capacity to understand and to evaluate competing conceptions of the good life and the good society." It is therefore inappropriate for the state or any group within it to confine such deliberation (Gutmann 44). Gutmann's examples of repressive restrictions on rational inquiry include requiring the teaching of creationism instead of evolution and Christian fundamentalists' efforts to have their elementary school children exempted from public school reading classes because they believe the reading texts are offensive to their beliefs (1987, 101–04; 1990, 17; 1991, 81–85).³ The principle of nonrepression requires not only that rational consideration of different

ways of life not be restricted but also that the state "inculcate the kind of character and the kind of intellect that enables people to choose rationally (some would say 'autonomously') among different ways of life" (1991, 77). To this end, nonrepression is "compatible with—indeed it requires—the use of education to inculcate those character traits, such as honesty, religious toleration, and mutual respect for persons, that serve as foundations for rational deliberation of differing ways of life" (1987, 44; 1991, 78).

Rational deliberation is not valued because it is neutral vis-à-vis differing ways of life, for as Gutmann acknowledges, it makes some ways of life more difficult to pursue than others. Nonrepression understood as the promotion of rational deliberation means that it will be more difficult for some groups (Gutmann focuses on the Amish and Christian fundamentalists) that depend, as Gutmann puts it, "upon resistance to rational deliberation" to pass on their ways of life to their children. That rational deliberation is not neutral among all ways of life is not, for her, a meaningful critique of democratic education. That a civic education regime of rational deliberation will make it more difficult for those who reject democratic values (as Gutmann understands them), such as the Amish and Christian fundamentalists, to pass on their ways of life "does not constitute a criticism of democracy any more than the rejection by a committed misogynist of the rights of women constitutes a critique of feminism" (1991, 82). The quoted passage lends weight to my contention that Gutmann simply disregards objections by those not already committed to rational deliberation as a way of life, to say nothing of the comparison of Christian fundamentalists with misogynists. Still, she insists that although rational deliberation is not conducive to the reproduction of all ways of life, it "remains the form of freedom most suitable to a democratic society in which adults must be free to deliberate and disagree but constrained to secure the intellectual grounds for deliberation and disagreement among children" (1987, 45).

The second constitutive component of conscious social reproduction is nondiscrimination. That is, the standard of conscious social reproduction requires that society as a whole, and not merely some portion of it, be equipped to reproduce itself. The principle of nondiscrimination thus prevents both the state and parents from denying any educable child a democratic education, "an education conducive to deliberation among conceptions of the good life and the good society."

GUTMANN'S CASE AGAINST PUBLIC FUNDING OF NONGOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLING

Having seen the contours of Gutmann's theory of democratic education, let us now examine why, on her account, it is appropriate that little or no public funds be expended on schools not owned by the state or on students therein. Specifically, we now turn to Gutmann's critique of school choice or voucher programs—programs that permit public funds to support private education. It should first be noted that Gutmann's opposition to vouchers is not based on the claim that public schools do a better job than private schools of prepar-

ing children for adulthood. Gutmann writes: "The evidence is scanty, but it suggests that private schools may on average do better than public schools in bringing all their students up to a relatively high level of learning, in teaching American history and civics in an intellectually challenging manner, and even in racially integrating classrooms" (1987, 65). Gutmann does not claim, as some do, that the better performance of private schools occurs simply because they attract the more affluent and capable students. In fact, she notes that "[a]lthough the median income of parents who send their children to parochial schools is higher than the median of public-school parents, the distribution of income among private-school parents is very broad." She concedes further that "[f]ar from siphoning off only the best and brightest, private schools admit students with almost as broad a range of abilities as public schools" and that "[p]rivate schools are more segregated than public ones by religion, but not by class, race, or academic talent" (117).⁴ One would think that in granting the foregoing about private schools, Gutmann would not object to vouchers. Because private schools are more integrated, except for religion, than public schools, and because they do a better job of teaching civics and history, do they not then better prepare students for active civic engagement than do public schools? Her opposition is based on the fact that voucher proposals generally insist only on the inculcation of a minimum set of common standards, which, in her view, would not necessarily include all that is required for conscious social reproduction.

Although Gutmann argues that governmental funds should not be expended to subsidize parental choice of private schools, she does not go so far as to suggest that private schooling should be abolished. Private schools are important, she holds, because they allow "parents who are intensely dissatisfied with the public schools" and their children an exit from the public schools. One might add that being "intensely dissatisfied with the public schools" is not necessarily enough to compel parents to exit the public schools. For private schooling to be a meaningful option, dissatisfied parents also must have the financial wherewithal to afford private schooling. Gutmann's point, however, is that it would be a violation of the democratic principles she is advocating to deny dissenting parents the right of exit from the public schools. That is, it would be repressive not to allow dissatisfied families the right of exit. Gutmann thus grounds acceptance of private education in her democratic principles, rather than in the rights of parents to direct the educational experience of their children.

Gutmann's accommodation of private schools is conditioned, however, on the requirement that they also teach democratic values. Gutmann writes:

A mixed system (of public and private schools) should attempt to achieve a rather delicate balance: permitting parents who are intensely dissatisfied with public schools to send their children to private schools, but also trying to develop in all children—regardless of the religious commitments of their parents—a common democratic character. (1987, 117–18)

Because in Gutmann's scheme private schools are allowed "on the grounds that dissenting parents should be permitted

to exit from the public schools," the state may not require "exactly the same standards" for "private schools without taking away with one legislative hand what the other granted" (118). In the interest of promoting democratic character in all children, however, even those attending private schools, the state is justified in requiring private schools to teach "religious toleration, mutual respect among races, and those cognitive skills necessary for ensuring all children an adequate education" (118). These schools would still be free to provide religious instruction, but they would be required to inculcate in students a "common democratic morality."

With regard to home schooling, Gutmann writes little, other than to say that the demands of democratic education do not leave parents "free . . . to keep their children home from school" (1987, 234). It is not clear if she is referring to home schooling or to children enrolled in a school. Given her insistence that many parents cannot be trusted to give their children a democratic education, however, it seems unlikely that she would endorse home schooling.

Although Gutmann is opposed to unregulated private schools, school choice, and home schooling, she makes another concession regarding the effectiveness of the high school civics curriculum that calls into question her entire project: she concedes that empirical studies generally show that the civics curriculum has little impact on students. That is, when students "are tested for political knowledge, political interest, sense of political efficacy, political trust, and civic tolerance," those who have had courses in history and civics score only marginally better on these measures than students who have not had the courses (1987, 105).⁵ In other words, the difference in scores between students who have taken the civics curriculum and those who have not is statistically insignificant.

It would thus seem that in yielding to the empirical data, Gutmann has undermined not only her opposition to vouchers but also her entire project. After all, she has linked state-mandated democratic education for all children to the health, well-being, and durability of democratic society. That high school civics courses do little by way of enhancing "political knowledge, political interest, sense of political efficacy, political trust, and civic tolerance" suggests two important objections to Gutmann's plan of democratic education. First, the empirical data suggest that public schools are incapable of developing a critical consciousness in children. Gutmann's response to this objection is that the "[e]mpirical studies measure the results of civics and history courses as they are, not as they might be" (1987, 106). Gutmann is confident, in other words, that the civics curriculum and the way it is taught can be restructured to accomplish her goals. She does not, however, lay out how or in what time frame such a restructuring could be accomplished. Even if one favors her plan, she has not given us reason to believe that it is feasible.

The second and more fundamental objection to Gutmann's plan, as suggested by the empirical data, is that civic stability does not in fact depend on her scheme, much less on a state-run, unitary system of education. If the civics curriculum has such a negligible effect on political knowledge, sense of political efficacy, civic tolerance, and so on, should

we not then look to other forces afoot in society to explain the relative stability of American society? Tocqueville, for example, maintains that in America, those mores required to sustain liberty and civic responsibility are developed through the initiatives of families and voluntary associations. Let us also consider Tocqueville's emphasis on the steadying influence of religion. Although Christianity does not loom over the civic landscape like it did in his time, is it not possible that religious faith continues to restrain the less desirable tendencies of democratic society that worried Tocqueville? Perhaps it is simply the case that the stability and fundamental decency of American society is owing to the vestiges of a once vibrant religious faith and that the increases in crime, drug use, pornography, divorce, and teenage pregnancy, as well as falling academic standards, among other things, are related to its decline. I do not mean that Tocqueville's analysis necessarily holds true today, but such arguments cannot be dismissed out of hand, as Gutmann is wont to do. She insists dogmatically that social cohesion depends on her plan of democratic education while virtually conceding that the empirical evidence does not substantiate her claim.

Another objection to Gutmann's plan may be drawn from John Stuart Mill, who argues that the government should require all children to be educated, but should not itself provide that education. That is, schools should be operated mostly by private entities, although Mill does allow for state-operated schools so as to increase the educational opportunities available to children. Mill's objection to state schooling is that it "is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another" (1989, 106). Because Mill recommends that education be left to families and private schools, with the state defraying the costs for children who cannot afford schooling, it would appear that Mill advocates a plural system of education that vests parents with primary educational authority. Gutmann tends to deny this, however. To be sure, Mill does not call for absolute parental control of education. He does, after all, permit the state to require the teaching and testing of certain subjects. On Gutmann's account, there are two crucial differences between Mill's views on education and a plural system. According to Gutmann, Mill's

preference for private schools follows not from a principled defense of parental choice but from an empirical presumption that state control of schools lead to repression ("a despotism over the mind"). Since absolute parental control over education also threatens despotism over children's minds, it is as suspect on Millian grounds. Perhaps for this reason, Mill severely limits the educational authority of parents by (among other things) a system of "public examinations, extending to all children and beginning at an early age." (1987, 33 n. 26)

It is questionable if this is an entirely accurate reading of Mill. Mill does call for public examinations, but rather than "severely limiting the educational authority of parents," it seems that Mill's intent is to limit the educational authority of the state. He does this by permitting state schools only if they increase the diversity of educational opportunities for children and by confining the public examinations "to facts

and positive science exclusively," that is, he denies the state the right to test in a way that biases "the conclusions of its citizens on disputed subjects." Mill's objection to state schooling is based primarily on the homogenizing effect it would have on children, who would be molded according "to that which pleases the predominant power in the government." Moreover, Mill is not naïve about the consequences of vesting educational authority in parents. He knows that parents will seek to pass on their beliefs to their children, yet he views this as a better outcome than having all children molded in the image of the powers that control the state, because at least this preserves the diversity that already exists. As Mill writes: "Under this system, the rising generation would be no worse off in regard to all disputed truths, *than they are at present*; they would be brought up either churchmen or dissenters *as they are now*, the State merely taking care that they should be instructed churchmen, or instructed dissenters" (1989, 107; emphasis added). Although Mill does allow the state to require the teaching of certain subjects, he does this not to prevent parental despotism over children's minds, but simply to insure that they are educated in specified subjects, even as they continue to hold beliefs inherited from parents on disputed questions.

Having considered a unitary plan of civic education that is rooted in comprehensive liberalism, let us now examine a unitary plan of civic education that derives from political liberalism.

STEPHEN MACEDO'S PLAN OF CIVIC EDUCATION

According to Macedo, a unitary educational system is necessary because it alone can forge a common civic life out of the diverse religious, moral, and philosophical beliefs that exist in America. A common civic life—indeed, liberalism itself—requires that men and women with diverse views of the good life somehow develop a shared set of values—not just any values, but values supportive of liberal democracy: The "project of creating citizens is one that every liberal democratic state must somehow undertake" (2000, ix). Macedo is unwilling to rely on an invisible hand to form liberal citizens from our diversity. Individuals and groups who are decidedly illiberal in their beliefs and practices would, if left to their own devices, simply pass their illiberal ways from one generation to the next. Government must assume responsibility for forming liberal citizens, and this is best accomplished where the bulk of public funding goes to state-owned schools. Such schools are best able to transform children from diverse backgrounds into liberal citizens.

As I noted at the outset, the critical problem of Macedo's writings is that he fails to show persuasively that the success of liberalism depends on a unitary system of education. His plan of civic education, moreover, is needlessly antagonistic toward religion and rests on narrow commitments that many people reasonably might refuse without also rejecting the liberal political tradition. I will now examine Macedo's theoretical framework and the plan of civic education that derives from it. Because Macedo understands religion as presenting a special danger to liberal

society. I also will examine closely his prescriptions for dealing properly with religion.

Macedo's Theoretical Framework

"Civic liberalism" is the name that Macedo gives to his effort to extend John Rawls's idea of political liberalism to our broader civic life. Although Rawls concerns himself largely with justifying basic constitutional principles, Macedo stresses the need for liberals to actively shape the broader civic culture, including the "institutions, practices, and character traits . . . that help promote a publicly reasonable liberal community" (2000, 11, 169). Political liberalism for Rawls, of course, neither rests upon nor presupposes any comprehensive philosophical commitments, and it refrains from taking sides in controversies over such commitments (1993). It aims instead to establish rules of justice and political arrangements that are independent of or neutral with respect to ultimate philosophical principles. Political liberalism is grounded in an "overlapping consensus" that requires individuals to set aside their comprehensive moral, religious, and philosophical commitments and establish or endorse liberal political arrangements on the basis of shared political values. Macedo explains:

People who disagree about their highest ideals and their conceptions of the whole truth might nevertheless agree that public aims such as peace, prosperity, and equal liberty are very important. That is political liberalism's virtue: it focuses our attention on shared political values without requiring or expecting agreement on ultimate ends or a comprehensive set of moral values governing all of our lives. (1995a, 474)⁶

Individuals are not required to renounce what they believe to be true, but simply "to acknowledge the difficulty of publicly establishing any single account of the whole truth." Political liberalism "invites us to put some of our (true) beliefs aside when it comes to laying the groundwork for common political institutions" (474). Macedo insists that political liberalism is not hostile to religious belief, but he adds that diversity has "to be kept in its place." That is, religious and other forms of diversity are desirable within a liberal society only insofar as their civic dimensions comport with the principles of Rawls's political liberalism.

The common values that political liberalism generates for the guidance of public life are values that comport with "public reason," values that "reasonable people" can affirm. In Macedo's view, arguments that are based on truth claims of a comprehensive nature fail the test of public reason. He therefore wants to establish as a requirement of the liberal public sphere that all public arguments must be political arguments only, that is, they cannot be based on comprehensive claims.

Macedo's contention that comprehensive arguments cannot in any sense be "public reasons" seems wrong, and I am thus skeptical of his claim that political liberalism is not motivated by "fear of conflict or a desire to exclude religious speech from the public realm." First, are not all arguments that have broad appeal or that widely resonate with citizens properly to be understood as "public" arguments? Is it not the case that in seeking to have some policy enacted into law, advocates of that policy will want to try to

appeal to as many citizens as possible? As Sanford Levinson (1992) asks, so long as individuals are free to reject arguments that they do not understand or agree with, why does it matter if comprehensive arguments are made? Why not simply allow individuals to decide for themselves the types of arguments that they believe will be most effective in advancing their cause? Suppose that someone argued that policy X, a prudent measure that violates no rights, should become law because it is God's will or, for that matter, the design of Plato's Demiurge or Hegel's World Spirit. Aside from Macedo's arbitrary exclusion of such arguments, why, if a majority chooses to accept them, should we not then conclude that they comport with "public reason"? In truth, comprehensive arguments of this sort do not carry much weight in liberal societies and are likely to be counterproductive in gaining broad support for public policies. Why then preclude arguments that are unlikely to have much appeal? Why not allow individuals to take their chances in the public arena with whatever arguments they wish to advance? Macedo's exclusion of ultimate appeals, including religious ones, seems to rest on fear, that is, fear that the public is incapable of weighing such appeals and deciding if they are reasonable or salutary.

The key question, of course, concerns what makes an argument reasonable, if not the mere fact that the public embraces it. Macedo could do what philosophers have traditionally done—give a substantive account of which political principles truly conform to reason—but this is precluded by his decision to remain within the confines of Rawls's political liberalism. For Macedo, it is simply a given that citizens hold incommensurably diverse moral, religious, and philosophical commitments that cannot be reconciled by appeals to a higher reason or substantive good. Macedo's solution is to identify a supposedly neutral basis for moral reasoning that generates a set of "common" values with which no reasonable person could disagree. In truth, however, Macedo has done nothing more than identify a collection of values that are common to individuals committed to a certain framework of beliefs and assumptions about how a liberal society can be made to work. Those who live by a different framework and who want a public hearing for their views are by definition "unreasonable." Because such people are unreasonable, their views therefore need not be considered in debates over the political arrangements that define public life.

In making "public reason" the polestar of moral reasoning, Macedo presents it as deriving from the moral judgment of no one, that is, he presents it as independent of or neutral with respect to all moral judgments. I do not wish to suggest that Macedo is cynical or acting in bad faith, but as Stanley Fish (1997) has noted, advocates of public reason must make this claim, because public policy not based on public reason entails the unjust imposition of private moral judgments—the very outcome political liberalism is supposed to prevent.⁷ Absent the claim that political liberalism derives from the moral judgment of no one, Macedo would be acting in precisely the manner of those groups whom he singles out as particularly unreasonable. Fish's point is well-taken: what is really being invoked here is not a set of

principles that are neutral or above the fray, but “some very personal agenda passing itself off as the impersonal judgment of all, a judgment that just happens to exclude” non-Rawlsian ideas and perspectives (1997, 2293).

Instead of regarding individuals who cannot or will not engage in “epistemic abstinence”⁸ as beyond the pale of civic discourse, it seems to me that in the interest of strengthening civic attachments there is a valuable benefit derived from encouraging individuals to make public arguments in the idiom of their choice. If individuals must first recast their public arguments along Rawlsian lines, will not the experience of losing a policy debate incline them to view that loss merely as the foreordained outcome of an arbitrary and hostile process, rather than on the true merits of their case? Will they not harbor the conviction that they might have succeeded had they been able to advance their arguments according to their own best lights? Conversely, will not the civic attachment of those individuals be strengthened, or at least not weakened, if they lose in the public arena after making the best arguments they can in the idiom of their choice? In any case, it is far from clear just how political liberalism reinforces civic attachment for those who are discouraged from entering the public sphere on their own terms.

It is worth remembering that Macedo’s way of dealing with disagreeable opinions and beliefs was anticipated and rejected by Mill. According to Mill, one can never know the truth of a matter unless all the contending views are considered. “He who knows only his own side of the case,” Mill writes, “knows little of that” (1989, 38). Moreover, for someone seeking the truth of a matter, it is not enough that one hears adversarial arguments from teachers who do not actually believe what they are arguing. To gain a full understanding of those arguments, one must hear them from adversaries themselves, from those who know them best, who believe them, and who are most capable of presenting and defending them earnestly (38). Macedo might respond that he is not trying to come to the truth of any matter, but rather to sidestep foundational questions in the public arena. Even so, Mill’s second reason for encouraging adversarial arguments would remain, that is, they compel us to understand more fully and feel more deeply the truth of our own convictions. On this ground, Macedo should welcome his comprehensively minded adversaries into the public arena on their own terms. By confronting their arguments, the general public would be led to a better understanding of the reasons for political liberalism. The public would come to experience political liberalism as a living truth and not merely hold it as a dead dogma. In a rather arbitrary way, Macedo seeks to insulate the public from something that Mill thought vital to a liberal society, that is, “real contact” with persons who “actually believe” their principles, “who defend them in earnest, and do their utmost for them,” and who, we might add, are likely to justify those principles on ultimate grounds (38).

Political Liberalism and Civic Education

Let us now consider the relevance of Macedo’s theoretical framework—political liberalism—for civic education.

As we have noted, Macedo denies that liberal character traits and political virtues “come about ‘naturally’ or by the deliverance of an ‘invisible hand.’” Liberals must “think about political education in order to plan for their own survival” (1996, 240). The state, through its schools, must develop in its citizenry those traits or virtues that ensure a healthy liberal democratic order. The belief that the state must create liberal citizens through its public schools does not lead Macedo to reject all forms of school choice. He does not oppose, for example, limited experiments in controlled choice, especially in beleaguered inner city schools, so long as participating schools are regulated in such a way as to dissuade the participation of “narrowly sectarian institutions” and to prohibit religious schools from requiring students to participate in religious activities. Regulations such as these, he argues, permit choice without undermining the values necessary to good citizenship (2000, 271). Although Macedo allows for some choice in education, the choice he would welcome does not appear so expansive as to undermine the state’s monopoly over education funds. It is thus worth noting that despite his opposition to a pluralistic system of education, he, like Gutmann, concedes that the available empirical evidence fails to establish that state schools are better at teaching civic virtues than are non-governmental ones (2000, 308 n. 55, 324 n. 28). Yet if such evidence is lacking, and notwithstanding his approval of limited choice, must we not wonder about his contention that the very survival of our liberal democratic order precludes the establishment of a pluralistic system of schools?

In this vein, Macedo goes on to deny that parents should have the right to have their children exempted from a civics curriculum that offends a family’s religious beliefs. He writes that it is

extremely hard to show that any particular school program is crucial for realizing the core liberal value of toleration. Empirical questions in this area seem intrinsically hard to settle, however, and so judgments about fundamental rights should turn on other grounds. (1995a, 485; 2000, 201)

According to Macedo, the question that should be asked is not whether a certain civics program violates the religious rights of some families, but whether it “stands as a reasonable effort to familiarize students with diversity and teach toleration” (2000, 201). The question here, of course, is “reasonable” for whom? Certainly it is not so for the parents who object. More fundamentally, however, Macedo’s response merely sidesteps his obligation to provide evidence for his claim that for liberal democracy to survive, most children must receive an education in liberal values from government schools. The real issue here, in my view, is whether there are sufficient grounds to think that liberal democracy’s well-being requires it to override religious freedoms in ways that Macedo endorses. He seems unwilling to confront this issue squarely, perhaps because doing so would seriously undermine his justification for a unitary, state-controlled system of education.

Macedo argues that the civic education employed in producing good citizens for a liberal polity must be justified in terms of public reasonableness, that is, in terms that are

widely acceptable to reasonable people with diverse ultimate commitments. Political liberalism thus "advances an ideal of citizenship according to which we formulate and defend basic principles of justice by relying on public reasons that we can share while disagreeing about our ultimate commitments" (1995a, 472). It is therefore improper for educators to insist that children accept the convictions of others about ultimate truths and ideas, whether they are of a religious or secular character.

Given the principle of public reasonableness, what are the core liberal values that civic education should advance? According to Macedo, no reasonable person could reasonably deny the appropriateness in a liberal democracy of teaching critical thinking, toleration, and mutual respect. The mutual respect and toleration that Macedo has in mind is toleration of diversity and respect for the rights of others as equal citizens. As I noted earlier, the critical thinking that Macedo wishes to inculcate is limited to politics. It consists in the ability to evaluate and choose among competing political claims. Whereas Gutmann believes that children should be taught to think critically about inherited beliefs, especially those of a religious nature, Macedo sees no need to challenge students to re-examine core beliefs of a nonpolitical character. On his account, Catholics who "absurdly defer to the authority of the Bishop of Rome" in religious matters, for example, can still be good liberal citizens so long as they submit to the authority of public reason in political matters (1995a, 474 n. 30, 2000, 318 n. 13). Macedo grants that promoting critical thinking in politics will likely encourage it in all areas of life, including religion. This is fine, he believes, but his point is that this must be accomplished indirectly. To do this directly would be deeply partisan and unnecessary for peaceful coexistence.

Religion and Civic Education

From what has been said thus far about Macedo's prescriptions for civic education in a liberal democracy, it should be clear that dealing properly with religion is a central concern for him. Macedo treats religious zealotry, as exhibited, above all, in Christian fundamentalism, as the primary threat that our society must curb to retain its liberal character (1995b; 1995a; 1998; 2000). Although secularist zealots, driven by ultimate beliefs, might certainly violate the strictures of political liberalism, the fundamentalists, in his view, are more likely than other groups to impose their beliefs improperly. The state's monopoly over public education funds is therefore necessary to ensure that the children of zealous parents, but particularly of Christian fundamentalists, develop liberal character traits.

Macedo's proposed remedy for the supposed illiberalism of fundamentalist parents is vital to his civic liberalism, and one must weigh it carefully in assessing his overall program. Macedo is surely aware that the very label "Christian fundamentalism" will be regarded as highly pejorative by most of his readers.⁹ Making this unloved group the target of attack gives his general argument a certain emotional lift, deflects attention perhaps from its weaknesses, and puts critics in the difficult position of appearing to defend an

unpopular cause. Even so, if one can show that Macedo's civic liberalism fails in this hard case, then its wider deficiencies should become evident.

To see Macedo's idea of civic education at work, let us examine the case of *Mozert v. Hawkins County Board of Education*,¹⁰ which serves for him as a paradigmatic example of the need for Christian fundamentalists to be educated toward liberal values.¹¹ The issues giving rise to the legal case began in 1983 when several Christian families in Hawkins County, Tennessee, objected to their children's participation in a primary school reading program. The reading program was designed to expose children to diverse viewpoints, and the parents claimed that the stories denigrated the truth of their own religious beliefs, in violation of their religious free exercise rights.¹² As a remedy, the parents asked not that the reading program be dropped, but that their children be allowed to participate in an alternative reading program. Some schools initially allowed the fundamentalist children to pursue alternative readings, but eventually the county school board made the objectionable reading series mandatory for all children and suspended all children who refused to participate. It was at this point that the fundamentalist families filed suit, claiming that the mandatory reading program violated their free exercise rights. A federal district court sustained the parents' claim, but the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the school board.

Macedo, arguing that the school board and the appeals court were correct, characterizes the issue as follows:

Mozert raises fundamental questions in an apparently moderate posture. The families did not seek to impose their ideas on anyone else through the public school curriculum and did not (apparently) challenge the general legitimacy of secular public schooling. They wanted only to opt out of a particular program while remaining in public schools—How much harm could there be in that? And yet, the *Mozert* objections went to the heart of civic education in a liberal polity: How can tolerance be taught without exposing children to diversity and asking them to forbear from asserting the truth of their own particular convictions, at least for political purposes? (1995a, 471)

According to Macedo, the mandatory reading program was a "reasonable effort to familiarize students with diversity and teach toleration" that involved neither indoctrination nor any effort by the state to inculcate religious beliefs (485). "Exposure to something does not constitute teaching, indoctrination, opposition or promotion of the things exposed" (472).¹³ Because "'exposure to diversity' is a necessary means for teaching a basic civic virtue" (toleration), the state's "rightful authority" to "inculcate core liberal values" trumps the fundamentalists' free exercise claim.

But is the distinction between "exposure" and "indoctrination" as clear as Macedo would have it? Consider, for example, if the *Mozert* dispute had been over Bible readings and other religious materials that the fundamentalist families might have liked to have included in the reading program. Could fundamentalists not claim, for example, that the Bible and books portraying their way of life sympathetically ought to be required reading in the interest of diversity so that other children might come to understand their way of life? How, they might argue, will nonfundamentalist

children learn to tolerate fundamentalists if they are not exposed to positive accounts of their way of life? Those who argue against Bible reading in the public schools today object that it is constitutionally prohibited because it involves the state in the inculcation of religion. However, if "exposure to something does not constitute teaching, indoctrination, or promotion of the things exposed" (1995a, 472), what ground is there for excluding the Bible and other readings of which fundamentalists approve? My point is not to advocate religious inculcation in the public schools, but to point out that the distinction between "exposure" and "indoctrination" is not necessarily an easy one, and Macedo dismisses the fundamentalists' complaint on grounds that he likely would not apply if the situation were reversed.

In any event, the *Mozert* case, for Macedo, affirms a basic principle of political liberalism, to wit: that families have no "moral right to opt out of reasonable measures designed to educate children toward very basic liberal virtues because those measures make it harder for parents to pass along their particular religious beliefs" (1995a, 485).¹⁴ In defending this rule, Macedo warns against assuming that there can be "a mutually respectful desire to live in peace with those one believes to be damned" (1998, 59). Civic peace, in his view, is

a political achievement and not an assumption to be taken for granted. We need to avoid making the mistake of assuming that liberal citizens—self-restrained, moderate, and reasonable—spring full-blown from the soil of private freedom. (59)

Macedo himself proceeds from the opposite assumption, that in the absence of state-controlled education, families and private associations are unlikely to produce good citizens, especially where firm religious beliefs are present. He doubts that citizens of a liberal republic, acting in the sphere of "private freedom," will be disposed to inculcate values of tolerance and mutual respect in their children. For this reason, the state must intercede, through its own schools, to develop "regime-supporting interests."

It is true, of course, that families and private associations often fail to instill civic virtues in children, but given the fact that state-run schools share in this failing, I think that the burden of proof is on Macedo to show that broad state-run education can achieve the results that he claims it can. I would urge, moreover, that parents are entitled to the presumption that they will encourage, rather than impede, the development of basic civic capacities in their children.

Consider by way of an analogy the state's posture regarding the parent's role in a child's physical, emotional, and social development. Parents may not lawfully neglect or abuse their children, and for the most part a sense of moral or social obligation prevents this from happening. When parents fail in their responsibilities and there is evidence of a child's maltreatment, as sometimes happens, state intervention is warranted. The presumption, however, is that the great majority of parents will encourage and foster their children's physical and emotional development and well-being. Should not the same presumption also hold for the development of a child's civic capacities? What warrants

the assumption by Macedo, Gutmann, and other advocates of a unitary system of education that the normal course will be for parents to hinder their children in the development of basic civic capacities? This negative presumption seems crucial to the unitary approach to schooling and civic education. But is such a pessimistic presumption defensible?

Surely it is the case that the overwhelming majority of parents wish for their children to become responsible, law-abiding citizens who are respectful of the rights of others, capable of providing for themselves, and not burdensome to their families or society at large. In fact, I suspect that there is broader agreement on the values Macedo stresses—toleration of diversity, mutual respect for the rights of others, critical thinking about politics, and the willingness to participate in the political process and civic society more generally—than he realizes. Most parents, that is, likely wish for their children to become tolerant, mutually respectful adults with the capacity to make critical judgments about politics and the public sphere more broadly. Although most parents are unlikely to articulate their support for these values according to the requirements of Macedo's "public reason," are these ideals not embodied in the ordinary parental hopes I identified?

Macedo seems to share this view, for he notes that "[f]ew parents reject either our basic civic values or the notion that their children should lead independent lives" (2000, 245). I think Macedo is right on this point—although I think it also accurately describes most Christian fundamentalists, a view he does not share—and it is the basis for my skepticism about his (and Gutmann's) claim that the well-being of liberal society depends on a unitary system of education. If most parents agree with these values, is it not reasonable to assume that they will see to it that their children receive an education consistent with these values? Why, then, should parents not be afforded the presumption that they will promote their children's civic capacities as well as their emotional, social, and physical welfare? Giving deference, insofar as possible, to "the soil of private freedom" seems to be the genuinely liberal position. Nevertheless, despite Macedo's acknowledgement that most parents agree with "our basic civic values," he gives no explanation for his presumption that parents will hinder, rather than encourage, the development of basic civic capacities in their children.

Macedo further assumes, as an earlier passage indicates, that the seriously religious are likely to be the chief instigators of conflict. According to Macedo, it is a mistake to assume that those with resolute religious beliefs are willing to live peacefully with those they "believe to be damned." But is it accurate to say that the presumed good will of religious-minded persons, including fundamentalists, is nothing more than a hollow assumption? Does this supposed "assumption" not receive some measure of confirmation from the American experience, where different religions have lived together more or less peacefully? If there is concrete evidence that religious believers are more likely to disrupt the social order than those who are motivated by strong beliefs of a nonreligious kind, then Macedo fails to produce it. One could in fact conclude, with Tocqueville, that religious belief is an indispensable source of cohesion and

mutual respect for rights in a constitutional democracy. By repeatedly invoking fundamentalists as the archetypal danger to civic peace and by welcoming their marginalization, Macedo's effort to restrain them seems nothing less than a calculation to protect the majority from the minority, or perhaps to induce an unthinking conformity to "political liberalism." From Mill's perspective at least, this is an odd position for one confessing commitment to liberal values.

"Creating" Liberal Citizens?

In addition to the criticisms I have already offered, Gutmann's and Macedo's claim that the state has to "create" liberal citizens strikes me as an odd way of thinking about one's commitment to liberal values. This raises the larger question, unexplored in this paper, of whether our commitment to liberal values derives mainly from our formal education. To say that liberal values have to be formally inculcated in children through schooling is to say that they must be given something they do not already have. Perhaps it is the case, however, that children who grow up in the United States are already on their way to becoming committed liberals as adults before they ever set foot in a classroom. I am tempted to say, in fact, that a rigorous antiliberal education would be required to deflect children from a liberal path. Virtually all value-shaping forces in American society move toward liberalism, toward the values of equality, liberty, and individual rights—those values embodied generally in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and important Supreme Court decisions, even where these documents have not been the subject of formal study. In other words, we are fashioned by our liberal ethos in ways that predate and overshadow formal schooling. After all, liberalism was ascending long before universal public education was instituted. The liberal ethos preceded the institution of public schooling and provided its impetus and character. One is hard pressed to point to any meaningful institution in American society today that does not generally embody liberal values. Although critics often characterized the family and religious institutions as antiliberal, upon examination such criticism often proves merely to be the claim that they are not liberal in the right way, that is, that they provide only an affective or practical attachment to liberalism and not a philosophical commitment based on a rational understanding of first principles. Although it may be true that such a rational account is required for an intellectual defense of liberalism, it is not required for the everyday practice of citizenship.

Gutmann's and Macedo's aim, it seems, is to undo or roll back a diversity that has long existed in this nation. America has been a religiously and morally diverse society since its founding. Gutmann and Macedo generally proceed, however, as if they were designing anew, like Socrates' ideal city, an ideal liberal society that has no previous history whatsoever. Their stance is that of gatekeeper for the ideal liberal society, deciding whom to let in and whom to keep out. The problem is that the groups that they want to keep out—Christian fundamentalists and other supposed illiberals—are already here and have been, if not since the

founding, for a very long time. Gutmann and Macedo fail to show that such groups have displayed less civic virtue or have been more disruptive of civic peace than other groups in society. Both writers acknowledge that their plans of education limit diversity. They fail to acknowledge, however, that their efforts are aimed at reducing a constituted diversity with deep historical roots in American society. Rather than serving civic peace and social unity, as they suppose, their plans virtually guarantee civic strife. We are thus left to wonder why political philosophies that wish to use the coercive powers of the state to alienate and marginalize fundamentally decent, law-abiding citizens on the basis of their religious beliefs are deserving of the name "liberal."

In contrast to the unitary approaches of Gutmann and Macedo, I wish now to sketch the outlines of a pluralist approach to civic education.

A SKETCH OF A PLURALIST APPROACH TO SCHOOLING

A pluralist approach to education is appropriate in a pluralistic society such as the United States for several reasons. First, the pluralist approach is appropriate not because it is impossible to discover what is truly good for human beings or what the best mode of education might be, but because in a free society views of the human good cannot properly be imposed by the state. It is also important to note that the unitary approach to schooling needlessly marginalizes many decent and good citizens who simply wish for their children an education not available at the local public school. Although one may question the wisdom of many of the policies that Christian fundamentalists—the object of scorn for both Gutmann and Macedo—advocate, recent empirical studies suggest, as William Galston (1999b, 870–71) notes, that conservative and fundamentalist Christians are solidly committed to core democratic values.

Moreover, we have actual experience with nongovernmental schools in this country, and the evidence, both experientially and scholarly, suggests that on the whole a pluralist approach would lead to better outcomes, both politically and educationally. For example, as Gutmann acknowledges, private schools generally do a better job of inculcating democratic norms than do public schools.¹⁵ Additionally, recent empirical research on the effect of school choice and voucher programs, although not without its critics, generally tends to show slightly improved academic performance for students in choice programs and more parental involvement in schools that parents have chosen for their children, which is an important indicia of social capital.¹⁶

Philosophically, a pluralist approach to education is more consistent with what John Rawls calls the "fact of pluralism." That is, societies in which individual freedom of thought and action are highly valued are characterized by a diversity of conflicting and irreconcilable moral, religious, and philosophical beliefs. A pluralist approach to schooling begins with the fact of pluralism and places the burden of proof on those who wish to use the coercive powers of the state to limit diversity. As Richard Flathman writes:

If acknowledgment and favorable valorization of the fact of pluralism is a fundamental tenet of liberalism, then there is a presumption in favor of diversity and the burden of justification must fall on any and all proposals to restrict or confine the welcome, the permissible, the tolerable beliefs and values, objectives and purposes, modes and styles of life. (1998, 82)

In the context of schooling, the burden is thus on advocates of the unitary approach to show the necessity of a diversity-limiting unitary system of education. Gutmann and Macedo acknowledge that a unitary system of education makes it difficult for many parents to pass on their beliefs and ways of life to their children—a point they applaud—and they defend such an arrangement on the grounds that individual and social flourishing depend on all or most children receiving an education in individuality or autonomy (Gutmann) or that basic social unity depends on it (Macedo). Yet, as both writers acknowledge, there is no empirical evidence to support the claim that liberal society decays in the absence of state-run schooling. Indeed, Charles Glenn's (1989) research supports the conclusion that liberal democracies have flourished in other parts of the world without such unitary systems of education. There is a certain irony in the unitary liberals' dogged insistence that democracy depends on a unitary system of education. One of the reasons that both Gutmann and Macedo are so critical of Christian fundamentalists is that they are said to hold their beliefs uncritically and dogmatically. As it turns out, the unitary liberals' own premise that democracy depends on a unitary system of education is itself a kind of "faith," for the empirical evidence does not appear to support this claim.

A pluralist approach to schooling rests upon or presupposes an understanding of liberalism similar to the one developed by William Galston (1991, 1995, 1999a, 1999b). It should first be noted that as a practical matter Galston supports a unitary approach to schooling. I cannot make the complete case here; however, as I argue more fully elsewhere, Galston's principles serve just as well to support a pluralist approach to education.¹⁷ Galston argues that liberalism is best understood as diversity-centered, as permitting the "maximum feasible space for the enactment of individual and group differences, constrained only by the requirements of liberal social unity" (1995, 524). Galston adds further that what he calls the right of "expressive liberty" is an important feature of liberalism. By expressive liberty he means "the absence of constraints imposed by some individuals or groups on others that make it impossible or significantly more difficult for the affected individual or groups to live their lives in ways that express their deepest beliefs about what gives meaning and value to life" (1999a, 12).¹⁸ For Galston, moreover, "an essential element of expressive liberty" is "the ability of parents to raise their children in a manner consistent with their deepest commitments" (12–13). Galston's comments about expressive liberty and the right of parents to raise their children according to their own best lights are in the context of denying the state the authority to regulate private schools in a way that would undermine a school's unique identity. Nevertheless, Galston's emphasis on expressive liberty and the right of parents to generally raise their children is compelling and

can be meaningful for all families—as opposed to only those that can afford private schooling—only within the context of a pluralistic system of education.

In conclusion, the proponents of a unitary system of education have failed to make the case that such a system is required for a healthy democracy. Moreover, they have failed to establish that nongovernmental schools do not generally develop good citizens. If civic virtue is truly the goal, then it would seem that a pluralistic system can likely provide it without those objectionable elements of coercion and control that aim to reduce the influence of families over their own children.

NOTES

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1. See Allan Bloom's "Interpretive Essay," in *The Republic*, ed. and trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

2. See Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *Ethics* 105 (1995): 557–79. I tend to believe that there is not all that much difference between comprehensive liberalism and political liberalism. I cannot take up the issue here, but I think Gutmann is right when she points out that political liberalism is no more accommodating of diversity than is comprehensive liberalism.

3. The fundamentalists that Gutmann refers to are those involved in the case of *Mozert v Hawkins Board of Education*, 827 F2d 1058 (6th Cir 1987). I discuss the case in a later note.

4. See James S. Coleman, Thomas Hoffer, and Sally Kilgore, *High School Achievement: Public, Catholic, and Private Schools Compared* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 16–64.

5. Kent M. Jennings, Kenneth P. Langston, and Richard G. Niemi, "Effects of High School Civics Curriculum," in *The Political Character of Adolescence: The Influence of Families and Schools*, ed. Kent M. Jennings and Richard G. Niemi (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974) 181, 191.

6. See also Stephen Macedo, *Diversity and Distrust: Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), chs. 6–8.

7. One need not agree with every criticism that Fish levels against liberalism to acknowledge that his criticisms sometimes hit their mark.

8. See Joseph Raz's critique of political liberalism, "Facing Diversity: The Case of Epistemic Abstinence," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 (1990): 3–47.

9. One line of attack, which I shall not pursue, would be to show that Macedo distorts the phenomena that he refers to by the term "fundamentalism." See George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Marsden points out that the term was coined in 1920 by Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of a Northern Baptist newspaper, to designate Christians who subscribed to a list of "fundamentals," or core tenets of belief. Laws relied on an influential twelve-volume series published from 1910 to 1915, called *The Fundamentals*, which "became a symbolic point of reference for identifying a 'fundamentalist' movement" (159). Macedo, like many other writers, uses "fundamentalism" in a broad and stereotypical way to characterize various groups of evangelical or theologically conservative Christians who in fact hold a variety of quite diverse views on questions of theology, morals, and politics and who would in many cases disagree with the original fundamentalist tenets or with Laws's interpretation of them. For the sake of argument, I will follow Macedo's terminology, even though I question its accuracy.

10. 827 F2d 1058 (6th Cir 1987).

11. Unless otherwise indicated, the following account of the *Mozert* case is taken from Macedo (1995b, 224–29; 1995a, 470–76; 2000, chs. 6–8). See also Stephen Bates, *Battleground: One Mother's Crusade, the Religious Right, and the Struggle for Control of Our Classroom* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993) for an excellent account of the *Mozert* case and the larger political struggle of which it was a part.

12. See Amy Gutmann, "Undemocratic Education," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 81. She notes that the fundamentalists' objections focused on a story depicting a young boy "having fun" while cooking, on

grounds that it "denigrates the differences between the sexes" that the Bible endorses; a story entitled "A Visit to Mars," on grounds that it encourages children to use their imaginations in ways incompatible with fundamentalist faith; a story entitled "Hunchback Madonna," which describes the religious and social practices of an Indian settlement in New Mexico, on grounds that it teaches Catholicism; and an excerpt from Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, on grounds that it suggests that nonorthodox belief in God is better than no belief at all.

13. Quoting Judge Lively of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, *Mozert v Hawkins Board of Education*, who in turn was quoting the Hawkins County school superintendent. See also Macedo, *Diversity and Distrust*, 161.

14. Although Macedo insists that the fundamentalist families had no moral right to opt out of the reading program, he allows that there sometimes may be prudential grounds for accommodating dissenters. If refusal to accommodate dissenting families is likely to lead to an exodus from the public schools, then school officials may choose for prudential reasons to offer alternative programs, such as the *Mozert* families initially requested, in order to keep the children in public schools (1995a, 488; 2000, 204–11).

15. See also Jay P. Greene, "Civic Values in Public and Private Schools," in *Learning from School Choice*, ed. Paul P. Peterson and Bryan C. Hassel (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

16. For a nice summarization of more than one hundred studies on school choice, see Paul Teske and Mark Schneider, "What Research Can Tell Policymakers about School Choice," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 20: 609–31. I wish to be clear about referencing the empirical literature on school choice. I do not believe the burden is on me or other advocates of the pluralist approach to demonstrate that school choice has beneficial effects. Rather, the burden is on opponents of school choice to demonstrate that children who are educated at home or in nongovernmental schools do not become adults attached to American liberal democracy. In other words, as I noted earlier, the burden is on proponents of the unitary approach to demonstrate the necessity of such a system.

17. I take up the writings of Galston, Gutmann, and Macedo, among other liberal theorists, in a book in progress on liberalism and civic education.

18. Galston provided this paper to me in electronic form. The page numbers cited here thus reflect the peculiarities of my word processing program and printer.

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