

## Chapter 9

### Patriotic history

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*History will never be restored as a subject of value unless it is detached from vulgar utilitarianism; it should not be expected to infuse morals or patriotism.*

Diane Ravitch<sup>1</sup>

*Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles*, issued in 1987 by the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network, and Freedom House, exhorted the nation to "a special effort to raise the level of education for democratic citizenship."<sup>2</sup> It expressed the "fear that many young Americans are growing up without the education needed to develop a solid commitment to those 'notions and sentiments' essential to a democratic form of government."<sup>3</sup>

What curricular reforms can serve this special effort? "We regard the study of *history* as the chief subject in education for democracy," declared *Education for Democracy*, reflecting a growing movement to re-establish history as a vital part of the school curriculum.<sup>4</sup> In the same year, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?*, by Diane Ravitch and Chester Finn, made national headlines with its findings that students are dismally ignorant of historical facts; the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools issued its preliminary report urging increased historical studies; and California, under the guiding hand of Diane Ravitch and Charlotte Crabtree, rewrote its social studies curriculum to require three years of world history and three years of U.S. history between grades five and twelve.<sup>5</sup> In 1989, the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, a joint project of the American Historical Association, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the Organization of American Historians, likewise urged substantial teaching of world and national history from early grades on.<sup>6</sup>

It seems plausible that a renewal of civic education should be built

around solid instruction in history, especially national history. From the time it first entered the school curriculum in our country, teaching history was linked explicitly to "the cultivation of good citizenship."<sup>7</sup> It continues to be so linked today. *One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence*, the 1991 New York report on multiculturalism and the social studies, framed its first concern in these words:

Despite growing attention to the need for preparing young people to participate in the world community, the United States continues to be deeply involved in nation-building. The common school is generally viewed as one of the principal vehicles for building in our young people the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and understandings essential to continuing national cohesion and viability. The teaching of the nation's history, our national traditions and values, and a common loyalty are purposes commonly accepted as appropriate to the social studies.<sup>8</sup>

Although the New York report sparked criticism for its proposals about ethnicity, race, and multiculturalism, no commentators objected to this leading premise.

How does teaching history, especially national history, serve the aim of "nation-building"? Clearly, in a democracy, an informed citizenry is better than an uninformed one, and school history supplies important facts about past social conditions and their contemporary effects. It also creates a framework for continued learning after school. Historical learning provides more than useful information; it fosters a *sense* of history, which in turn provides perspective and distance on immediate affairs and aids in balanced judgment. In these ways, historical knowledge contributes to citizenship, and thus to "nation-building."

Still, these and other effects of historical studies seem secondary to a special outcome history purportedly underwrites: a sense of identity. As Michael Kammen, a member of the Bradley Commission, observes, "[i]t has become commonplace to say that one sound reason for studying history is to enrich the understanding of identity. . . ."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Bradley Commission report itself emphasized that history can "satisfy young people's longing for a sense of identity, and of their time and place in the human story," and the Commission recommended extensive study of history in the schools: "American history to tell us who we are and who we are becoming; the history of Western civilization to reveal our democratic political heritage and its vicissitudes; world history to acquaint us with the nations and people with whom we shall share a common global destiny."<sup>10</sup>

There is considerable plausibility to the idea of history as shaper of identity. We make sense of our lives through stories. Indeed, under-

stood in a certain way, stories *constitute* identities. Alasdair MacIntyre insists that "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, *essentially* a story-telling animal."<sup>11</sup> This is so because we "cannot characterize behavior independently of intentions, and we cannot characterize intentions independently of the settings which make these intentions intelligible both to agents themselves and to others."<sup>12</sup> And these settings ultimately have the form of narratives: "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"<sup>13</sup>

Our lives are best conceived as narratives within narratives. Though all of us seek to extend our own stories in ways unique to us, because our personal stories are embedded in larger stories we are only partly the authors of our own. The structures of significance from which our personal narratives draw are already fixed and only partly malleable to our desires and intentions.<sup>14</sup> We inherit our identities just as we inherit our hair color – our identities are given by the ongoing stories into which we find ourselves born. Moreover, our defining commitments – our moral identities – also arise from the roles, expectations, limitations, and duties we inherit, whether we assume them as our own or resist and react against them.

Because stories are so important in our self-understanding, school history naturally suggests itself as a vehicle for shaping political identity.<sup>15</sup> *National history* tells children of the "great deeds and high purposes" of their predecessors and locates them as "participants in an unfinished story."<sup>16</sup> It makes them bearers of a heritage – a "precious inheritance," in the words of *Education for Democracy*.<sup>17</sup> It reminds children that the opportunities and well-being they now enjoy resulted from the hard work and sacrifices of earlier generations, grounding a sense of "gratitude to the past and responsibility for future generations."<sup>18</sup>

I call such history "patriotic history." Its purpose is not merely to inform but to elicit commitments, to inculcate values, to *create citizens*.

Even in a society largely homogeneous in class and culture, and roughly agreed on the interpretation of its past, the project of patriotic history may be open to challenge. Objectors could protest, as Diane Ravitch does, against subordinating historical studies to "vulgar utilitarianism." History, they might argue, ought not be enlisted to "infuse morals or patriotism."

In a society like our own, characterized by great heterogeneity and riven by political struggles among groups trying to achieve certain kinds of social recognition and acquire increased economic opportunity, patriotic history becomes the focus of greatly intensified discord. Edmund Gordon and Francis Roberts, the co-chairpersons of

the New York committee that issued *One Nation, Many Peoples*, described in an afterword the conflicts within the committee itself:

Some of us were shocked by the depth of feelings about diverse renditions of history. Some of us who are comfortable in the belief that the history we know is valid were offended by the assertion that much of that history is incomplete or false. Some of us who feel that the standard histories have excluded or misrepresented important players found it difficult to assert our claims dispassionately. In the views represented by some of us, it appears that much of the dominant or traditional information available to us is viewed with doubt, skepticism and distrust because it does not fit comfortably with the experiences of some, while for others it is simply counter-intuitive. Deciding what to teach under such existential circumstances confronts us with problems of monumental complexity. Even more problematic for the teaching and learning of history and social studies is the ease with which information, ideology and belief become commingled in the minds of people whose interests are at stake – sometimes so much so that these concepts, despite their differential order, came to be interchangeable one for the other. Although we were generally in agreement that histories tend to reflect the interests and perspectives of those who write them, there was a ubiquitous undercurrent of concern for the recognition of historical and other truth.<sup>19</sup>

Composing a patriotic history “confronts us with problems of monumental complexity,” say Gordon and Roberts. How should educators and interested citizens address these problems? Can their complexity be reduced? Is the issue truth versus ideology, interest versus interest?

These questions are too large to be tackled in the short span of this chapter. Here, I carve out a small but core issue, the legitimacy of patriotic history. I explore the case for patriotic history sympathetically. I argue that educators are rightly concerned to offer students a “usable past” that encourages the development of desirable civic attitudes and commitments. I consider and deflect objections to patriotic history by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Jurgen Habermas. Finally, I illustrate some of the shoals Historian-Educators must navigate in composing patriotic history.

#### A USABLE PAST

*That night when the Boss and I called on Judge Irwin in the middle of the night and when, burning the road back to Mason City in the dark, the car hurtled between the black fields, he said to me, “There is always something.”*

*And I said, “Maybe not on the Judge.”*

And he said, "Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud. There is always something."

And he told me to dig it out, dig it up, the dead cat with the patches of fur still clinging to the tight, swollen, dove-gray hide. It was the proper job for me, for, as I have said, I was once a student of history. A student of history does not care what he digs out of the ash pile, the midden, the sublunary dung heap, which is the human past. He doesn't care whether it is the dead pussy or the Kohinoor diamond. So it was a proper assignment for me, an excursion into the past.

Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*<sup>20</sup>

Patriotic history proceeds on the premise that children need a common, "usable past" if they are to be formed as citizens willing to make the sacrifices necessary to support and improve the nation's political institutions. Is patriotic history a concession to the "vulgar utilitarianism" Diane Ravitch would have us deplore? Is the search for a "usable past" a misuse of history?

The criticisms in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s widely read little book, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, might lead us to think so. Schlesinger argues that writing or teaching history as a means of "defining national identity" turns history "into a weapon," and

[h]istory as a weapon is an abuse of history. The high purpose of history is not the presentation of self or the vindication of identity but the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

"Honest history calls for the unexpurgated record."<sup>22</sup> History should be "disinterested intellectual inquiry," not "manipulated" as an "instrument of social cohesion and political purpose,"<sup>23</sup> and our schools should teach it "for its own sake."<sup>24</sup>

*History for its own sake, disinterested, noninstrumental:* patriotic history is none of these, so it seems to stand condemned. But the force of Schlesinger's argument fades the moment we make it more precise. To announce *the purpose* of history implies "history" means only one thing and the historian has only one role. But the historian can play many roles, in some of which disinterest would be a vice, not a virtue. Consider these three roles and the aims that animate them: the Historian-Scholar, the Historian-Educator, and the Historian-Public Citizen.

Scholarship, let us grant, is indeed subservient to one imperative only, "disinterested truth-seeking." Whatever the Historian-Scholar finds in the sublunary dung heap of the past, whether it is the dead pussy or the Kohinoor diamond, its being there – its truth – is a

sufficient reason for him to exhume it, *no matter what the consequences*. That, I take it, is the meaning of being *disinterested*.

But an Educator may not ignore consequences. The Educator's task is to tutor the young toward a certain end, and every tool must be measured by its efficacy for that end. The Historian-Educator, whose tool is history, is no exception. Similarly, the Historian-Public Citizen, by whom I mean the historian who aspires to give public discourse a theme or story or guiding vision as a means of clarifying public purpose, likewise concerns herself with the effects of her engagement. Whatever the relation of the Historian-Educator and the Historian-Public Citizen to truth and truth-seeking, it is, and must be, an *interested* relation.

We can see this quite clearly by looking at one of the educational outcomes aimed for in the California History-Social Science Framework: through studying history, students "should recognize that ideas and actions have real consequences – that history, in other words, is not simply the ebb and flow of impersonal forces but is shaped and changed by the ideas and actions of individuals and governments."<sup>25</sup> Now, aiming to produce such "recognition" makes educational sense. If young people were to think their own actions can make no difference to the larger world, why would they act in it rather than resign themselves to it? Why would they exude public energy rather than public apathy? How would they be good citizens within democratic institutions requiring active participation?

But how shall the Historian-Educator convey this important lesson in agency to eighth graders, say? Certain kinds of historical approaches and perspectives clearly don't lend themselves very well to incitement to action. The long-term perspective of Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, for example, reduces events and actions to "no more than the foam on the sea of history," a sea really governed by large and remote structural forces.<sup>26</sup> Such a perspective may be the best one for certain scholarly purposes. Indeed, historians might argue that it is *the* best perspective for scholarship, all things considered, since it gives the best vantage point for achieving real historical understanding. But it is clearly not the best perspective for encouraging civic activism in students through belief that their actions can make a difference in the world.

The same is true of religiously and philosophically based views of history whose bent is fatalistic or pessimistic. For example, a view like Heidegger's, which characterizes our own times as deeply nihilistic and traces the cause of this nihilism to those very Enlightenment notions of liberty and autonomy that underlie our democratic practices, does not provide a very usable past for encouraging students to

trust in their own actions and in the actions of democratic governments.<sup>27</sup> Whatever we may think about the ultimate truth of such views, the educational aim posited by the California Framework requires telling the human story with a different slant.

The same considerations apply to historical content as well as historical perspective. The educator must select with an eye toward desired effect. Schlesinger declares that "[h]onest history calls for the unexpurgated record." Let us concede that the Historian-Scholar rightfully holds nothing back, however horrible. But does this rule apply to the Historian-Educator? What if the unexpurgated record undermines rather than promotes the aim posited in the California Framework? Isn't the Historian-Educator going to have to provide a rather artful and selective packaging of the contents of the ash pile, the dung heap which is the human past, if eighth graders are to take from their historical studies optimism about their institutions, hope for a brighter future, and faith in their own efforts? Auschwitz and Hiroshima, world wars of extraordinary destructiveness, mass starvation, totalitarianism, slavery, colonialism, the obliteration of civilizations, barbarism at every turn – all of these and more must be conveyed to students in a way that fortifies their resolve and encourages their industry, not sickens and unnerves them.

The history teacher in the California classroom has an *interest*: to instill a sense of efficacy in students. This interest is ulterior to historical truth. Of course, the teacher has other educational aims as well. Indeed, one of them, we may suppose, is to implant in her students a love of truth. *But this interest, too, is ulterior to historical truth.* There is no guarantee that historical truth supports lessons in the love of truth. A comprehensive survey of the human ash pile may reveal that lies have served most human interests better than truth has. Implanting the love of truth in students would then call for an adroitly blinkered tour through the ash pile. Every educator must keep her eye on her ulterior purpose.

Schlesinger himself writes with an ulterior purpose. *The Disuniting of America* is not a disinterested look at the past. In it, Schlesinger wears the hat not of Historian-Scholar but of Historian-Public Citizen. He means to warn fellow citizens against certain false views of history not simply because they are false but because they are dangerous. They threaten our national cohesion; they stretch bonds "sufficiently fragile already."<sup>28</sup> The proper account of our past, on the other hand, strengthens the "common purpose" that holds us together. It reinvigorates the American Creed. It reminds us of the "marvelous inheritance" bestowed upon us, that we might better commit ourselves to preserve and sustain it. Truly, the proper account of our past can "above all . . . give a sense of national identity," Schlesinger

announces at the end of his book, forgetting his earlier warnings about history as weapon.<sup>29</sup> *The Disuniting of America* is itself a prime example of patriotic history – history told for effect, history told not simply to inform but to elicit and strengthen commitments to national unity.

Schlesinger can so easily conflate the Scholar/Educator/Public Citizen into one undifferentiated Historian and speak of *the* purpose of history because he does not imagine truth and good purpose coming apart. Accurate history is always good for us. Accurate history makes us better citizens. Accurate history teaches the California lesson: "Properly taught, history will convey a sense . . . of the ability of individuals and peoples to overcome obstacles."<sup>30</sup> This faith that more accurate history is more civically useful history keeps Schlesinger from noticing and addressing the possibility that the Historian-Scholar and the Historian-Educator may face diverging imperatives. Schlesinger looks at American history through the eyes of an optimist, self-confessedly so.<sup>31</sup>

This same faith animates another recent contribution to the multicultural lists, Ronald Takaki's *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*.<sup>32</sup> While Schlesinger is a wary observer of multicultural history, Takaki is an enthusiastic proponent. *A Different Mirror* tells the stories of Irish, Jewish, Japanese, Chinese, and Mexican immigrants to the United States as well as the stories of African-Americans, Native Americans, and indigenous Hispanics – people transported to this country as slaves or incorporated by conquest or expansion. Their stories are told from their own perspectives and through the voices of common people.

Takaki offers two reasons why such a multicultural telling should be incorporated into any larger history of America. First, such enlarged history is more accurate.<sup>33</sup> Second, it has the power, by allowing different groups to understand one another, to help a divided and fractious people "to get along" (in Rodney King's words).<sup>34</sup> Greater accuracy and mutual understanding go hand in hand.

Each of the groups in Takaki's story endures oppressions and hardships – slavery, discrimination, dispossession, exploitation, hostility. Yet each struggles for its place in the American sun. Though victimized, members of these groups are not victims: they act for themselves, defying stereotypes of passivity and docility.<sup>35</sup> By the sweat of their brows, they build American agriculture, industry, transportation. By their challenges and strikes, they broaden legal rights for themselves and all workers. By their "resistance against racial borders and distances," they appropriate and advance "America's principle that 'all men are created equal.'"<sup>36</sup>

The apogee, at least symbolically, of this story of struggle by differ-



ent groups comes with World War II. There we find contributing to the war effort Navajo signal units and Cherokee pilots; Chinese airplane builders; Japanese infantrymen; Mexican rail laborers and artillerymen; and black defense workers and tankers.<sup>37</sup> There we find all of America's groups fighting "A War for Democracy," "*Fighting as One People*."<sup>38</sup> There we find a vital "lesson . . . forged in the crucible of America's multicultural history," a lesson teaching, in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, that "Americanism is a matter of mind and heart"; it "is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry."<sup>39</sup>

This is the same lesson Schlesinger wants us to learn from history.<sup>40</sup> Takaki's multicultural story no less than Schlesinger's traditional account provides a past usable for patriotic purposes: for creating citizens. Takaki's story emphasizes the importance of agency even in the most oppressive circumstances. It conveys the dignity of common people, who quietly struggle under difficult conditions and who, in large and small ways, refuse to submit passively to abuse, discrimination, and exploitation. Takaki tells a story to inspire readers to take up the uncompleted project of "nation-building" (to use the words of *One Nation, Many Peoples*), the uncompleted project of making "Americanism" truly a matter of heart and mind rather than race or ancestry.

Takaki, like Schlesinger, is an optimist. In his view, we "have nothing to fear but our fear of our own diversity."<sup>41</sup> Embrace our multicultural story, learn from and accept each other, and we will be a stronger society for it.

Optimism about "accurate history" – faith that it will make us better rather than worse – is not something the historian accidentally stumbles across in the sublunary dung heap; it is not something that ineluctably jumps out at us if we sift there long enough. It is something the historian *brings* to the telling of history. Optimism may be a vice in the Historian–Scholar, or at least it may not be a virtue; but in the Historian–Public Citizen and the Historian–Educator surely it *is* a virtue. The Public Citizen and the Educator have an *interest* – in the present case, to teach and encourage a sense of efficacy and to define the project of "getting along together" that the rising generation of citizens ought to take up and advance. This interest shapes their accounts of the past into a patriotic history intimating to students and citizens the *potential* for effective action in the future. The Historian–Educator and Historian–Public Citizen need a faith in progress.

#### PATRIOTISM

*The difference [between altruism and patriotism] is that patriotism is based on identification with others in a particular common enterprise. I am not dedicated to defending the liberty of just anyone, but I feel the*

*bond of solidarity with my compatriots in our common enterprise, the common expression of our respective dignity. Patriotism is somewhere between friendship, or family feeling, on one side, and altruistic dedication on the other. The latter has no concern for the particular: I am inclined to act for the good of anyone anywhere. The former attach me to particular people. My patriotic allegiance does not bind me to individual people in this familial way; I may not know most of my compatriots, and may not particularly want them as friends when I do meet them. But particularity enters in because my bond to these people passes through our participation in a common political entity. Functioning republics are like families in this crucial respect, that part of what binds people together is their common history. Family ties or old friendships are deep because of what we have lived through together, and republics are bonded by time and climactic transitions.*

Charles Taylor<sup>42</sup>

That Schlesinger proves not to be an effective critic of patriotic history but rather a practitioner of it doesn't mean patriotic history is immune to objection. Critics may still think it misdirected. They may take my propositions about constructing a "usable past" as casting the Historian-Educator or Historian-Public Citizen in a role too similar to that of a propagandist.

Patriotic history induces citizens to shoulder the burdens of defending and reforming particular institutions by telling a story that connects citizens to those institutions as *theirs*. Why couldn't citizens, instead, be prompted to support particular institutions simply because they are good, simply because they embody certain attractive principles? Patriotic history would then be unnecessary for creating civic responsibility. This is the possibility seemingly offered by Jurgen Habermas.

In 1986, the West German *Historikerstreit* ("Historians' Controversy") threw that country's intellectual community into a furious tumult centering on historical re-interpretations of German history in the Nazi era. Coming to terms with the recent past has, of course, not been an easy process for Germans. West German historians began only after about 1958 to study the Nazi period thoroughly. West German citizens in general exhibited little relish for looking backwards, and in the 1950s and 1960s, students were taught "next to nothing" about World War II and the concentration camps.<sup>43</sup> In 1982, after thirteen years of rule by the Social Democratic Party, the conservative Christian Democratic Union under Helmut Kohl assumed power. Part of Kohl's desire as Chancellor, reflecting broader conservative sentiment, was to create a more "positive historical consciousness" for West Germany.<sup>44</sup> He supported the creation of museums in Berlin and

Bonn devoted to the German past and, of course, conceived the visit to Bitburg Cemetery by President Reagan on the 40th anniversary of V-E day – a ceremony meant to symbolize Germany's full partnership with the West and "symbolically . . . wipe away the last residues of moral probation under which the Federal Republic still labored."<sup>45</sup>

Among some German historians and intellectuals, the matter of "German guilt" became a topic of intense discussion, and in June 1986, Ernst Nolte, philosopher/historian and author of the well-known 1963 book *Three Faces of Fascism*, published an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* called "The Past That Will Not Pass Away." Nolte argued against the thesis that the Nazi extermination of Jews was "unique." He claimed that "everything the National Socialists later did – with the sole exception of technical procedures of gassing" – had already been done by the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, Nolte argued, it was necessary to ask: "Did the National Socialists carry out . . . an 'Asiatic' deed only because they regarded themselves and their kind as the potential or real victims of an 'Asiatic' deed? Wasn't the 'Gulag Archipelago' more original than Auschwitz? Wasn't class murder by the Bolsheviks logically and actually prior to racial murder on the part of the Nazis?"<sup>46</sup> The question, of course, was meant as an answer. The point for Nolte of putting and answering the question was not merely to set the historical record straight; recognizing the context of Auschwitz would, he hoped, dispel the "myth of absolute evil" that stood as a barrier to German identity.<sup>47</sup>

During the same period, Michael Sturmer, another conservative historian, was writing a series of essays on the need for historians to provide for West Germans a usable past.<sup>48</sup> Sturmer, too, lamented the Germans' "obsession with their 'guilt'" and emphasized the need for a nation to have a positive sense of identity.<sup>49</sup> The "fall of God and the decline of Religion," Sturmer wrote, has deprived individuals of the traditional framework for defining their "personal or collective place in time and space."<sup>50</sup> Without a religious foundation of values, a people must turn to its own history as a source of meaning. Historians should aid this turn by providing a usable past.<sup>51</sup> That is, they should assume the role of what I have called the Historian-Public Citizen.

Nolte's and Sturmer's arguments, contentious as they are, might have remained the objects of intramural historical debate but for the interjection of Jurgen Habermas, Germany's best-known contemporary philosopher. In July 1986, Habermas published in *Die Zeit* a broadside against Nolte, Sturmer, and a third historian, Andreas Hillgruber. Hillgruber's *Two Kinds of Downfall*, published that year, joined together two separate essays, one on the destruction of European

Jews and the other on the destruction of the Third Reich. The second, longer essay caused Habermas to lump Hillgruber with Nolte and Sturmer. In that essay Hillgruber defends the German Army's tenacious resistance on the Eastern Front in 1944–45, even though it prolonged Hitler's reign and the destruction of the Jews, by arguing that the historian "must identify himself with the concrete fate of the German population in the East and with the desperate and sacrificial exertions of the German Army . . . which sought to defend the population from the orgy of revenge of the Red Army, the mass rapine, the arbitrary killing, and the compulsory deportations."<sup>52</sup>

Habermas's harsh attack on the three historians, "Apologetic Tendencies,"<sup>53</sup> ignited a furious controversy on all sides about "historical revisionism" and the proper use of history. As Habermas characterized the controversy, one side had a "functionalist understanding of the public use of history" while the other side, his own, opposed "this kind of 'politics of history'" and advocated "enlightenment."<sup>54</sup> The "bad side" wanted to make use of history to support a national identity rooted in an acceptable past,<sup>55</sup> while the "good side" eschewed identity "centered on national identity"<sup>56</sup> for one that embraced universal principles of right. The conservative side wanted a national identity founded on a "past that one can approve of"<sup>57</sup> while Habermas wanted a "post-conventional identity"<sup>58</sup> founded on a "constitutional patriotism,"<sup>59</sup> rooted in the "universalist value orientations of democracy"<sup>60</sup> and "human rights."<sup>61</sup> Habermas thought West Germany needed a "sober political identity [that] has detached itself from the background of a past centered on national history."<sup>62</sup>

Habermas's characterization of the two sides presents a distinction between a civic education that attaches us to our institutions because they exemplify some external standard of excellence and a civic education that attaches us to our institutions because they are ours. If there is a patriotism cut free of national history, a patriotism attached to abstract principles, then we needn't start down the path of "patriotic history" as I've characterized it. We needn't get into doubtful quarrels about creating a usable national past. We needn't pose a choice between universalist outlook and particularist attachment.

But Habermas doesn't actually succeed in articulating a patriotism that doesn't depend on particular traditions. His patriotism needs its own usable national past, a "past one can approve of." Habermas differs with his opponents not on the need for an acceptable past but on what that acceptable past need be. West German "constitutional patriotism" turns out not to leave national history and culture behind at all. Its ties to universal principles "have to be nourished by a heritage of traditions that is consonant with them. . . . [T]he abstract idea of the universalization of democracy and human rights forms the hard

substance through which the rays of national tradition – the language, literature, and history of one's own nation – are refracted."<sup>63</sup>

The universal principles of right that Habermas lauds are embedded in a particular constitution – West German Basic Law – and it is this particular constitution West Germans are loyal to. And there is a story behind that embedding that must be told in the right way.

Our life, says Habermas, is the product of "familial, local, political, and intellectual traditions . . . a historical milieu that made us what we are today. None of us can escape this milieu, because our identities, both as individuals and as Germans, are indissolubly interwoven with it."<sup>64</sup> Now, one unavoidable fact about those traditions is that they made possible Auschwitz, "not by contingent circumstances but intrinsically."<sup>65</sup> It consequently falls to Germans to keep alive the memory of Auschwitz as the unique evil it was. Thus, Nolte's comparison of the Holocaust with Soviet crimes is to be rejected. Germans are the inheritors of their traditions, according to Habermas, but the way they critically appropriate and continue those traditions is up to them.<sup>66</sup> Critically appropriating and continuing those traditions means finding something in them acceptable even in the face of Auschwitz.

But here is the daunting challenge. No matter how much garden-variety barbarism there is in a nation's past, usually some good can be found in it, something in its traditions that endures and transcends the barbarism. It may require some imaginative reworking, some strategic forgetfulness, to get the story of the past to be "acceptable," but usually it can be done without great violence to the truth. However, what happens if an event like Auschwitz lies across the past, an event so uniquely awful it threatens to *annihilate* all past value, achievement, and good? What remains to nourish even the most abstract constitutional patriotism? What is there to appropriate and carry forward in any way?

This is the apparent sticking point the conservative German historians mean to overcome by their "revisionism." Who is a German? The story they want to tell goes something like this. A German is someone whose culture and history stretch over centuries. The period 1933–45 stands over that history as a horrible and troubling time, not in any way to be glossed over or downplayed. But the horrible events of 1933–45 must be seen in context, seen as partly a reaction to Bolshevism and the vast exterminations by Stalin. Moreover, both Bolshevism and National Socialism can be viewed as extreme reactions to the dehumanizing tendencies of secular modernism.

This interpretation "normalizes" 1933–45 by fitting it, and its admitted horrors, into the longer history of German and European history. There is much in that longer history that constitutes a "past one can approve of," and the hope of the conservative interpretation is to

bracket the events of 1933–45 in a way that leaves some of those elements of the longer past alive for appropriation and use in German identity. If the events of 1933–45 are not bracketed somehow, if Auschwitz literally annihilates all the value in the past, then what hope is there for a German identity?

Habermas offers a different interpretation to overcome the same sticking point. A German, on this interpretation, is one who appropriates 1933–45 in a particular way, not by fitting it, however awkwardly, into a continuous German story, not by “normalizing” it in some way, but by keeping “alive, without distortion . . . the memory of the sufferings of those who were murdered by German hands” and by affirming what followed the end of the Third Reich as a “new beginning” dedicated to constitutional democracy and human rights.<sup>67</sup> It is only by keeping the memory of Auschwitz alive as absolute evil, and defining future German identity in opposition to it, that Auschwitz is prevented from annihilating the worth of all German traditions. The very project of living against Auschwitz from 1945 on, while creating a healthy democracy and free, open political life, constitutes a “past one can approve of,” and one that lets elements of older traditions be retained and appropriated.

The contest between Habermas and his conservative opponents is not, then, a contest between a “functionalist” versus “nonfunctionalist” view of history. Habermas needs a usable past for his form of patriotism as much as his opponents need one for theirs. Habermas’s “constitutional patriotism” is not (in the terms Charles Taylor set out above) “altruistic dedication” to a set of universal principles. It is a readiness to identify with particular political institutions. The identity-sustaining allegiance to the principles embodied in those institutions rests not just on the general character of the principles as principles of right but on the specific, always-remembered, duty-defining fact that they “were violated in an unprecedented way” in 1933–45.<sup>68</sup> German constitutional patriotism arises out of a specific shared mission, a mission in which each German citizen can find his dignity affirmed and reflected.<sup>69</sup>

#### INTERESTED TRUTH: TWO LESSONS

The Historian–Educator and the Historian–Public Citizen are interested rather than disinterested partisans of the truth. They reconstruct usable pasts for students and citizens. They write and teach with an eye to effect.

Although American historians in writing for the eighth grade do not have to navigate around the Third Reich and Auschwitz as German historians do, they have in slavery (and its aftermath), as well as

in the displacement and extermination of the Indians, their own considerable challenges to interpretation and composition. Stories about racial and ethnic conflict, which abound in the American past and present, invariably risk controversy. We may imagine that the "depth of feelings" Gordon and Roberts noted among the members of the New York committee had to do largely with "diverse renditions" of the story of race and ethnicity in American history, and not different interpretations of the value of the gold standard.

How shall the patriotic historian proceed in the face of such depth of feeling? Within the debate about multicultural history, two ubiquitous watchwords – "accuracy" and "inclusiveness" – seem to offer guidance. Both Schlesinger and Takaki, from different vantage points, endorse more accurate, more inclusive history. *One Nation, Many Peoples* follows suit, proposing that the history taught in New York classrooms be "based on up-to-date scholarship" and be "culturally inclusive." "This inclusivity," it goes on to say, "should incorporate opposing opinions and divergent interpretations."<sup>70</sup>

*Accuracy* and *inclusiveness* are like mom and apple pie: no one can oppose them in the abstract. However, neither do they offer much guidance to the patriotic historian. The mechanical application of the two standards would result in stories neither multiculturalists nor anti-multiculturalists would accept. It would make histories mindless. The patriotic historian cannot escape the need to impose a particular – and controversial – interpretation on the past. In composing her accurate and inclusive story, she has to distinguish between *real* and *spurious* accuracy, *genuine* and *specious* inclusiveness. And how will she do this except by reference to the usable past she has in view? Two lessons in American history illustrate what I mean.

In 1991, the adoption by California of the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies textbook series occasioned impassioned debate in some school districts, as critics charged that the series distorted or misrepresented the experiences of various minority groups.<sup>71</sup> One charge the critics didn't make, however, was that the account of Martin Luther King, Jr., in *A More Perfect Union*, the eighth-grade text in the series, omitted important facts.<sup>72</sup> In a 620-page book covering the whole of United States history, it is quite understandable that Martin Luther King gets no more than a few lines. The text's authors had to be very selective in their account of King. They describe King's charisma from the pulpit, his doctrine of non-violence, and his moving "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in 1963 before the Lincoln Memorial.<sup>73</sup> They do not refer, however, to his multiple infidelities or his plagiarism of others' writings in his doctoral dissertation.

Some facts get included, some omitted. What is the principle of selection? It might be argued that the second set of facts have no

bearing on King's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, and thus have no place in a brief passage where the only issue is that of leadership. The principle of selection is material relevancy. But this answer won't quite do. Though the second set of facts doesn't bear on King's leadership, it does bear on the *greatness* of his leadership. And his greatness is at issue in the text as well as his leadership, for children naturally infer that men who do great things are great men. That inference is allowed to stand – indeed is encouraged – by the brief passages about King in *A More Perfect Union*. And the real point of omitting the second set of facts is not to upset or complicate that inference. Indeed, were a textbook deliberately to include the second set of facts along with the first, people would justly accuse it of trying to discredit King.

Not all men and women who do great things are great persons. In some cases their personal failings or misconduct so dishonor them as to obscure all their achievements.<sup>74</sup> In other cases, an individual's failings and misconduct, even of a serious nature, can leave untouched the greatness of his accomplishments and of his own person. There is no simple correspondence between doing good and being good. Assessments of achievement and greatness can involve many complications. It is precisely these complications that we fear may overwhelm or disorient eighth graders reading a text describing Martin Luther King, and that justify omitting the second set of facts.<sup>75</sup>

In leaving out those facts, however, did the authors of *A More Perfect Union* write "less accurate" history? They certainly omitted some of that "latest scholarship" *One Nation, Many Peoples* favors. Even so, adding the second set of facts, because of its effect, would have brought only a spurious, not a real, accuracy to the text. Martin Luther King, Jr., is now an American icon. The successful political struggle to establish a national holiday for him fixes his name in the American pantheon alongside Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson. Whatever the true significance of his role in the Civil Rights Movement in comparison to that of other leaders and participants, his name is shorthand for that movement and its aspirations. Since history texts will invariably associate the Civil Rights Movement and King, to include in the necessarily brief compass of King's deeds his plagiarism and infidelity would have the effect of discrediting not only King but the Movement. The King depicted in *A More Perfect Union* and similar texts, on the other hand, leaves to children a vital legacy, a movement for racial justice and human dignity to be carried further toward completion by new generations. The King of "I Have a Dream" lets students never forget the upwelling of hope embodied in the Civil Rights Movement. The King of "I Have a Dream" bequeaths to students a usable past.



Not only did the authors of *A More Perfect Union* reject a spurious accuracy, they also rejected a specious inclusiveness. They did not offer "opposing opinions and divergent interpretations" of King. They did not tell the story of King from "multiple perspectives."

As one of its principal recommendations, *One Nation, Many Peoples* declares that the "social studies should be taught from multiple perspectives." Too often, it tells us, history has been taught from only one or a few points of view. For example, typically the "story of the western United States is told as one of westward expansion, assuming the perspective of the migrating Easterners and disregarding the native men and women already there or the long-established Hispanic influence and settlements in the West."<sup>76</sup>

Arthur Schlesinger agrees: "Of course history should be taught from a variety of perspectives. Let our children imagine the arrival of Columbus from the viewpoint of those who met him as well as those who sent him."<sup>77</sup> Here we seem to have a potential pedagogical solution to teaching history in the face of disagreement about the meaning of the past: teach history from "multiple perspectives"; teach our disagreements.<sup>78</sup>

It is, indeed, often quite illuminating to be aware of, and see from, different perspectives. Taking account of other perspectives can lead us to revise our own, or to construct a preferred perspective that ours and others should answer to. At other times matters can simply be left in the air: we can note that Group A believes one thing, Group B another thing, and leave it at that.

But noting that there are different views can also, in the right context, prejudice a particular view rather than leave everything in the air. Were *A More Perfect Union* to add to its account of Martin Luther King that *some people think* he was a philandering, plagiarizing opportunist while others think he was an American hero, the effect would be much the same as simply itemizing the charges as a list of facts. The effect would be to cast doubt in eighth graders' minds about the greatness of King.<sup>79</sup> The effect would be to make this piece of the past less "usable" for many students. *A More Perfect Union* wisely eschewed "multiple perspectives" about King.

It eschewed "multiple perspectives" about another "usable past" as well. *One Nation, Many Peoples* complains that New York's "K-6 syllabi . . . focus on celebrations such as Thanksgiving and Columbus Day without examining other perspectives than those of Europeans, such as the perspectives of Native Americans."<sup>80</sup> We can easily agree with both *One Nation, Many Peoples* and Arthur Schlesinger that Columbus can, and ought to be, looked at from many perspectives. Columbus plays no vital role in the moral economy and civic understanding of eighth-grade students. He is essentially a place-marker: after him the

Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and English came to America. That he might be demoted from a courageous, far-sighted hero to a rapacious plunderer if we look at him not from the perspective of Europe but of aboriginal America is of little consequence.

But consider the second example *One Nation, Many Peoples* joins to Columbus: Thanksgiving. How should it be treated? Quite possibly New York's K-6 syllabi do offer objectionable renderings of Thanksgiving, but here is what eighth graders would have learned were they reading *A More Perfect Union*:

The Pilgrims struggled through the terrible winter of 1620-21 at Plymouth, half of them dying in the process. They did not seek contact with Indians, whom they feared and mistrusted. When spring came, they had run out of food and were too weak to begin planting.

Just as the Pilgrims' situation was getting desperate, Samoset, a Pemaquid Indian, made his appearance. To the Pilgrims' astonishment, he spoke some English, which he said he had learned from English fishermen. He made his tribe's peaceful intentions known and introduced them to Squanto, an Indian who had been enslaved in Spain and had spent two years in England. Squanto showed the colonists where to fish and hunt and taught them to plant native crops such as corn, beans, and squash.

After the 1621 harvest, the Pilgrims wanted to give thanks to God . . . [who] they felt had provided them with plentiful crops. Consequently, they invited their Indian neighbors to a common feast of "thanksgiving," as the colony's governor, William Bradford, proclaimed it. The peaceful relations between the Pilgrims and the Pemaquids lasted for years, and Americans have continued to celebrate Thanksgiving to this day.<sup>81</sup>

Now, how or why would *One Nation, Many Peoples* want to augment this story with another "perspective"?

Some critics, of course, complain about *false accounts* of Thanksgiving. Michael Dorris, a writer of Modoc ancestry, recalls (in an essay entitled "Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving") his son bringing home a school handout with the caption "[The Pilgrims] served pumpkins and turkeys and corn and squash. The Indians had never seen such a feast!" and retorts: "On the contrary! The *Pilgrims* had literally never seen 'such a feast,' since all foods mentioned are exclusively indigenous to the Americas and had been provided, or so legend has it, by the local tribe."<sup>82</sup> Apart from egregiously false depictions, critics may also protest accounts that "glorify the Pilgrims" and "marginalize" the Indians,<sup>83</sup> but the story in *A More Perfect Union* does neither.

What, then, are the perspectives *A More Perfect Union* omits? Perhaps these comments by one multiculturalist supply a clue: "as Americans, we commemorate holidays such as Thanksgiving, a celebration

of ancestral survival . . . , but the reduction of Native Americans to second-class status which facilitated ancestral survival is not acknowledged."<sup>84</sup> If this spurious linking of Thanksgiving with the history of depredations against Native Americans is the missing perspective, then *A More Perfect Union* does well to omit it. The story recounted in *A More Perfect Union* lets students respond directly to the simple decency, humility, harmony, and peaceableness reflected in the first Thanksgiving and memorialized in subsequent ones. There is no need to sabotage that response by inserting into Thanksgiving a *mea culpa* for reducing "Native Americans to second-class status." On the contrary, the Thanksgiving of *A More Perfect Union* pictures the cross-racial comity that might have been and that might yet be if students commit themselves to it. It supplies students a very "usable past."

The "multiple perspectives" approach recommended in *One Nation, Many Peoples* can't serve as an uncritical, unrestricted, across-the-board policy for writing or teaching history. In Takaki's *A Different Mirror*, for example, though many different perspectives get attention, many others don't. Indeed, if he had allowed equal time to perspectives from which the struggles of ordinary Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, African-American, Irish, and Native American men and women had no significance, Takaki would have undermined his own project. His story of multicultural America would have ceased to be a story. It would have degenerated into gibberish. No historian, not even the Historian-Scholar, can write a story in which all perspectives get equal time and no perspective dominates. Certainly, the Historian-Educator cannot, if she is to supply a usable past.<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSION

When Diane Ravitch advises us to detach history from a "vulgar utilitarianism," it is not clear whether she means the emphasis to fall on "vulgar" or on "utilitarianism." If the latter, I have argued that her advice is not sound. The Historian-Educator necessarily uses history instrumentally. The Historian-Educator has interests. A truly told history must nevertheless be truly told in a way that promotes those interests. On the other hand, if Ravitch means to condemn "vulgar" instrumentalism, then nothing argued in this chapter makes patriotic history fall under her condemnation.

Identity has many dimensions, to be sure, some of them quite unattractive, and putting history to work promoting identity might lead to objectionable forms of history. On some accounts of collective identity, for example, "every identity is the affirmation of a difference, the determination of an 'other' that is going to play the role of a 'constitutive outside.'"<sup>86</sup> Upon this Other we project negative attri-

butes, defining our own group by contrast. In the context of this account, we could think of patriotic history as the marking off of national identities, defining our own nation in contrast to the inferior, deficient, backward, vicious, or perverse qualities of others. Worse, in serving as the handmaiden of nationalism, patriotic history "creates a mythic land in which people understand themselves and each other" and "legitimizes attacks on people [within] whose lives are different."<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, patriotic history might be thought to serve national pride. Just as multiculturalists argue that children must see in their schoolbooks their own culture and attractive representatives of their own racial or ethnic group in order to achieve "self-esteem," so we might see patriotic history as designed to make citizens "feel good" about being Americans. But, of course, many forms of pride are vices rather than virtues. In a quite common form of conceit, we congratulate ourselves as though the accomplishments of our ancestors reflected credit on us. We bask in their reflected glory, which patriotic history limns for us.

But the core idea of identity I have seized upon in this chapter is not essentially connected to puffed-up pride or national chauvinism or denigration of the Other. The core idea has to do not with *pride* but with *duty*: what projects over time, begun by others, am I duty-bound to take on (or resist)? Our answers to that question fix our moral identities. It is *that* identity – moral identity – around which I build my sympathetic account of patriotic history.

Patriotic history, as I've described it, seems clearly required by the California Framework, Diane Ravitch's own handiwork. The object of the social studies, the Framework tells us, is to help students "develop a keen sense of ethics and citizenship," so that they might "care deeply about the quality of life in their community, their nation, and their world."<sup>88</sup>

Students need a usable past, I've suggested, a past in which they can find values and projects to take as their own legacies. As heirs, they define their own lives around goals and commitments that build on what came before. Their moral and political identities reside in making "more perfect" the unions and Union they are a part of. There must be, then, something perfectible in those unions. The role of Historian-Educators is to tell stories that let the "something perfectible" be revealed and carried forward.

#### NOTES

1. Diane Ravitch, "The Plight of History in American Schools," in *Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education*, ed. Paul Gagnon (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 68.

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2. *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles – Guidelines for Strengthening the Teaching of Democratic Values* (Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers, 1987), p. 7.
3. *Ibid.*, quoting Tocqueville.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17 (emphasis added).
5. Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? A Report of the First National Assessment of History and Literature* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); Bradley Commission on History in the Schools, "Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in the Schools," in *Historical Literacy*, ed. Gagnon, pp. 16–47; *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools* (Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1988).
6. *Charting a Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1989).
7. Statement by the NEA's Committee on the Social Studies, quoted by Clair Keller, "National History and Citizenship Education," Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy Working Paper (College Park, Md.: University of Maryland, 1987), p. 13. See also the foreword to Richard E. Thursfield, ed., *The Study and Teaching of American History* (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1946), p. viii; James Howard and Thomas Mendenhall, *Making History Come Alive* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Basic Education, 1982), pp. 2, 14–6; Roy F. Nichols and Arthur C. Bining, "The Role of History," in *Education for Citizen Responsibilities*, ed. Franklin L. Burdette (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1942), p. 62.
8. New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee, *One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence* (Albany: New York State Education Department, June 1991), p. vii.
9. Michael Kammen, "History Is Our Heritage: The Past in Contemporary American Culture," in *Historical Literacy*, ed. Gagnon, p. 149.
10. Bradley Commission, "Building a History Curriculum," in *Historical Literacy*, ed. Gagnon, pp. 22, 24.
11. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 201 (emphasis added).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 192. See also Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 33.
13. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 201. Bruner concurs: see *Acts of Meaning*, p. 35 and throughout. See also Owen Flanagan, *Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).
14. Bruner offers this image: "When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress – a play whose somewhat open plot determines what parts we may play and toward what denouements we may be heading" (p. 34). Michael Sandel in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) makes MacIntyre's point in terms of moral identity: "to have a character is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences nonetheless for my choices and conduct" (p. 179).

15. "[H]istory has generally played a more fundamental role than literature in the creation and maintenance of national identities. A democratic public culture cannot survive without broad commitments to democratic ideas, traditions, and freedoms that come in part from a knowledge of history. Public debate requires a shared vocabulary that emerges from the historical experience and language of people who acknowledge some common values or principles or founding events." Lloyd Kramer and Donald Reid, "Introduction: Historical Knowledge, Education, and Public Culture," in *Learning History in America*, ed. Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 4.
16. Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), p. 137.
17. *Education for Democracy*, p. 21.
18. Thomas Pangle, *The Ennobling of Democracy: The Challenge of the Postmodern Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 164.
19. *One Nation, Many Peoples*, p. 31.
20. Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), p. 157.
21. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), pp. 46, 72.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
25. California Framework, p. 4.
26. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). I take the "foam on the waves" image as well as the characterization of Braudel from Peter Burke, "Overture: The New History, Its Past and Its Future," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. 4.
27. I take my account of Heidegger from Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, "Introduction," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1-25.
28. Schlesinger, *Disuniting of America*, p. 18.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 27, 131, 137.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
32. Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993).
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 426.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6, 427.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 116 (slaves resisted through malingering and rebellion), 187 ("Mexican workers demonstrated they were capable of defying stereotypes of docility and submissiveness"), 200 ("Chinese farm laborers did not passively accept what their employers offered them"), 207 ("contrary to the stereotype of Chinese passivity, the Chinese fought discrimination"), 257 ("Japanese workers were not passive victims of exploitation"),

- 261 (Japanese engaged in "day-to-day cultural resistance"), 295 (the power to strike against the shirtwaist industry "had to come from the people themselves"), 325 (the "labor militancy" of Mexican farm workers "contradicted and challenged stereotypes of Mexican passivity"), 346 (blacks "refused to be victimized by southern police abuse" by migrating north), 402 (pressure to end segregation "would have to come not from judicial pronouncements, but from a people's movement for civil rights").
36. Ibid., p. 374.
  37. Ibid., pp. 383-4, 386, 389, 392-3, 395ff.
  38. Ibid., p. 378 (emphasis added).
  39. Ibid., p. 374.
  40. Schlesinger, *Disuniting of America*, p. 37.
  41. Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, p. 427.
  42. Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 166.
  43. Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p. 11.
  44. Ibid., p. 18.
  45. Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 10.
  46. Quoted in Ibid., p. 30.
  47. Ibid., p. 42.
  48. Comments by Charles Maier in *The Unresolved Past: A Debate in German History*, Proceedings of the Wheatland Foundation Conference, ed. Gina Thomas (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), p. 5.
  49. Quoted in Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow*, p. 103. See also Sturmer, in *The Unresolved Past*, ed. Thomas, p. 16 (quoting Helmut Schmidt).
  50. Sturmer, in *The Unresolved Past*, ed. Thomas, p. 15.
  51. Maier, in Ibid., pp. 5-6.
  52. Quoted in Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, p. 21.
  53. See Jurgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 212-28.
  54. Habermas, "Closing Remarks," in *The New Conservatism*, p. 247.
  55. Habermas, "Apologetic Tendencies," in *The New Conservatism*, p. 214.
  56. Habermas, "Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity," in *The New Conservatism*, p. 257.
  57. Ibid., p. 250.
  58. Habermas, "Apologetic Tendencies," p. 227.
  59. Habermas, "Historical Consciousness," p. 261.
  60. Ibid., p. 254.
  61. Ibid., p. 256.
  62. Ibid., p. 257.
  63. Ibid., p. 262.
  64. Habermas, "On the Public Use of History," in *The New Conservatism*, p. 233.
  65. Ibid.
  66. Habermas, "Historical Consciousness," pp. 251, 263.

67. Habermas, "The Public Use of History," p. 233; "Historical Consciousness," p. 267.
68. Habermas, "Remarks from the Romerberg Colloquium," in *The New Conservatism*, p. 210.
69. Taylor, "Cross-Purposes," p. 165 (citizens seeing their dignity affirmed and reflected in the laws as a condition of patriotism).
70. *One Nation, Many Peoples*, p. 12.
71. See Paul Hemp, "Houghton Mifflin's Textbook Troubles," *Boston Globe*, June 25, 1991, p. 37, and Robert Reinhold, "Class Struggle," *New York Times Magazine*, September 29, 1991, p. 26.
72. Beverly J. Armento, Gary B. Nash, Christopher L. Salter, and Karen K. Wixson, *A More Perfect Union* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991).
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 601-3.
74. Richard Nixon no doubt went to his grave in dread that eighth graders would for all time to come know him only for Watergate. That dread would not have been unrealistic. Nixon gets mentioned two times in *A More Perfect Union*, once in a section entitled "American Indians Make Gains," where the text notes that Nixon appointed Indians to the top twenty positions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (p. 604), and the other in a sidebar to a section on Andrew Johnson, which describes Nixon's resignation in the face of impeachment proceedings for the Watergate cover-up (p. 386).
75. Indeed, the complications thrown up by the recent revelations of King's plagiarism seem to have unnerved some sophisticated adult scholars writing in a recent symposium in the *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991). One offers the thought that King's lifting the words of others was actually to his credit, a "part of his resistance" to "academic commandments about language" and the ideas of "Great White Thinkers," through which resistance King "began the process of creatively translating into print the [black] folk procedures of voice merging and self-making" (Keith Miller, "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Folk Pulpit," p. 121). Another resists the view that "if King's flaws are revealed, we must reassess his stature," but, evidently finding the resistance hard, further opines that the academic practice of "documenting sources" is "keyed to the ownership, possession, private-property ethos that drives so much of Western cultural nationalism," in contrast to the community-based standards of African-American culture (Bernice Johnson Reagon, "'Nobody Knows the Trouble I See'; or, 'By and By I'm Gonna Lay Down My Heavy Load,'" p. 117). A third offers the unsupported speculation that King persisted in his plagiarism because he "sensed instantly the racial double standard of his professors" for failing to penalize his initial "transparent legerdemain" and decided to "repay their condescension and contempt in like coin" (David Levering Lewis, "Failing to Know Martin Luther King, Jr.," p. 85).
76. *One Nation, Many Peoples*, pp. 19, 18.
77. Schlesinger, *Disuniting of America*, p. 15.
78. *One Nation, Many Peoples*, pp. 2-3. See also Gerald Graff, *Beyond the*



*Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992).

79. Eighth graders can understand that great figures have flaws. Indicating that he had flaws like all other humans, great and small, need not discredit Martin Luther King for students, especially if the flaws are not described in brutal detail. But such an account *already* operates from within the received perspective on King provided by the text of *A More Perfect Union*. To present the "other perspective" requires conveying King's failings not as character "flaws" but as character-revealing traits.
80. *One Nation, Many Peoples*, p. 19.
81. *A More Perfect Union*, p. 29.
82. Michael Dorris, "Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving," *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* 9 (1978): 9.
83. James W. Loewen, "The Truth about the First Thanksgiving," *Monthly Review* 44 (November 1992): 21.
84. Nitzza M. Hildago, "Multicultural Teacher Introspection," in *Freedom's Plow: Teaching in the Multicultural Classroom*, ed. Theresa Perry and James W. Fraser (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 103.
85. In respect to "usable pasts," the California History-Social Science Framework is noteworthy for the emphasis it puts on history as "a story well told" (4).
86. Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 2.
87. Richard Sennett, "The Identity Myth," *New York Times*, January 3, 1994, p. 17. See also Richard Sennett, "Narrative as Knowing" Symposium, *Yale Journal of Criticism* 5 (1992), pp. 179-82.
88. California Framework, pp. 2-3 (emphasis added).