

# Justice AND Caring

*The Search for  
Common Ground  
in Education*

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**TEACHERS  
COLLEGE  
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Teachers College  
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New York and London

## CHAPTER 8

# Ethnicity, Identity, and Community

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Disputes about the the appropriate roles of care and justice in ethics and moral development theory have made little contact with another area of contemporary controversy, multiculturalism in schools and society. Yet the two have much to offer one another. Ethnic cultures and ethnic identities can provide a form of moral orientation for their members. But this moral orientation takes the form of a group consciousness that does not fall comfortably into either side of the care/justice debate. It is neither as individual in its focus as care nor as universalist as justice. Thus the group aspect of ethno-cultural identity challenges the idea that care and justice together exhaust the entire moral terrain (Blum, 1994). At the same time, norms of care and justice do appropriately govern aspects of ethnicity-based moral consciousness and community.

Multiculturalism is frequently criticized as divisive. The emphasis on ethnic or racial identity—for example, ethnic affirmation in multicultural curricula, in-group ethnic socializing, and institutional support of ethno-racially based dormitories and organizations—is claimed to be harmful to unity and community. *Difference* is privileged at the expense of *commonality*.

Yet *proponents* of multiculturalism, too, invoke community in their defense of ethno-racial social and cultural affirmation in colleges. Members of ethno-racial groups (a term I define below) seek realization of a sense of community with their fellow ethnics and desire recognition for that ethnicity-based community from the wider institutions and bodies of which those groups are a constituent part.

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The stances of both opponents and proponents of multiculturalism make this dispute quite difficult to resolve. Each tends, at least implicitly, to make two problematic assumptions. The first is that intra- and inter-ethnic communities are necessarily in tension with one another; loyalty to one necessarily diminishes or compromises loyalty to or involvement in the other.

The second assumption is that there is something suspect about one or another of the types of community in question. Multiculturalists, though often paying some kind of homage (or, less charitably, lip service) to the importance of trans-ethnic communities—both large (national) and small (schools, classes, neighborhoods)—generally accord primacy to ethno-racial communities and identities. Multiculturalist writing is often suspicious of communities with aspirations to trans-ethnicity or universality for employing a false universality to mask cultural bias toward or against particular ethno-racial groups in the mix in question (Scott, 1995). Critics of multiculturalism who are concerned about community tend to do precisely the reverse. They may reluctantly concede some value to intra-ethnic community, but they give strong pride of place to non-ethnic and trans-ethnic communities. (Some critics of multiculturalism are not concerned about trans-ethnic community, but about individuality or a perceived anti-Western or anti-American bias.)

Both of these assumptions are unfounded. Healthy forms of identification with one's ethnic community are entirely consistent with identification with trans-ethnic communities; group attachments do not fit the zero-sum model. Moreover, both types of community do, or can, embody important values.

In this chapter I will be concerned mostly with the second issue—specifically, with values realized by intra-ethnic communities. I will argue that intra-ethnic communities come in several distinct forms, and realize distinct values, some of which are distinct from both care and justice.

Debates about multiculturalism are often framed in an abstract and over-polarized manner—difference versus commonality, giving voice to marginalized voices versus imposition of dominant culture, individualism versus communitarianism, and the like. This chapter is an attempt to shed light on one small part of this complex terrain, in hope of thereby encouraging a more nuanced and substantive discussion of the many other issues involved as well.

### **ETHNO-RACIAL IDENTITIES: A TYPOLOGY**

I will adopt David Hollinger's (1995) term *ethno-racial* to refer to major groupings currently conceptualized when people discuss ethnic groups in

schools and colleges in the United States—African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, European Americans, Asian Americans. The term *ethno-racial* captures the complex character of these groups, in which racial and ethno-cultural elements interweave in forming the group identity. It is meant to suggest, too, that those two factors each have shifting meanings, ones that preclude a sharp distinction between them.

The five ethno-racial groups listed above are by no means the only ones currently visible in educational institutions. One finds subgroups of each—a campus with a Korean-American organization, or Haitian-American club, for example—or, in the other direction, formations and organizations of “people of color,” encompassing the above ethno-racial groups other than European Americans. Much of the subsequent discussion will apply to both these sub- and supra-ethno-racial groups. Nevertheless, what Hollinger calls the “ethno-racial pentagon” constitutes the dominant divisions and group categorizations in most high schools and colleges, and in recent popular consciousness.

Students bring differing types of ethno-racial cultures from their home backgrounds to these educational institutions. I will distinguish *four* forms of ethno-racial identity. The list is not exhaustive; but it suggests a range of forms materially relevant to the character of ethno-racial communities in educational institutions—to the values they are able to realize, to their impact on possibilities for trans-ethnic community in an institution, and for how issues of care and justice are pertinent to these communities.

### **Thick Ethnicity**

“Thick” ethnicity contrasts with thin ethnicity, though the distinction is only a matter of degree. Thick/thin concerns the extent to which one’s daily life is immersed in and permeated by one’s ethno-racial identity. Criteria of thick ethnicity in a student’s home background include the following: living in a mono-ethnic neighborhood; coming from a family which speaks a language other than English; attending largely mono-ethnic schools; having a family life permeated with ethnicity-based rituals and other cultural expressions of ethnicity (music, food, and the like); being able to speak the (non-English) language of one’s parents or grandparents; being immersed in the ethnicity-based (including religious) traditions of one’s ethnic group; having friends almost solely from one’s ethnic group.

### **Thin Ethnicity**

“Thin” ethnicity is marked by what sociologists often call “symbolic ethnicity” (Gans, 1996). Mary Waters (1990) studied this form of ethnicity among second- and third-generation White Catholic ethnics in her book

*Ethnic Options.* She prefers the term *voluntary ethnicity* as allowing for a genuine personal meaningfulness called into question by Gans's analysis.

Thinly ethnic persons partake of some cultural and familial aspects of their ethno-cultures, but do not live or go to school primarily among members of their ethno-racial groups. Their ethnicity is not very salient in their daily existence. The distinction between thin and thick carries with it no implication that thick ethnicity is more "authentic" or "real" than thin ethnicity, though thick ethnics (and others) often regard thin ethnicity in that way.

Factors empirically affecting the thinness or thickness of one's ethnicity are immigrant status, distance in time from ancestors' immigration, and economic position; if all other things are equal, thick ethnicity is found in poorer and immigrant families, thin ethnicity in families more well-to-do and more distant from original immigration. However, these relations hold only in general. There are many exceptions. African Americans as a group provide several exceptions to these links. Because residential segregation is greater among middle-class African Americans than among any other prominent ethno-racial group's middle class (Hacker, 1995, ch. 3), African-American young people are likely to be more thickly ethnic across class lines than are other groups. Moreover, though African Americans are native English speakers, the linguistic form sometimes called "black English" provides a linguistic counterpart to non-English languages among other thickly ethnic groups. Speaking only black English or standard English that is heavily inflected with black English is a marker (though only one among several others) of thick ethnicity among African Americans. Speaking *only* standard English is one marker of thin ethnicity. Moving easily between the two, depending on context, might place one somewhere in the middle, other factors aside.

## **Identity Ethnicity**

Identity ethnicity is an ethno-racial identification with no cultural content. Though perhaps an extreme case, it is significantly conceptually distinct from both thin and thick ethnicity. African-American, Latino-American, Asian-American, and Native-American are all very salient social identities in the United States, and identification of someone as a member of such groups can be marked by features other than culture—for example, by phenotypic features taken as corresponding to a "racial" manner of understanding such groups, or by ancestry as a member of the group. For these reasons, someone may be identified as, and may identify herself as, a member of one of these groups, even if she has partaken of virtually no aspect of the ethno-culture seen as corresponding to that group (see also Appiah, 1996; Hollinger, 1995).

Imagine, for example, a third generation Japanese American growing up in an (otherwise) all-white suburb. Her family is completely assimilated, at least to the extent of not observing any distinct Japanese rituals, not preparing Japanese foods, and not expressing any distinct identification or interest in Japan or with other Japanese Americans. The girl has never explored Japanese culture; her own peer culture is the multicultural mix we call "American culture," and her family culture is barely distinguishable from that of her white neighbors. Nevertheless, because the girl "looks Asian" (within the U.S. context) and because her ancestors are unquestionably Japanese-American, she can, and in fact is likely to, be taken as Asian-American or Japanese-American.

When this young woman comes to college, she meets substantial numbers of Asian-American students for the first time. Despite the absence of any distinct ethno-culture, she is able to identify herself as an "Asian American." That identity can be or become meaningful to her, and will often be accepted by others as "legitimate." She may (come to) feel a real bond with other Asian Americans, including those who are much more culturally ethnic (thick or thin) than she.

Mary Waters's (1990) account of ethnicity strongly emphasizes an asymmetry between white and non-white ethnicity in regard to the degree of choice one has to distance oneself from one's ethnic (or, in my terminology, ethno-racial) group identity or not. A Polish American can generally choose when to exhibit, celebrate, or take on, her ethnicity. She is not visibly a Polish American and may not have a characteristically Polish name. African Americans and Asian Americans (with the exception of the few able to "pass" as white) do not have this option. They are treated as African-American, or Asian-American, as illustrated in the above example.

This point is relevant to the possibilities for identity ethnicity. What allows for identity ethnicity is the social salience and significance of the identity category. Physical appearance, shared history as groups seen and treated as distinctive, and the self-claiming (intensified in the past three decades) of their ethno-racial identity as a group have all contributed to the salience of non-white ethno-racial group identity in the United States, thus providing the conceptual and psychological space for an individual to take on an ethnic *social* identity without having the *cultural* substance often assumed to accompany it.

It is useful to distinguish among three distinct types of identity ethnic:

1. A person who recognizes that she is seen by others, and would be classified by the governing classificatory conventions in the society, as a member of ethnicity E, but who does not herself identify personally as an E.

2. A "pure" identity ethnic, who makes the distinction I am drawing here, and so regards herself as *not* having an ethno-culture (though perhaps aspires to have one, or wishes she had one), yet, unlike type (1), does personally identify with (identify herself as) ethnicity E.
3. Identity ethnics who do not themselves subjectively make a clear distinction between an identity ethnic (one without cultural ethnicity) and a cultural (thin or thick) ethnic. Persons in this category think of the ethno-culture of their ethnic identity as something that belongs to them, but which they perhaps need to "discover," or get in touch with.

### Anti-discrimination Ethnicity

The fourth type of ethno-racial identity is grounded entirely in the ethnic group's being a target of discrimination. In the ideal type I am imagining, the individual is not and does not regard herself as *culturally* ethnic at all. But she feels a strong loyalty to and identification with her group because and insofar as it suffers discrimination at the hands of others. That identification is experienced and manifested most strongly *when the group is discriminated against*; but it also exists as a standing identification.

The anti-discrimination ethnic is thus one subgroup within identity ethnics of type 2 (a person who identifies with her ethnic group, but does not regard the identification as something grounded in a shared culture). For the anti-discrimination ethnic it is the ethnic group not as a *cultural* group but as a *discriminated-against* group that is the source of her identification.

For the most part, *pure* anti-discrimination ethnic identity is found only in non-white groups (in the United States), for they are by far the most frequent targets of racial and ethnic discrimination. For example, a Mexican American who feels so far removed from Mexican or Mexican-American culture that she has no identification with it might still identify herself clearly as Mexican-American and *with* other Mexican Americans insofar as they suffer discrimination.

However, Jews are a "white" group (see also Kaye-Kantrowitz, 1996) that also suffers discrimination, and many Jews' form of identification with Jewish ethnicity is through an anti-discrimination consciousness. Moreover, in specific locales, some other white ethnic groups may be widespread targets of discrimination by other white and non-white ethnic groups. Also, because anti-discrimination ethnicity is subjectively defined, an individual person can adopt it when actual discrimination is non-existent or trivial—thus the possibility of a Euro-American (or white, depending on whether a [quasi-]cultural or a racial dimension is being emphasized) anti-discrimination ethnicity.

The anti-discrimination ethnic is motivated by a justice-based consciousness. But the justice is not of the pure Kohlbergian kind; it is not simply a universal principle to which the ethnic adheres. There are two differences. First, the anti-discriminator's sense of justice is particularized to her own group. While she may well have a broader sense of justice, that is a different matter. She is indignant when her own group, or one of its members, is unjustly treated but does not necessarily have a similar reaction when members of other groups are similarly mistreated.

Second, the anti-discriminator possesses a sense of particularistic connection and bond with members of her group. To her they are not simply *fellow human beings* unjustly treated, but members of her particular ethnoracial group. She feels a distinct, and particular, bond with them.

These two features do not, however, make the anti-discrimination ethnic any less motivated, in her solidarity, by a sense of *justice*. It simply means that this justice is not of a pure Kohlbergian or Kantian type. (This does not mean, however, that it is a species of "care," either, as we will see below.)

### **Identities and Identifications**

A form of anti-discrimination identification can exist not as a pure type of identity ethnicity but as a component of identification that can coexist with cultural identification of either thin or thick variety. In fact, most people of color do possess some combination of cultural and anti-discrimination identifications.

The categories of "thin" and "thick" (ethnic) differ from those of "identity" and "anti-discrimination" in one significant respect. The latter are *chosen*, or at least *affirmed*, ethnic identifications; in fact, in common parlance they would not be seen as forms of ethnicity (or ethnic identity) at all, since that concept implies some cultural content. They are rather forms of ethnic identification. While *membership* in the ethnoracial group in question is not chosen but is (or is at least regarded as) a given—one just *is* Jewish, or African-American, or Mexican-American—nevertheless, whether one *identifies oneself with* that group (in anti-discrimination or other identity modes) is something one chooses, or embraces.

By contrast, thinness and thickness do not express ways an individual has chosen to identify herself. Rather, they express cultural material with which she has been provided. A person brought up in a thick ethnic environment may well recognize herself *as* an E (substitute your favorite thick ethnicity), but she may wish she were not. She may even hate



being an E, see it as very confining, and wish to escape it. In any case, she does not embrace E-ness. If she were to be introduced to the distinction between thin ethnicity and thick ethnicity, she might see herself as a thick ethnic who wishes she were a thin ethnic, or wishes she were not an E at all. Thin ethnicity is less permeating of one's life, so in a sense there is less to reject or resent. Still, a thinly ethnic E may wish she were not E; she may not like whatever it is that she associates with (thin) E-ness. She may also wish she were thickly ethnic, yet feel she never can be.

So anti-discrimination and other forms of identity (ethnicity) refer to modes of appropriating identities, while thin and thick refer to the cultural character of the identities themselves, independent of what attitude or claim the individual takes up toward it.

On a given campus, any ethno-racial group present in more than very small numbers is likely to encompass exemplars of all four types of ethnicity. Ethno-racial groupings on campuses can be classified as *visible* or *classificatory*. The visible group comprises those group members who distinctly identify with other members of the group, tend to hang out with them, and, more generally, give it to be understood by the wider institution that they are members of the (Asian-American, Latino, etc.) group on campus.

The classificatory group is broader than the visible group and comprises all individuals who would be officially classified as members of the given ethno-racial group, even if they do not actually identify with the visible ethno-racial community on the campus. So this larger group also comprises individuals who do not identify with the specific other Es on the campus, even if each acknowledges herself as an E. The extent to which a classificatory ethnic is also a visible ethnic on a given campus can be a matter of degree and imprecision. Some people will more clearly be members of the visible ethnic group than others.

The classificatory ethno-racial group is likely to include persons of all four types of ethnicity (and some who fit none of those categories). It is possible for the visible community as well to include all four types (though not type 1 of the identity ethnic—the person who disidentifies with her classificatory ethno-racial group). The visible ethno-community is somewhat less likely to include anti-discrimination ethnics, however, as they feel no cultural proclivity with fellow ethnics. Moreover, the visible ethnic community must contain at least some, and often a preponderance, of thin and thick ethnics, since generally a pure identity ethnic comes to think of herself as ethnic only when confronted with other fellow ethnics who possess some cultural substance.

## THE "SENSE OF COMMUNITY": A TYPOLOGY

It is sometimes assumed that persons who identify with a given ethnicity necessarily constitute a community with other members of that ethnic group. Depending on what we take "community" to mean, this should not be assumed, as the distinction between "visible" and "classificatory" ethnicity indicates. Suppose, for example, that Jose is a thinly ethnic Mexican American on a campus in which the other Mexican Americans are thickly ethnic. His identity as a Mexican American is not in question, but he may feel no sense of community with the other Mexican Americans (Navarrette, 1993). So (*ethno-racial*) *identity* is not the same as (*ethno-racial*) *community*.

However, where ethnic community *does* exist, what kinds of values do such communities realize? Little systematic thought has been given to this question. Both multiculturalists and anti-multiculturalists trade on the honorific associations of the term *community* (in each of their two favored forms—intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic). But why are communities of either type a good thing?

First, some thoughts about the slippery notion of community itself. The term is sometimes used in a purely descriptive sense to name a grouping of persons with some degree of organization or a shared, recognized status. Thus we speak of "the medical community," "the law enforcement community," even "the explosives community" (Royal, 1995). Particular institutions can be communities in this sense: "the McCormack School community," "The University of Iowa community," "the Biogen Corporation community." In *this* sense an (ethnic) identity group *does* always constitute a community—a classificatory community ("the community of African Americans at the University of Massachusetts at Boston," for example).

"Community" in this descriptive sense contrasts with community in a valorized sense, in which the community (in the descriptive sense) is taken to realize some positive *value*, and not simply to exist as a social entity or classificatory group. Having a "sense of community" is a major way in which a community (in the descriptive sense) can realize a value. A neighborhood or school may entirely lack a sense of community in this sense. But the descriptive use may also be *aspirational*, implying an as-yet-unrealized potential for the achievement of a sense of community.

Yet not all communities with a sense of community are good or valuable communities. Nazi youth groups and religious cults often have a strong sense of community, yet they do not or may not realize positive values. A sense of community is no guarantee that the community (in the descrip-

tive sense) is a good one, all told. It must also serve good, or at least non-objectionable, ends. A sense of community may be a good feature of a group that possesses other negative features, such as being loud and obnoxious, for example. Yet if a group crosses some threshold of "badness," we may no longer accord *any* value to its sense of community. For instance, a neo-Nazi group's strong sense of community would not normally be regarded as good, because it is so deeply implicated in the group's badness. In the case of educational institutions, we may assume that most at least aspire to serve genuinely good ends—the moral and intellectual growth of individuals, the preparation of informed citizens; hence a sense of community in them will be a good thing.

The contemporary movement known as "communitarianism" has contributed much to a revival of concern for community in the valorized sense (Etzioni, 1995; Sandel, 1982; Selznick, 1992). That movement has generally portrayed community in terms of a group of people—often based in a shared location, such as a neighborhood, but sometimes on a tradition (such as a religious one)—bound together by shared meanings or *shared values*. Should a neighborhood be able to exclude a pornographic bookstore? Should a St. Patrick's Day parade associated with South Boston be allowed to exclude an openly gay Irish group from participating, on the grounds that homosexuality is antithetical to the values of the South Boston community? These questions are raised by the "shared values" conception of community.

But sharing values is not sufficient for the sense of community at stake in the multiculturalism debates, in either inter- or intra-ethnic communities. For example, a multi-ethnic school with an intense culture of individual competitiveness and achievement, recognized and accepted as such by its staff and students, would be a community in the "shared values" sense. So would a school in which a strong sense of discipline and adherence to rules was accepted and valued. Yet neither school would necessarily embody the sense of common bond and attachment to other members presupposed in the "sense of community" that multiculturalists wish, or assume, in ethno-racial groups, and that pro-community anti-multiculturalists seek in classes, schools, and nations. Shared values can be "anti-communal" ones, yet they are still shared, and they can help define a community. But it will not be the kind of community generally desired in intra- and inter-ethnic communities. It will not have a "sense of community" in the required sense.

*Some* degree of shared values may be required for any community in the evaluative sense. However, the kinds of intra- or inter-ethnic communities I envision do not require that the students all have the same values in any general sense. It allows, and celebrates, the fact that children will

bring many differences, including differences of values, to the school and the classroom. People can care for and care about those whose values differ from their own, and the pluralistic communities that constitute our schools in a culturally diverse society can attain a strong and overarching sense of "shared values" only at the cost of the recognition of their diversity. What may be correct, however, about the communitarian notion of shared values is that in order to be communities, the students must share certain values *with regard to the school setting itself*—values defining how people are to be treated, valuing of the school itself as an institution, and the like. But this leaves room for differing values about many other matters.

A sense of community, then, is not the same as (though it may involve) shared values. But what is a "sense of community," then? The term is too imprecise to find a single distinct answer. Let me suggest, then, at least *three* types of "sense of community" that can plausibly lay claim to this label. Each involves a somewhat distinct form of the human bond that connects the members of the community. Only one of these forms involves "caring" in the full sense in which it is used in the relevant literature; I will argue that this form is, when everything else is equal, the highest of the three forms of community. Nevertheless, individual caring in its own right lacks a type of collective or communal good possessed by the other two forms of community.

I will describe these ethno-racial communities primarily in the context of "visible" ethno-racial communities on school and college campuses. So I am here envisioning members of the same ethno-racial group who socialize (though not necessarily exclusively) with one another, eat together in the dining halls (at least some of the time), and are a distinct presence in the eyes of other students as members of that group; they may or may not be part of formal ethno-racial organizations.

Like the typology of ethnic identities, the following are ideal types. Actual communities may only approximately exemplify the values discussed, and may also embody more than one of the three values.

### **Belonging and Comfort**

Communities may provide a sense of belonging and security, comfort and familiarity, to their members. Intra-ethnic groups on colleges are often experienced this way—a place or grouping to which members of a minority group who may not feel entirely comfortable in the larger institution can retreat for human sustenance among people with whom they feel comfortable, secure, and familiar. Stephen Carter (1993) describes the "black table," a place in the dining room of Yale Law School where black law students would gather at mealtimes to discuss issues of concern to

them, where they could acknowledge their shared difference(s) from other students and proceed from that shared understanding.

Perhaps a "comfort" community is best realized among thickly ethnic students, as they have the most in common with regard to the ethno-racial dimension of their lives. Nevertheless, thin and identity ethnics may also experience this sense of comfort, though their sense of community will not replicate their home form of ethnic community. In fact, as mentioned earlier, residential colleges are often the first setting that identity ethnics experience themselves *as* ethnic, and they may feel a common bond and a desire, one they have never felt before, to socialize with fellow ethnics.

As I have described them, *pure* "anti-discrimination ethnics" are not likely to be members of comfort communities. They do not particularly desire to socialize with co-ethnics, nor necessarily feel any degree of personal comfort or familiarity with them.

The sense of comfort and security can not be generated by the mere co-presence of members of ethnic groups, of the thick, thin, and identity varieties. Personal and other factors may keep a collection of co-ethnics from "gelling" into a security community; they might, for example, just not hit it off with each other personally.

### **Solidarity and Loyalty to the Group**

I conceive of *loyalty* and *solidarity* as involving a stronger sense of being bound up together, as having a "shared fate," than what is required by the security/comfort notion of community. Loyalty and solidarity require the members to stick up for one another and to join with one another in the face of outside threat or obstacle. By contrast, members of a comfort community could be something like fair-weather friends. They might feel comfortable with one another and have a sense of belonging and enjoy being with each other. But when all or some of its members encounter adversity, the group as a whole may not be counted on to stick together.

The community of solidarity is not merely a subgroup of the community of comfort. The solidarity community may include non-members of the comfort community, such as antidiscrimination ethnics who do not experience their ethno-racial group as a social comfort and familiarity group but may be there when the group is victimized. They do strongly identify with the group, but the tie is one of solidarity and loyalty rather than comfort. Of course, many students will feel *both* solidarity *and* comfort/security in the visible ethnic group. (Solidarity and loyalty may be directed to the wider classificatory ethnic community as well.)

While antidiscrimination ethnics feel loyalty and solidarity with their group, not all members of the loyalty community have an antidiscrimination consciousness. Loyalty untempered with justice (of which antidiscrimination is one form) is different from loyalty tempered with justice. The latter is exemplified by the antidiscrimination ethnic whose conviction that the group has genuinely suffered an injustice is a condition of her expressing solidarity; while the "pure" loyalty member simply sticks to and stands up for the group come what may. (In practice it is not always easy to distinguish these two types.) If, for example, the group has a clash of interest with some other group over resources for their respective student organizations, the antidiscrimination ethnic will not stand with her group if she does not feel they are being discriminated against with regard to the resource dispute, while the loyalty ethnic will. This is why a loyalty community, untempered by a sense of justice, is subject to a group egoism which diminishes the group's value; though, providing that the group is not dedicated to positively evil ends, I would still regard the loyalty as at least a limited virtue in that group.

### **Mutual Caring**

A third kind of valorized community is characterized by mutual care and an intensified sense of individual responsibility of each for each other's welfare. While there are hints and seeds of this caring in the two previous forms of community, the more developed caring—the individualized caring described most fully by Nel Noddings (1984, 1992), and discussed and presupposed in much feminist and "carist" moral philosophy—is not guaranteed by either a comfort community or a loyalty community. To like to be with others, to feel comfortable with them, to share a culture with them, to feel socially secure with them—none of these requires or guarantees individualized attentiveness and concern for the welfare of the other members in the "mutual caring" community. However, all provide psychic and social contexts in which that caring can develop.

Similarly, the sense of solidarity involved in the loyalty community does not involve (or guarantee) this individualized attentiveness, either. Pulling together with, or joining, a group of one's co-ethnics in time of unjust treatment, and feeling a strong sense of solidarity with them, is by no means the same as knowing them individually, caring about them individually, and being concerned about the welfare of each individual.

To be sure, solidarity can be regarded as a *form* of caring. One would not stand with one's fellow ethnics unless one cared for them in *some* sense. For that matter, comfort/security/belonging involve a (different) form of

care—at least) a well-wishing, a pleasure in their pleasure. However, neither involves the type of care described by Noddings, the type rightly conceived of as grounding an “ethic of care,” with its more intensified attentiveness to the other individual and her needs, her distinct personality, her way of viewing things, and the like.

The caring community in this sense is difficult to realize fully in any grouping of a fairly large number of persons; it is not possible to care in the Noddings sense for very many people at a given time—certainly only for fewer than those with whom one can feel either comfort or solidarity. Still, the caring community holds out an ideal which can be approximated to a greater or lesser extent among visible ethno-racial communities.

Aristotle’s discussion of friendship provides a useful analogy here. He describes three types of friendship—pleasure, use, and character. All are genuine forms of friendship; they are not less than friendship. Yet only in character friendship is the other person truly loved for her own sake. In “pleasure” friendship, one enjoys the other’s company and wishes her well, but does not love her for her own sake. The pleasure friendship is somewhat analogous to the “comfort community.” (But the “use” friendship is *not* analogous to the solidarity community; the latter has no counterpart in Aristotle’s scheme.) The character friendship is analogous to the caring community, in containing a higher degree of a characteristic important to all friendships (caring for the friend—analogue to the sense of bond with co-ethnics in communities).

Bonds of individualized care can grow up among fellow ethnics of all four kinds—thin, thick, identity (excepting type 1), and antidiscrimination. Temperament, interest, opportunity, and character of the individual will affect with whom these carings develop. But people can also work at caring for others, and a particular visible ethno-racial group on a given campus may have a culture or ethos that encourages the development of individualized caring, rather than, say, leaving the character of the community at the security/comfort stage.

### CARING AND COLLECTIVITY

From the point of view of concern for individual welfare, caring communities are a more desirable—a “higher”—form of community than solidarity or comfort/security communities. The bonds between the members are stronger and deeper than in those other communities.

Nevertheless, the idea of individual attentive caring that informs a caring community does not capture the full range of value that people seek

in communities, and, specifically, that students may seek in an ethnicity-based community in school or college. In particular, this caring does not necessarily guarantee a sense of *collectivity* that students from campus ethno-racial minority groups often expect and want.

Generally, ethnicity-based groups are not, or are not only, analogous to one's set of friends, each of whom one cares for individually, but who do not (necessarily) constitute a distinct, mutually recognizing group. Rather, the visible ethnic community thinks of itself as a distinct group, defined by shared ethnicity, within which the ties of friendship and care develop. As such, a collectivity can have an identity that is not reducible to the mere set of its members. Thus it can have interests, can view itself in relation to other groups, can feel itself under threat as a group. Some members may come to feel that the group is defining its ethnic identity in an unacceptable way—perhaps too narrow, or too nationalist, or too embracing of homophobia—or (in a different direction) too tepid or thin. In this case, some persons, even if they like and care for the individual members taking this group in (as they see it) an unfortunate direction, may choose to dissociate themselves from the group. This action, in turn, can threaten the identity and cohesion of the group as a whole—for example, by depriving it of a critical mass necessary for it even to be seen as a distinct ethnic group, or to experience itself as a distinct group, at that institution, in the visible sense.

The difference between pure *individual* caring, and the sense of collectivity involved in a caring (ethno-racial) community, involves the kinds of attitudes that the members have toward one another. For example, a member of the caring *community* is proud when a member of her group achieves something noteworthy; she sees this as reflecting on the group as a whole. She not only recognizes the other member's accomplishment and is *pleased* for her because she cares about her as a fellow student; she also feels pride *herself* because she identifies with the group and sees the other member's accomplishment as reflecting on the group.

Despite their weakness in guaranteeing a strong sense of mutual caring and responsibility, pure security communities *and* loyalty communities necessarily embody this collective dimension that individualized care does not. The familiarity, belonging, and security occur in relation to a distinct *group*, defined in terms of the shared characteristic of ethnicity, or ethnic identity, and a sense of collectivity built around that; the member's sense of security has its existence not only in relation to a random collection of individuals each of whom she feels secure with. Similarly, the loyalty involved in a loyalty community is directed not toward a mere collection of individual persons, but toward that *group*, when the group as a



collectivity is threatened, insulted, or degraded. (It can also be generated by persecution of an individual; but it is the individual *as a member of the group*, as well as in her own right.) Perhaps the loyal member would *also* be loyal to individual members *purely* as individuals (e.g., as friends), but that is a different matter.

But could it not be replied that *caring* can itself be directed toward collectivities, as well as toward individuals, so the distinction I am attempting to draw really carries no weight? We can care that the group retains its integrity, that it stands for worthy ideals, that it engages in productive activities. We can embrace the notion of collectivity in our caring.

As Noddings points out, we can care for entities other than people—animals, the earth, ideas. These forms of caring differ in important ways from caring for individual persons. If the notion of care expands to include every form of appropriate moral relationship with every sort of entity warranting moral concern, the distinct individualized focus, the role of responsiveness of the other in caring, its operation independent of the formal demands of institutionalized structures and roles—all of which make the notion of care such a powerful moral conception and distinguish it so clearly from other moral conceptions (e.g., ones rooted in duty, obligation, pure rationality)—would be lost. The paradigm use of care should remain tied to caring for the other as a distinct *individual*. Independent of the terminological point of how broadly to employ the term *care*, the psychic operation of individualized person-to-person caring is distinct from that of attitudes toward collectivities, or toward individuals-as-members-of-collectivities.

So a caring *community* must be more than a group of individuals caring for one another individually in the fullest sense. It must embody a sense of ethno-racial collectivity, and the virtues that can attend it (such as concern and loyalty for the group). The individualized caring needs supplementing by collectivity-related values. (They may also need to be supplemented by justice, but that is another matter).

### **INTRA-ETHNIC AND INTER-ETHNIC COMMUNITIES: SOME IMPLICATIONS**

While no claim of exhaustiveness can be made for this threefold typology of ethnicity-based communities and some of the values they are able to realize, it does suggest that there can be no *general* answer to the question, What is the value of ethnic communities? The answer depends on the values realized by particular communities. Similarly, there is no general answer to the question whether intra-ethnic communities detract

from valuable inter-ethnic communities. That depends on the character of the ethnic community (as well as of the inter-ethnic one).

Some kinds of intra-ethnic communities detract from trans-ethnic ones much more than do others. Let us imagine two "ideal types" of security community (most college ethnic communities will be combinations of elements of both, but it is useful to consider the extremes). One consists of members who derive security and comfort from the ethno-community but are fearful, distrustful, and hostile to out-group members. They may see themselves as constantly victimized by other groups, or they may just be fearful of people who are different or who seem more able than they to negotiate the dominant culture of the educational institution.

The second ideal type of security community is one in which the members are bound by the comfort that stems from a shared culture (thin or thick, or something in between), but they are not negative toward or fearful of the wider multi-ethnic community. The members all have friends from other groups, participate in activities that bridge different groups, and evince loyalty to and concern for the larger institution by playing on sports teams and involving themselves in (multi-ethnic) service projects, various levels of student government, and the like. Perhaps they more frequently sit with fellow ethnics in dining rooms or cafeterias than with others. But they do not *always* do so, and they feel entirely comfortable in many multi-ethnic settings.

I am asserting, without distinct empirical support, that the less exclusivist comfort community can provide as strong a sense of comfort/belonging/security as the more exclusivist one. But some research does suggest that non-exclusivist ethno-racial identities are healthier forms of ethno-racial identity than exclusivist ones (see Tatum, 1996).

Obviously the fearful/hostile ethnic community is much more inimical to trans-ethnic community than is the accepting/expansive one. The former's members will be poor candidates for attempts to forge cross-ethnic ties and to generate a loyalty to the institution itself, or at least a loyalty experienced as gladly shared with members of other groups. It does not follow, however, that the mere *existence* of the fearful visible ethnic community, and of organizations and practices through which it is realized, *by itself* detracts from the development of wider ethno-racial ties and community. It could be that without the ethnicity-based community, the particular members of the ethnic group in question would be alienated equally from the larger community. They simply would not have *any* community in which they were comfortable. Merely depriving students of the option of an ethnicity-based communal attachment and recognition does not by itself promote wider cross-ethnic attachments and loyalties, as some anti-multiculturalism seems to presume. The exis-

tence of such organizations does not prevent, nor does its absence guarantee, trans-ethnic communities.

## CONCLUSION

I have argued that there are at least four importantly distinct types of ethnicity: two kinds of ethno/racial identity (thick and thin), identity (with three subgroups), and antidiscrimination (an instance of one of the subdivisions of identity ethnicity). Ethno-racial identity can have quite different meanings for different people. The typology allows us to recognize the distinction between ethno-culture and ethnic identity; not everyone who possesses an ethnic identity that can be personally significant necessarily partakes of its corresponding ethno-culture(s).

At the same time, shared ethnic identity in any of its forms is no guarantee of a substantial sense of *community* with fellow ethnics, in an educational (or other) institution. (*Culture, identity, and community* are more distinct from one another than writings on multiculturalism often presuppose.) Nevertheless, institutionally visible ethnic communities can readily encompass all four types of ethnic identity.

I have argued that different sorts of community realize different values. I have distinguished among security/comfort/belonging, loyalty/solidarity, and mutual (individualized) care as distinct values realized by different kinds of ethnic communities. A sense of collectivity, present in both the security and loyalty communities, must complement the individual care of the caring community in order to realize something close to a full range of values realizable by intra-ethnic communities.

The group-based goods of security, belonging, loyalty, and solidarity that ethno-racial groups can realize are thus distinct from the values of individual caring. They are also distinct from justice, and can, but by no means must, come in conflict with it.

Finally, I have briefly suggested how this analysis helps us see that the relations between intra-ethnic communities and trans-ethnic communities (in shared institutions) must be varied and complex. It is not simply a matter of choosing between one and the other, as anti-multiculturalists, on one side, and cultural chauvinists and nationalists, on the other, generally assume. A next step would be to examine the character of inter-ethnic communities. Only then would we be in a position to address the question of relations between the two.

*Acknowledgments.* I wish to thank Benjamin Blum-Smith and Marcia Homiak for very helpful comments on drafts of this article.

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