# Race, Community and Moral Education: Kohlberg and Spielberg as civic educators

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ABSTRACT    *Literature on moral education has contributed surprisingly little to our understanding of issues of race and education. The creation of inter-racial communities in schools is a particularly vital antiracist educational goal, one for which public support in the United States has weakened since the 1970s. As contexts for antiracist moral education, such communities should involve racially plural groups of students learning about, and engaging in, common aims, some of which must be distinctly antiracist: an explicit concern to institute racially just norms within the community (reflecting, yet going beyond, Kohlberg's own communitarian justice focus in his Just Community schools) and to foster social justice in society generally; and an appreciation of distinct cultural and racial identities within a community. Popular culture has an important role to play in providing salient cultural imagery of inter-racial co-operation and antiracist activity. In this regard, several films of Stephen Spielberg, a film-maker who takes his responsibilities as moral educator seriously, are promising yet ultimately disappointing.*

I will be speaking today about issues of race and moral education. Although my focus will be the United States, many other nations face similar issues and I trust that, in some form, my remarks will be applicable to these contexts as well. President Clinton of the United States has drawn the nation's attention to issues of race, and particularly to communication about race among people of different racial groups. In this light it is worth looking at what moral education can contribute to our understanding of race and racism. For "racism" has become as firmly entrenched in our moral vocabulary as the more time-honoured vices of dishonesty, cruelty and cowardice. To charge a person, an action or an institution with "racism" is to condemn it in very strong terms. Whatever work the concept of "racism" has done as a category of *historical* analysis, in the past several decades it has unalterably become a *moral* concept as well. While moral *philosophy* should help to elucidate the moral character of that concept—and that is not my goal today—moral *education* in the area of race should tell us the range of moral goals bearing on race and racism that we should pursue in our education of children. Yet when we consult the most popular or esteemed practically orientated books in our field, we find a distinctly

narrow range. Thomas Lickona (1991), William Bennett (1992), William Damon's *The Moral Child* (1988) all say little about race, and goals of moral education in this area are generally confined to tolerance, the avoidance of individual bigotry and prejudice, and occasionally to a mention of promoting harmonious relations among racial groups [1].

## Three Goals of Moral Education in the Area of Race

### 1. Concern for the Racism of Others

What is omitted here? With no attempt to be comprehensive let me describe a few other antiracist goals, to indicate the rich and complex character of antiracist education. First, the focus on avoiding individual prejudice and discrimination omits teaching children what to do when they witness an act of racism committed by *another person*, including a friend or classmate. It is not enough that a child learns not to engage in racial discrimination in her *own* actions. If a child witnesses her white friend call a black child a "jungle bunny", or if her friends exclude an Asian child from playing with them saying "she looks weird", it is surely not a sufficient goal of moral education that she thinks, "Well, as long as I'm not the one being racist, it's none of my concern". Some immoral behaviours are so serious that children must be taught to care when others engage in them. Racism, like violence, is one of these. Producing bystanders to racism, however morally pure their own individual motives and actions, cannot be a goal of moral education.

Concern about the racism of others is partly a matter of *civic* education. Children should be taught to care about the various social environments and institutions of which they are, or will become, a part. Racism is a stain on *communities*—on the community of one's classroom, one's school and one's society. In learning to take care of, and protect, those communities, students need to learn how to influence the behaviour of others that affects those communities. To do so is part of becoming a responsible citizen of these various polities.

So influencing the racist or racially destructive behaviour of others is a matter of both *moral* and *civic* education—the latter concerned with care for worthy collectivities, the former with individual responsibility to act well.

### 2. Nurturing a Sense of Racial Justice

A second moral goal of education about race is the nurturing of a sense of racial justice. This, too, is a civic responsibility. The promise of justice, in the form of equal opportunity for example, has not yet been fulfilled for many in the United States—most blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans among them. The racial equality stated eloquently in the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, in various Supreme Court decisions and civil rights laws, has never been fully achieved. Just as we want our next generation to grasp the concepts, and care about the violations of civil liberties and human rights, so they should care also about these race-related injustices.

The idea of "racial justice" has lost a good deal of the cachet as a publicly recognisable and mobilising vision that it had in the 1950s and 1960s. The idea that all children should have the same opportunity to make the most of their talents and abilities, or that all citizens have certain entitlements, has been under continual attack since the late 1970s. Indeed, the scope of the idea of "equality of opportunity" itself has so diminished that it has come often to mean no more than race- or gender-blindness in the procedures selecting individuals for access to jobs and schools. In their book *Chain Reaction*, Thomas and Mary Edsall (1992) document this narrowing of the public meaning of equality of opportunity so that it has now become a code word for opposition to affirmative action and to group-based benefits for blacks in general. The Edsalls show in painful detail the excising, by conservative Republicans from the 1960s through the Reagan era, of the concept of racial justice—and indeed social justice in general—from public legitimation. Racial justice has been replaced by a language of cultural deficit and pathology, competitive group interests, individual responsibility and, at best, charity toward the unfortunate. The idea that vast discrepancies in the life chances of different economic and racial groups are somehow unfair and contrary to core American values has virtually disappeared as a vital political and moral issue. As moral educators, one of our primary tasks is the awakening of a sense of social justice—and racial justice in particular—in our young people and, on the public level, a reinjection of concerns of social justice into public discourse.

### 3. Appreciating Both Individuality and Group Identity

A third, race-related moral goal not articulated by most moral educators, is the dual appreciation of the importance of people's racial or ethnic identity to them, of their embeddedness in and attachments to their racial groups and communities—yet at the same time, an appreciation of their individuality, of the fact that each individual is always more than any of her group identities, and even of all of them taken together. There is a tendency to oversimplify this complex territory by jettisoning one or another element of this duality. Being blind to someone's individual characteristics unconnected, or only minimally related, to his or her racial group affiliation is a familiar danger. Indeed it is *part* (although only a part) of racism to *reduce* people to their racial identity. Appreciating individuality, never a simple goal to achieve in any case, but especially in a race-divided society such as that in the United States, is an important corrective to this racist reduction [2].

Equally misguided, however, is its mirror image, the oft-heard homily, "I don't see colour; black, white, green, or purple, I just see each person as an individual." The problem with this viewpoint is that a person is never *just* an individual. A person is also a black person, a Korean, a Korean-American; and of course she belongs to non-racial and non-ethnic groups as well. Thomas Morgan writes about an African-American boy in high school who had many white friends, but these friends were unable to appreciate why Ellis Carter cared whether Martin Luther King Jr's birthday was recognised and celebrated in the school. Young Ellis said, "One of my white friends said 'I don't see you as a black friend, but as a friend. But I

want them to look at me for what I am. I am a black person." (Morgan, 1985, p. 34)

It is true, and important, that not everyone cares about her racial or ethnic identity as much or in the same way as everyone else. However, "treat each person *only* as an individual" misses the fact that group and communal components of identity can be deeply significant elements in a person's overall identity. Their existence is in no way inconsistent with the person's being "an individual"—but only with his or her being "*only* an individual". Education about race should have the dual aim of appreciating and respecting others' individuality as well as their personally significant racial identities.

Aiming only to hint at the wide range of goals of moral education about race and racism, I will leave you with the three, or four, I have mentioned—a responsible concern to intervene to prevent, stop or mitigate the racist actions of others; a sense of racial justice and injustice; and an appreciation of *both* individuality and racial group membership.

## Public Retreat from the Goal of Racial Integration

I want to focus today in more detail on a further aim of moral education, one simultaneously distinct from all those mentioned so far, yet also a condition for the most effective teaching of any of them. That goal is a racially mixed community in schools and classrooms. The ideal of racially integrated community—of children of different racial groups learning together, caring about one another, feeling responsible to one another and to their shared institutions—played an important role in the struggle for school desegregation in the 1950s [3]; in the Civil Rights Movement more generally, expressed in Martin Luther King Jr's resonant expression "the beloved community"; and also in Larry Kohlberg's vision of democratic schooling in his experiment in Just Community schools, especially his personal involvement with the racially mixed Cluster School in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the 1970s.

There has been a distressing retreat from the ideal of racial integration in American society during the 1990s. Federal courts at every level, very much including the Supreme Court, have granted district after district permission to jettison their often financially costly programmes of desegregation. As a totality schools today are as *de facto* segregated as they were in the 1950s, and are becoming more so [4] although, ironically, currently the *least* segregated schools tend to be in the South, the *most* segregated in the Northeast. While polling data have shown steadily increasing support for the *principle* of desegregation among blacks and whites, there has also been *decreasing* support for concrete measures that would achieve desegregation—busing, metropolitan districting, planned housing desegregation. Janet Schofield, one of the nation's most skilled and committed school integration researchers, lamented in a recent article that research funds for studying the conditions that best promote harmonious relationships amongst children of different racial groups in schools all but dried up in the 1980s and early 1990s (Schofield, 1996).

Especially distressing has been the chorus of voices of black leaders,

always accorded media attention with scepticism about, or outright rejection of, desegregation efforts. A local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the premier civil rights organisation in the United States, was disciplined by the national NAACP for its rejection of desegregation as an important goal for that organisation. Typical of a type of article found increasingly frequently in major media outlets is a 1998 piece in *Education Week* with the headline "Black parents prefer academic focus over diversity efforts" (Bradley, 1998). In the framing of the poll on which this article is based, academic achievement is pitted against the social and civic values of racial diversity. Yet research shows that when appropriately implemented, racial diversity in the classroom educationally benefits all students and that, even in the narrowest of terms, the academic achievement of privileged white students is not hampered, while the achievement of poorer black and Latino students is enhanced, by detracking efforts (Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Schofield, 1996). Vivian Paley, elementary and preschool teacher extraordinaire and a committed integrationist, reports in her marvellous book *Kwanzaa and Me* her own struggle to comprehend and make allowances for the increasing reluctance of middle-class black parents, with whom she comes into contact, to send their children to majority white integrated schools (Paley, 1995).

The ideal of racial integration is threatened by other forces as well. In their introduction to *Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education*, Clark Power and Ann Higgins (1989) note the "rapidly growing privatizing culture" which has so intensified since those words were written in the late 1980s. Market and consumerist modes of thinking about education have penetrated more and more deeply, driving out a firm grasp of the social and civic value of education, including the civic value of racial integration.

However, news on the racial integration front is by no means all bad. I mentioned President Clinton's national dialogue on race, which has tapped into a deep wellspring of hope, even longing, for cross-racial understanding and communication. Local initiatives also proliferate [5].

The social context of education has changed greatly since the 1950s desegregation efforts and, indeed, since Kohlberg's work with the Cluster school in the 1970s. The ideal of racial plurality in schools needs reconceiving and revitalising in response to these altered circumstances—especially to the increasingly ethnically and racially plural character of the school population (no longer only black and white) and to the rise of multiculturalism in its wake that has promoted an increased awareness and personal valuing of distinct cultural identities.

In light of these changes, I will propose a set of characteristics that racially mixed communities in schools and classrooms should possess, in order to realise their highest possible ethical values, and that provide an optimal setting for moral education in the area of race and culture. This task will constitute the major focus of the remainder of my talk. However, as I have suggested, I believe that popular discourse and mass and popular culture have contributed to (as well as reflected) the weakening of support for racial integration in schools and society. So, along the way I will point to the absence of cultural imagery supporting the values I propose here,

or to their presence but in inadequate forms. I will focus in particular on Steven Spielberg, the most prominent crafter of popular film imagery on serious subjects in our time, and an especially interesting figure in the racial arena. Spielberg's power is manifest in a film such as *Schindler's List*, which has provided millions of Americans with what will surely be their primary imagery, and understanding of, the Holocaust [6]. Spielberg's recent *Saving Private Ryan* bids fair to do the same for the American effort in World War II. It is thus instructive to cast a critical eye on these images that exert such influence over the American public.

## The Idea of "Community"

First, I will begin with some preliminaries on the nature of "community". As described in the Power *et al.* volume—which I will refer to from here on as "the Just Community schools book"—Kohlberg drew his understanding of community from the German social theorist Ferdinand Tonnies's notion of "Gemeinschaft", a social entity in which the participants feel a sense of common belonging, attachment and responsibility toward one another, value their relations with one another, and value the collective entity (for example, the school) encompassing those relationships (Tonnies, 1887/1955). (Communitarians since Kohlberg's time, especially in the great flowering of communitarian thought since the mid-1980s, have tended to shy away from Tonnies's Gemeinschaft imagery as too repressive of individuality and individual differences, and also too parochial—concerns which Kohlberg shared.) Kohlberg emphasised that the communities in which he was interested had to be *just* and *democratic*, two features not emphasised by Tonnies, and not always emphasised in current communitarian thought either. Both justice and democracy are particularly important for education about racism, and Kohlberg's emphasis is a welcome corrective to much of communitarianism's absence of focus on these civic values.

Kohlberg clearly recognised, however, that the values of community went *beyond* those of justice, and that community as a value is not adequately captured by a purely individualistic moral development scheme that places group-transcending justice as the highest stage of individual moral maturity [7].

### Community's Explicit Commitment to Racial Justice as Internal and External Ideal

The first characteristic of an ideal racially plural educational community that I want to emphasise draws on Kohlberg's emphasis on *justice*, yet goes beyond it. First, the community should make a commitment to racial justice an explicit civic goal, central to its defining mission. The racial justice in question should apply within the community, as Kohlberg emphasised. *Within*-community racial justice was encapsulated, for Kohlberg, in the idea that each student in the Just Community school has an equal say in the rules governing policy matters in the school. More generally, it meant that every individual is to be treated equally.

This equal treatment in turn requires that teachers believe in the capacities of every child in their charge for learning, for academic achievement and for adopting moral and civic value commitments. Subtle barriers to such equal treatment—

subtler forms of racism, and obstacles to full inclusion—have become much more manifest since the time of Kohlberg's work. Lisa Delpit (1995), Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) and other educational theorists have pointed to prejudices and stereotypes carried around unwittingly by white middle-class educators (and some black middle-class educators as well) about the intellectual capacities of children of colour, especially those from poor or immigrant families. Such barriers to equal treatment are often cited by black parents and educators as reasons for disenchantment with integrated schools (Paley, 1995). To accomplish this in-class and in-school equal treatment that accords with the ideal of educational justice would require a good deal of honest self-scrutiny on the part of many teachers and attendant professional development deliberately focused on hidden racial and cultural biases; and it would require education schools to make this endeavour a standard part of teacher education.

Thus racial justice, as equal treatment, in the class or school is a substantial goal in its own right. Yet it is not sufficient for the *civic* dimension of the commitment to racial justice. For, as mentioned earlier, the sense of social justice, and racial justice in particular—justice applying to *society as a whole*—must also be nurtured. What is racial justice in this civic sense? The best formulation of social justice as it applies to groups is a matter of dispute. Some see it as adequate group representation and participation in the major institutions of society. Others see it as equal power among groups in proportion to their numbers. Some views derive group rights from *individual* rights seen as more basic. Equal respect and dignity is another formulation of social justice. John Rawls's influential theory, adopted by Kohlberg, treats social justice as a distributive notion involving principles that allocate social benefits such as welfare and opportunity, guaranteeing that any material inequalities serve to improve the lot of the worst-off group in society.

For my purposes it is not necessary to choose among these. Any of them can be used to express the basic moral intuition that it is unfair for some groups and individuals to have so great a share of social wealth while other groups and individuals lack the requirements of a decent life measured by commonly shared standards. Some such intuition can guide teachers' nurturing and teaching a sense of social and racial justice to students, while with older students attempting a more precise formulation of justice will be necessary and appropriate.

Kohlberg, following in a Deweyan tradition, believed that practice in democracy within schools would lead to the acquisition of democratic habits and sensibilities that would carry over to the outer society. No doubt this is true. Yet, in addition, explicit teaching toward the acquisition of a sense of justice that encompasses one's society must complement the focus on justice issues as they arise inside the class or school itself.

In fact the two foci of justice—in school and in society—cannot really be separated. The classroom and the school are intimately tied to their surrounding society, with its racial inequities. Those inequities are the source of some of the difficulties in creating equality *within* the classroom—for example, getting white students to recognise black students as their equals, when their life situations are so unequal. Unless all students come to understand the structures of inequality that

cause the differences in what different groups of students bring with them to the classroom, their teachers will not be able to provide them with the intellectual and moral framework that will enable them to see the human equality amid the social and economic inequality.

This requirement of justice suggests a serious weakness in the current rhetoric of racial *reconciliation* promoted by the Clinton administration. Reconciliation without justice is too minimal a goal, and is not really stable in any case, as the inequities inevitably divide the races from one another. Inter-racial communication about racial issues is indeed integral to moral education in the racial arena but it must be placed in the wider context of social justice education.

*Cross-racial Co-operation in the Pursuit of Common Aims and "Contact Theory"*

A second characteristic of the ideal inter-racial community is the manifestation of cross-racial co-operation in the pursuit of common aims. This feature is integral to what is perhaps the most familiar theoretical framework for understanding the fostering of interracial harmony in schools, and that is "contact theory", originally discussed by Gordon Allport in his canonical *The Nature of Prejudice* and cited in the Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* case in 1954 (Allport, 1979/1954). According to subsequently refined versions of contact theory, when children from different racial groups interact, four conditions promote positive interpersonal and task outcomes of that interaction: (a) equal status between the participants in the circumstances of interaction; (b) one-to-one interaction; (c) support for positive intergroup contact by relevant institutional norms and authorities; and (d) as mentioned above, co-operative activity in the pursuit of shared aims (Stephan, 1987; Fine *et al.*, 1997).

While these conditions are necessary for the sustaining of a sense of community in racially plural classes they are not sufficient, at least without further elaboration. The equal status condition, for example, requires attention to the outer world and not just to the construction of in-class activities in which each student is accorded equal status by having something distinct to contribute. As mentioned above, students are affected in their views of fellow students from other racial groups by inequalities in the world outside school.

The co-operative activity condition also needs further exploration. Common and valued aims that transcend the racial differences at hand are indeed vital to inter-racial community, and to education that supports it. In his recent widely seen World War II combat film, *Saving Private Ryan*, Stephen Spielberg passed up a golden opportunity to provide the public with vivid imagery of blacks and whites, and other groups as well, co-operating as equals in The Good War, one of the most prominent US symbols of an unquestionably heroic and admirable national endeavour. The film attempts, in part, to distance itself from this heroism through a plot device that sends a small military unit, on which the film focuses, on a militarily and ethically questionable mission. Yet the heroism shines through, and the film has generally been treated by the US public as a long-overdue honouring of World War II veterans.

*Saving Private Ryan* has been lavishly praised for its originality and authenticity as a combat film; yet Spielberg adopts many of the same conventions as earlier films—including the stock World War II film ethnic and regional mix—the Italian, the Jew, the sharpshooter from the country, the cynic from Brooklyn [8]. Before I saw *Saving Private Ryan* I wondered how Spielberg, so much more attuned to racial issues than most mainstream Hollywood directors and producers, in part because of his own two black children, would update this ethnic mix for the 1990s. While military units were racially segregated during World War II, 1.2 million African-Americans served in the armed forces and Spielberg could easily have shown African-Americans as medics or engineers, or other participants in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, or in other encounters with the major characters elsewhere in the film (Smith, 1998). Yet nowhere does a black, or culturally indicated Native American, Asian or Latino figure appear in the film. African-Americans and other people of colour are thereby done a disservice of non-recognition. The vital civic aim, suggested by the "social norms" and the "co-operation" conditions of contact theory, of promoting icons of inter-racial co-operation as equals in a valued endeavour was deprived of a near-perfect vehicle.

*White Allies*

A second essential facet of interracial co-operation—but one not articulated either in contact theory or in Kohlberg's Just Community theory—is the emphasis on *white allies* of people of colour. One unfortunate effect of the multiculturalist emphasis on racial and ethnic identity has been an increased distrust that white people will support the struggles of people of colour for their due, for justice. (This cynicism is also both a cause and a result of the general weakening of the salience of racial justice as a general civic ideal in political discourse and popular media.) I find that students—from all racial groups—are either surprised by, or distrust the motivations of, whites who participated in the Civil Rights Movement, in the Underground Railroad, in the national grape boycott led by the Mexican–American union, the United Fruit Workers, in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and in other such endeavours for racial justice [9].

Correcting this misimpression and distrust, through creating venues for whites to become allies of people of colour and through the study of such whites historically or in the present, is a vital component in building inter-racial community in classes and schools. Beverly Tatum, a psychologist and author of the 1997 *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, emphasises the importance of teaching about the white ally. She says that white students often see only three models of whiteness, or white identity, available to them: the white supremacist; the white who denies that her whiteness has any social or political significance, and thus fails to see a racial dimension in social injustice; and, finally, the guilty white, who recognises injustice and white privilege and feels bad and even agonised about it but does not see anything for her to do. Tatum puts forth the "white ally" as a fourth, psychically and morally healthy racial identity for whites (Tatum, 1994).

Thus the salience, and structuring-in, of the "white ally" enables both whites and students of colour better to feel themselves part of a common community. The student of colour feels the support, or at least the potential support, of the white ally; and the white student sees an avenue open to her to provide assistance to people of colour. Study of white allies should be an integral part of education in the historical, social studies and literature portions of the curriculum; and opportunities for white students to engage in projects supporting people of colour including, but not limited to, fellow students, will help to build inter-racial community. At the same time such education must also emphasise that people of colour have almost always led these struggles for justice for their own people, thus avoiding the patronising assumption (seldom explicitly articulated but fed by widespread stereotypes) that people of colour are incapable of self-organisation and leadership and require whites to provide this for them.

Unfortunately, on this point Spielberg has again fallen short—this time for his deeply problematic portrayal of the white ally in his generally admirable, occasionally deeply powerful 1997 film *Amistad*. The film concerns an 1839 slave revolt on a slave trading ship and subsequent attempts to win, through the US courts, freedom for the slaves after they are tricked into landing in the United States. Historically, the white-dominated Abolitionist movement was the major source of aid for the captured slaves—raising money for their defence, finding a lawyer and raising money for their return to Africa. Yet in the film the Abolitionists, when seen briefly as a group, are portrayed as sanctimonious, unworldly and somewhat buffoonish. The sole white Abolitionist character, Lewis Tappan, is portrayed as deeply morally flawed—self-righteous, so enamoured of his cause (with a suspect religious passion bordering on fanaticism) that he is willing to sacrifice the well-being of the African captives to it. (Historically Tappan was a dedicated and principled Abolitionist leader who, like many Abolitionists, faced hostility and even death threats for his anti-slavery activity. He was central to the effort to aid the Amistad mutineers [Jones, 1987; Goldstein, 1998, p. A64] [10].) The actual historical white allies of the Amistad Africans, and of American black slaves, are thus absent or devalued in Spielberg's film.

The film does depict two individual white allies. One is the Africans' first lawyer, Roger Baldwin, portrayed as a young, street-smart, yet not particularly morally concerned individual, who goes through a moral transformation so that he becomes a genuine ally. This character is, however, historically falsified. In reality Baldwin was an older, pro-Abolitionist lawyer, and a prominent figure in Connecticut political circles. The second ally is John Quincy Adams, in the film, as in reality, by 1839 an ageing congressional representative who is roused to defend the Africans before the Supreme Court, and is successful. Spielberg inserts a historically inaccurate but morally satisfying encounter between Adams and Cinque ("Sengbe" in his native Mende), the slaves' leader, in which Adams professes to accord Cinque's African wisdom some credit for his own legal success. Adams was indeed a foe of slavery later in life; but Adams was not an Abolitionist and was not entirely friendly to their cause [11]. Adams's foregrounding in the film serves further to mask the historical role of white Abolitionists as the true allies of enslaved blacks.

*Stephen Spielberg, Hollywood and the Erasure of Collective Action*

The weakness in the portrayal of the Abolitionist movement in *Amistad* is connected to a more general deficiency in Spielberg's historical films dealing with social injustice, stemming from his wholesale embrace of a central convention of Hollywood film: that is, a reduction of historical forces, social movements and morally significant collectivities to single individuals. Spielberg's *Schindler's List* is instructive in this regard. For all its brilliance, the film leaves the viewer with the impression that Nazism—that complex system of state mobilisation in the service of terror and mass murder—can be encapsulated in the figure of one degenerate madman, the labour camp commandant Amon Goeth (Goldstein, 1998, p. A64). On the other side, the rescue of the Jews is attributed almost solely to the singular figure of Oskar Schindler—like Goeth, an exceptional individual. By contrast, the Thomas Keneally book (1982) on which the film is based makes clear that the rescue was an extraordinary collective effort involving many of the higher-ranking of Schindler's Jewish employees, some of whom, such as his accountant, Yitzchak Stern, were Schindler's conscience and support—as were various Germans working for the Nazis, without whose assistance Schindler's efforts could not have succeeded. The film *Schindler's List*, in true Hollywood fashion, encapsulates this collective struggle against the forces of Nazism in the *personal* struggle between two individual men, one representing good, the other evil. I would suggest that the absence of an accurate portrayal of the Abolitionist movement in *Amistad* partakes of the same failure to accord visual presence to a collective effort.

Kohlberg apparently recognised a similar limitation in an approach to moral education that focused solely on individual development. The Just Community schools book says that Kohlberg sought a way to affect the moral atmosphere and conduct of institutions, of collectivities directly, not solely as the cumulative effect of individuals (Power *et al.*, 1989) [12]. In this way Kohlberg recognised what Spielberg's Hollywood rarely portrays, that moral change on a socially or institutionally significant level seldom comes about in the absence of some collective activity. In this particular way, Spielberg's Hollywood and Hollywood's Spielberg fail to provide popular cultural imagery portraying struggles for social and racial justice.

*Inter-racial Co-operation in Support of Antiracist Aims*

I have amplified the co-operative endeavour condition in contact theory's view of the requirements for racially plural community to include explicit incorporation of the white ally. In addition, the common goals to be striven for by the community should include not merely race-independent goals that all groups can share, such as solving a complex mathematical dilemma, but also explicitly anti-racist ones, including racial justice. Let us imagine a classroom project that exemplifies this feature. Two students, a white and a Latino, research the operation of housing discrimination laws in their city and report their research to the class. Through interviews with the appropriate agency personnel, they learn about forms of housing discrimination that take place in their community, how the agency detects it and what sanctions it brings

against violators. By raising awareness of housing discrimination as a problem in their community, and alerting potential discriminatees of resources available to them, the two students contribute in a small way to countering that discrimination.

There *is* an element of the ally in the research project, for Latinos as a group are likely to have suffered as least some housing discrimination—even if this particular student and his family have not—while whites are not. In that regard, the white student is being an ally to the Latino student, regarded as a potential target of discrimination in a way that the white student is not. However, the white and the Latino students are also, in another way, *co-equals* in the research project. The project is set up in such a way that the two students are encouraged to take on a *shared* moral identity as antiracist researchers and resource people to their class.

*Beyond the White Ally: the moral co-equal*

This shared moral identity, a natural although not inevitable product of the emphasis on co-operative activity in the service of antiracist goals, complements the ally idea but is importantly distinct from it. Comrades, as it were, in the struggle for justice are in an important sense co-equals, even if they are from distinct racial groups that stand in an asymmetrical relationship to the injustice in question. It is not, or not simply, that an individual from one racial group comes to the aid of another and supports its cause. It is *also* two people struggling in the *same* cause. In doing so, they take on a shared moral identity.

Ironically, given its deficiency in portraying the Abolitionist *movement*, the film *Amistad* comes close to giving us a representation on an *individual* level of this co-equal relationship. The film-makers create a fictional character, a wealthy and respected black Abolitionist, Theodore Joadson, who is in that regard a moral co-equal with Lewis Tappan, the white Abolitionist. Not himself a slave, Joadson thus in one sense stands in the same moral relationship to the Abolitionist struggle as does Tappan. They are both devoted to, and activists in, the same moral cause, and share an identity distinct from that of slaves, the groups which Abolitionism strives to liberate. This co-equal status is sustained until Tappan's moral deficiencies (including racism) are definitively revealed, and he disappears from the scene, leaving Joadson to occupy the moral high ground and to continue the Abolitionist struggle by convincing John Quincy Adams to take the case of the African mutineers.

The difference between the ally and the moral co-equal can be stated in this way. The *ally* is someone from a non-beleaguered racial group, who comes to the aid of a different, and beleaguered, racial group. The ally relationship highlights the *racial* identity of the two parties. By contrast, the *moral co-equal* relationship foregrounds *moral* identity—the shared moral project, such as Abolitionism, or researching housing discrimination—and, while not denying the racial identity difference, places it in the psychic and moral background. The two ideas do not necessarily represent actually distinct people—although they *can* do so—but, rather, different aspects of the *same* people.

*Both* the ally idea *and* the moral co-equal idea are important components of

moral education in the racial area. They are complementary notions. Just as it is important for students to be presented with living or historical embodiments of people who crossed racial boundaries to aid in the causes of those of another race, so it is also vital for them to see embodiments of people of different races fighting side by side in the same cause. Similarly, when possible, it is good for students themselves to be encouraged to find ways to participate in both those moral relationships [13].

*Racially Pluralistic Communities as Difference-embracing*

Finally, a notion of community adequate to our current situation must allow for, and indeed embrace, a recognition of ethnic and racial plurality. "Community" is sometimes discussed in terms that imply that community requires that the people in the community must think of themselves as fundamentally similar. Contact theory as originally stated by Allport assumed that a reduction of prejudice comes about because the different groups come to perceive their common humanity and common interests (Stephan, 1987, p. 13; Schofield, 1996, pp. 378–379). That view itself provided the underpinning for the assumption made by many desegregation advocates in the 1950s that if blacks attended white schools, mere contact between the two groups would show both whites and blacks that they were akin to one another and white prejudice would melt away, thus creating an equal educational environment for blacks and whites (Blum, 1998).

These assumptions were hopeful but naive. Blacks were *not* the same as whites, and mere in-school contact did not always lead to a reduction in prejudice, a weakening of stereotypes or a stronger sense of inter-racial community. White prejudice proved more intractable. Moreover, distinct ethno-racial groups now have a much clearer sense of themselves as being *culturally* different from one another, and of valuing their distinct cultures. Understandably, in culturally pluralistic educational settings these groups wish some acknowledgement of these cultural differences.

For these reasons, any conception of community that can do justice to our current understandings of cultural differences and their importance in the forming and constituting of individual and group identities must abandon the idea that community requires students to overlook difference and to see each other as the same as themselves. We must instead fashion an idea of community with difference, or difference within community. The community must itself promote recognition and respect among its members for their cultural and identity differences from one another.

Let me roughly adopt the Just Community school book's notion of community (in a class or school) as involving the following features: (1) students feel a sense of shared belonging; (2) students care about one another, both as individuals and as members of the class; (3) students experience and acknowledge a sense of responsibility toward one another; (4) students value the community as an entity in its own right, not (or not only) as instrumental to other goals, and over and above their valuing of particular relationships *within* the community.

Cultural homogeneity may indeed facilitate communitarian attachments that constitute communities satisfying these four conditions; but in the culturally and racially diverse society which is the United States, such homogeneity in a given school or community is increasingly rare and in any case not entirely healthy, as it almost inevitably reinforces narrow, often prejudiced, and in any case stereotyped, views of out-groups. This racial and cultural blindness is frequently revealed by school personnel's assertion that their school does not need to concern itself with such diversity issues, since the students are all white—or all black, or all Latino.

A class or school community can possess the four features mentioned without its members having to think of one another as the same as themselves. These features allow for distinct ethno-racial subgroups that take pride in their ethnic or racial identity, that distinctly value their particular ethno-racial communities and that socialise primarily with members of their own group. A racially plural community need not be threatened by a Latina student's valuing her Latina identity and her feeling a distinct loyalty to the other Latinos in the community. Distinct ethnoracial identities need not threaten the broader community, because the community encompasses values and aims that, while *distinct* from ethnic attachment, are not *opposed* to it.

The compatibility of ethnoracial attachment with loyalties to larger transethnic communities obtains on both the individual and collective levels. On the individual level, Beverly Tatum's views on racial identity development, drawing on the theories of W.E. Cross Jr, are particularly useful. Tatum points out that black youth often experience a period in their lives in which they focus primarily on their own racial group as a social community and a source of identity, and on the culture and traditions of their group, and are largely indifferent to whites [14]. She implies that students immersed in this form of consciousness—which she refers to in the language of "stages" and that she calls "immersion/emersion" (Helms, 1990; Cross, 1991; Tatum, 1997)—are limited or self-limiting in their identity development. Tatum describes a further stage that she calls "internalization", in which the student remains secure in her blackness, or Korean-Americanness, as the case may be, but that identity is, as she says, "more expansive, open, and less defensive". The student still wishes to maintain special ties with peers of her own ethnoracial group, but she "is willing to establish meaningful relations with Whites who acknowledge and are respectful of his or her self-definition" (Tatum, 1994, p. 333). So, an individual with this form of ethnoracial consciousness or identity is quite capable both of special identification with her own group, yet also of attachment and loyalty to others outside her group.

The collective level of this compatibility can be seen in the Cluster school, the Just Community school Kohlberg worked with in the mid-1970s. Kohlberg wanted to see if a sense of democratic community could be built into the racially and economically integrated environment of Cluster. The Cluster school was a self-governing unit within a large high school, in which students and faculty set rules and policy through the mechanism of a full community meeting, and in which emotional investment in the community was encouraged in a number of ways. Black and white

students constituted the major, indeed only, ethnoracial groups in Cluster, and the Just Community schools book makes clear that the blacks were very much aware of themselves as a distinct group. At one important point in the second year of the school blacks pressed, in a united front fashion, to have more blacks admitted to the school rather than following the established procedure of taking students off an agreed-upon waiting list. Their action showed both an in-group consciousness and loyalty yet, at the same time, at least on the part of some of the black students, a valuing of the larger inter-racial community. While this process was in some ways temporarily detrimental to relations between the two racial groups, in the long run, by giving blacks a more secure sense of ownership, power, and recognition in Cluster, it led eventually to a greater degree of social mixing between the groups, especially noted in Cluster's third year (Power *et al.*, 1989, p. 175) [15].

Indeed, plural ethnoracial attachments and identities within a multiracial group can actually become a source of strength in the group. Students can take pride in their ability to form a community with such diversity within it, knowing as they do that the groups within their class or school frequently do not get along well outside it [16]. Moreover, the class as a *learning* community is enriched by the different experiences of the differing groups, and the students can feel pride and appreciation for that as well.

I mentioned that Kohlberg was particularly interested in the possibilities for the Cluster school as a laboratory for harmonious racial relations. At the same time, the account of Cluster in the Just Community schools book contains only a slight "multiculturalist" recognition of *cultural* differences, accompanying to some degree the racial differences, and barely a distinct recognition of the value of *cultural* identity to individuals. Nor does it place distinct value on cultural diversity itself, from either educational or social vantage points. Hence the strengthening of a community that can come from an explicit valuing of its own internal cultural diversity did not seem to be part of the communitarian values of the Cluster school.

In addition, the Cluster school does not appear to have attempted to make use of its internal racial diversity for educational purposes. There is no evidence, for example, that it attempted to foster explicit cross-racial and cross-cultural exchange about those differences, either for educational or social purposes. Nor did Cluster seem to have aspired toward a self-consciously antiracist understanding of itself as a community [17]. Any of these uses of the resources of an internally racially and culturally diverse community could reasonably be thought to strengthen such a community.

I am suggesting, then, that a consciousness of racial and cultural differences among students is entirely compatible with a sense of community that embraces all the differing groups within it. Indeed, there are ways in which the diversity can be utilised to strengthen the sense of community. At the same time, those who worry that ethnic loyalties threaten transethnic community are clearly onto something real. For example, the state of mind that Tatum describes as "immersion/emersion" is inhospitable to transracial community. That form of consciousness privileges one's racial identity over other aspects of one's identity that might be a source of

connection to people of other racial groups. Indeed, both some white and black students in Cluster are described in a way that evidenced little valuing of the inter-racial dimension of that community; some white students even manifested distinct racial prejudice and animosity, especially during the bitter dispute over admissions.

## Conclusion

The Cluster school went part of the way toward an ideal multiracial community— one that embraces cultural and racial difference, and uses these differences educationally and socially to strengthen students' attachment and loyalty to the larger community, while the students continue to have appropriate attachments and investment in their distinct ethnoracial identities, cultures and subcommunities. Communities that embody these values, that commit themselves to racial justice as an explicit goal, that embrace inter-racial co-operation in the pursuit of common, and sometimes antiracist, aims, will be a setting most likely to achieve the various goals that I mentioned earlier, of a morally informed programme of antiracist education. In addition to the important if somewhat limited goal of prejudice reduction emphasised in the small number of moral education texts touching on the area of race, other goals I mentioned in this regard are preventing, intervening in, or mitigating the effects of, the racism of others, especially others in shared communities, nurturing a sense of social justice in general and racial justice in particular, appreciating both individuality and the importance of group identity in others, and creating racially pluralistic communities of care, responsibility and shared loyalties. Moral education in general should be devoting more of its energy to these race-related moral issues than it is doing at present.

Attaining all these goals would, of course, also be facilitated by a public discourse and a popular culture in which they were given expression. We have steadily lost much of the required discourse, and need to revitalise it. Popular culture could be a valuable ally here and I have examined some films of Stephen Spielberg, our most influential contemporary film-maker, and found them disappointing in their failure to do more to serve the cause of racial justice and antiracism to which Spielberg seems, in many ways, committed.

*How* to attain these ambitious goals in a period of racial retrenchment and increased segregation I have not ventured to explore. Clearly, there is a widespread desire for some connectedness, understanding and communication between distinct ethnoracial groups, and there are stirrings in young people in the United States that suggest potentiality for a stronger concern with social justice. In any case, I hope to have suggested what a grievous loss it is to a society if it is unable to create some semblance of the inter-racial educational communities I have described here.

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NOTES

[1] Bennett does devote an entire chapter to the issue of race, but its content is almost entirely an attack on affirmative action rather than any facet of moral education.

[2] There is an important asymmetry between white identity and other racial identities in this regard, but I cannot discuss that here. On moral asymmetries between white and non-white racial identities, see Blum (1999).

[3] The main impetus to the desegregation efforts was equality of educational opportunity, but it was assumed that this could be accomplished only in integrated educational settings which embodied some degree of harmony between the "races". See Blum (1998).

[4] "National study finds school segregation increasing," pp. 1, 4.

[5] Many local initiatives of racial dialogue have taken place in the past few years, with educational and philanthropic organisations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Ford Foundation providing vital support and leadership.

[6] I can think of no other film in recent decades that has garnered the critical attention of *Schindler's List*, including an entire scholarly volume of critical pieces (Loshitzky, 1997).

[7] Power *et al.* suggest (e.g. p. 54) that all the various stages of the valuing of community are simply forms of the conventional morality of Stage Three and Four, implying their inferiority to the higher stages of justice. However, the form of justice involved in Just Community schools is no less confined to the particular community in which a given student is involved than is the value of community; it is neither more nor less universal. Moreover, the entire thrust of Power *et al.*'s account is to include communitarian values as vital components of the highest levels of moral maturity.

[8] In her valuable contextualising of the film in relation to World War II films produced since the mid-1940s, Jeanine Basinger (1998), a film historian, establishes this point.

[9] The distrust is milder, although still present, toward people of colour of other groups; a bond between all people of colour across different racial groups is sometimes, misleadingly, assumed to be present.

[10] At one point, Tappan even expresses racist sentiments. This scene has been defended as as making the accurate point that to be opposed to slavery was not necessarily to be a racial egalitarian, and many white Abolitionists did not believe that blacks were the equals of whites (although many did). The role, and internal complexity, of Abolitionism in ending slavery has been very well captured in the Public Broadcasting System's documentary "Africans in America", October, 1998.

[11] Adams's major political concern related to slavery was the "gag rule", a House rule forced through by Southern slavery-defending representatives that forbade anti-slavery popular petitions from being brought to the floor of the House of Representatives. Adams thought this rule unconstitu- tional and fought strenuously against it, but that did not mean he was a supporter of the cause of those who attempted to bring such petitions (Wilentz, 1997).

[12] The authors quote from a 1971 article of Kohlberg's that "The unit of effectiveness is not the individual but the group" (Kohlberg, 1971).

[13] It is, I think, a lacuna in Beverly Tatum's (1994) account of inter-racial co-operation that she does not fully articulate the idea of shared moral identity as moral co-equals across racial lines as a distinct and educationally significant dimension of the "restoration of hope" that the ally idea was meant to support. Since she is very much in favour of inter-racial co-operation—indeed she almost builds it into her definition of a "healthy racial identity"—she may perhaps be considered as implicitly doing so.

[14] In Tatum's view, students in the immersion/emersion stage may have originally been prompted in this direction by experiences of racism against them by whites.

[15] See also Grady (1994), esp. p. 56, where black girls abandoned racial loyalty for loyalty to the larger community by identifying two black boys as those who stole a wallet and some money, when the community had been unable to encourage anyone to own up to the stealing; pp. 88, 89.

[16] Alan Peshkin (1991) provides a rich ethnographic portrait of an ethnoracially mixed school in California in which the students take pride in the mix in the school, and in the fact that the groups get along with one another better than in many ethnoracially plural schools.

[17]  Elizabeth Grady (1994, p. 72) says that "openness to addressing racial and cultural issues" was not
      one of the variables originally measured in the research on which the Just Community school book
      was based. This does imply that such discussions may well have taken place, but it also suggests
      that no direct value was placed on them, especially with regard to the central organising values of
      the school.

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