

Communitarianism and Multiculturalism in the Academy

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Like diversity and unity, communitarianism and multiculturalism are often thought to be at odds, oxymoronic concepts invoked to achieve different ends. The criticisms of multiculturalism are familiar enough—it will serve to “disunite” the nation and water down the curriculum of schools and universities. The criticisms of communitarianism, while less widely known, are stated with just as much vehemence—a focus on community-oriented policy or curriculum will “provincialize” the policy arena or the curriculum of the academy. According to their respective critics, in one instance we expand the human gaze too widely, in the other, too narrowly. This essay will attempt a kind of synthesis between two academic movements that at first glance appear to be at odds, focusing on the role each plays, or could play, in the creation and improvement of democratic processes.

The twentieth-century drive for civil rights in the United States, for affirmative action and other policies designed to end a wide variety of discriminatory practices, was not invoked under the rubric of “multiculturalism.” That term entered the vocabulary of most Americans during the 1960s as a way to talk about educational reform. In fact, multiculturalism as an academic movement has been tightly connected to education, public education in particular, though contributions to it have come from virtually all corners of the academy and all corners of the globe. This has meant great visibility for the movement, for Americans are deeply concerned about what is taught in the nation’s schools and universities: witness the maelstrom over the essay of University of

Colorado professor Ward Churchill, or the heavy reprisals for professors who express their belief that the U.S. itself may have been responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Opponents of multiculturalism have published widely successful books with titles that leave little doubt about the author's anti-multicultural stand. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., for instance, condemned multiculturalism in his 1991 book, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, also published in 1991, was an equally successful attack on multicultural studies. Alvin Schmidt's *The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America* (1997) is an even more pointed attack. And one can find numerous websites sponsored by conservative political and religious groups, all attacking multiculturalism either as anti-American, anti-Christian, or both.

By contrast, communitarianism enjoys much less name recognition, much less popularity, and therefore much less organized opposition. This may be due in part to the fact that the targets of this movement have been primarily the economic market and the bureaucratic state, with the realm of education receiving only scant attention from major communitarian theorists. The essential thrust of their argument is that decisions made in current political and economic arenas are devoid of any attention to human community and the result has been deterioration in America's social fabric. While scholars have written about what economic policy would look like if it were made with the understanding that community is valuable, or how our government might function if it cared about community, few have had much to say about how communitarian theory might influence the policies and practices of K-12 or university education. We will have something to say about this, however. We should note here, too, that we will focus more on communitarianism than multiculturalism, due to our assumption that there is greater familiarity with the latter amongst the educational research community.

Our approach to making communitarian thought accessible to a broad spectrum of educators will be to provide a brief historical survey that identifies the probable antecedents to communitarianism. Following this, we will lay out an abbreviated account of the development of multicultural theory and then focus on a few of the problems associated with modern life and what the communitarian and multicultural responses to these problems might mean for contemporary society. This will help to demonstrate the ways, in which these theories complement, rather than negate, one another. Next, we will place communitarian theory alongside multicultural theory to demonstrate that, far from being at odds, they represent different approaches to a common struggle. Last, we will briefly discuss what we take to be some of the implications of

communitarian and multicultural theory for the curriculum of the twenty-first century academy.

Communitarianism

At its simplest, the chief criticism communitarians aim at the contemporary contours of our dominant culture is that it has allowed a kind of possessive individualism to create a focus on the self as the predominant contributing force in identity formation. The emergence of this individualism has come at the expense of roles hitherto played by factors outside the individual in shaping one's sense of self. Most notable among these is the role played by community membership, but also important are external factors such as religious ties and connections to the earth. In short, communitarians claim that American culture has produced individuals obsessed with themselves, or with their rights, a situation that led the late Christopher Lasch to claim that the United States, at least, had succumbed to a "culture of narcissism" (Lasch, 1979). In the process, or so the argument goes, any meaningful sense of community obligation, responsibility, and tradition has been lost or greatly diminished. For communitarians, this loss is reflected in the pervasive alienation, widespread search for meaning, and yearning for connectedness to someone or something outside the individual so characteristic of the modern American social landscape. The communitarian agenda (again, at its simplest) is designed to resurrect a sense of community allegiance and responsibility.

Communitarian arguments about the genesis of the kind of hyper-individualism they believe defines our culture and explains what they take to be an all-too-pervasive cultural narcissism cohere around four key "ingredients," so to speak, all of which are interconnected. The first on the list marks a distinctive break between the classical world and what came after. Charles Taylor calls it the "inward turn" and he attributes it largely to Augustine at the turn of the fifth century. Taylor claims that Augustine popularized the idea that lives should be led in the service of God who exists within us—rather than in the service of some cultural ideal, like service to one's community or to the polis (Taylor, 1989, 131).

Christianity made a second great contribution to our current conceptions of personhood at the time of the sixteenth century Reformation. With the advance of Protestantism, according to John Rawls, came the idea that humans rightfully possess some decision-making autonomy, that personhood, in fact, ought to be defined by the ability to make choices about how one's life would be led. Said Rawls, "Something like

the modern understanding of liberty of conscience and freedom began then” (Rawls, 1993, xxiv).

The third ingredient to modern selfhood from the point of view of contemporary communitarians, at least, was the seventeenth century embrace and steadfast belief in man’s rational nature. Fueled by scientific advances during the century, the quest for certainty began to seem like a legitimate and viable human project. Mystery, myth, and magic were increasingly banished from “enlightened” society. The scientific method became the official route to truth—obscuring the role of ethics and morality in political and economic realms. In fact, great efforts were made to secularize morality and disentangle it from its religiously-based standards—thus opening the door to today’s popular notion that all individuals possess their own (and equally legitimate) morality. This idea is sharply disputed by communitarians.

The last ingredient of modern selfhood is its volitional character. Rene Descartes and Francis Bacon clearly established the idea of man’s dominion over nature. We were to be its “masters and possessors,” in the words of Descartes. We would render nature “our slave,” according to Bacon (Theobald, 1997, 38). Henceforth, the measure of man was connected to the degree to which he could act on the world and turn it to his own purposes.

As the modern state emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it found its activities increasingly tied up with the demands of securing favorable conditions for the free pursuit of happiness, or more accurately and in accord with John Locke’s original formulation, for the free pursuit of property. The eighteenth century German philosopher, Johann Herder, further refined the liberal view of identity formation along individualist lines by popularizing the idea of selfhood as something singularly unique. For Herder, there is only one me and, further, only one original way to be me. “Each human being has his own measure,” according to Herder, “an accord peculiar to him” (Taylor, 1989, 375). Western nations, particularly the United States, have so completely adopted this view that it is widely believed to be a self-evident truth rather than a cultural predisposition. Further, we believe that individuals are to find this “one way to be me” only by looking within themselves, not in the world around them. Conformity to social institutions began to be seen as a threat to one’s originality and an impediment to the authentic realization of one’s true self. Thus, in the development of contemporary thought, the importance of the community’s role in shaping identity suffered a further blow. After Herder, modern selfhood was defined almost exclusively by the exercise of rational choice in the pursuit of one’s “unique” identity.

From a communitarian perspective, such a definition is fundamentally shortsighted because of its neglect of the fact that humans only come to make sense of their world, and their place in it, through social interaction. Simply put, no individual can possibly find an identity apart from others, Herder's insistence on human uniqueness notwithstanding. Yet the criticism extends beyond a definitional dispute over how the individual might properly be construed. Communitarians also argue that contemporary culture was further mistaken in the ways its emphasis on individual choice intersected with morality. Here the problem is that we came to equate the mere exercise of choice, rather than the quality of choice, as the measure of selfhood. Moral reasoning, or the importance placed on making the "right" choice, began to slowly fade as an essential aim of decision-making. People must be free to make and follow their own path in life, and any notion of moral obligation whose source was external to the individual was seen as an intrusion on one's freedom. Of course the advent of modern science played a role here, too. As science-as-a-path-to-truth continued to find its way into the Western mindset, the decline of moral considerations as a central component in the exercise of choice was further augmented. The scientific method increasingly became the tool used for exonerating humans from the arduous task of ethical deliberation. According to the logic of the Scientific Revolution, use the value-neutral, objective scientific method and morality is no longer a concern.

This is not to suggest, though, that mainstream American culture is bereft of an ethical position. As Charles Taylor has argued, the central position American society affords is equality, a tenet that, at least in theory, seems to demand a tolerant, neutral state, one that promotes a morality built on openness to other ethical positions (Taylor, 1991). If we are free to decide what concerns us, a tolerant population is a must. But this population also becomes, by default, little practiced at analyzing the merits of various ethical positions. Left to ourselves and ill-prepared to judge wisely on matters of virtue, we have been left, or so the communitarians claim, adrift in a culture increasingly devoid of sources that bring meaning to our existence.

Multiculturalism

The term "multicultural" was first used to describe societies made up of an especially diverse array of ethnic or racial groups. For example, it was applied to Switzerland in the 1950s and embraced there as an accurate way to describe Swiss society. Shortly thereafter the term was used to describe Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The large

super-powers (e. g., the United States, the former Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, etc.), each demonstrably more diverse and arguably, at least, more “multicultural” than those nations that openly embraced the term, resisted its use, fearing an erosion of the sort of social cohesion that produces patriotism and other jingoistic sentiments.

In the United States of the 1960s, however, amidst alarming signs of societal disarray, the term “multiculturalism” emerged as a way to frame changes in school and university curricula in an attempt to bridge the achievement gap and thereby open interesting and well-paying jobs to Blacks and other minority groups. College students across the country seized administration buildings demanding equal treatment for all students and curricular changes that would highlight, rather than hide, the intellectual and artistic contributions of minority scholars and artists. On the heels of these developments came research that substantiated the absence of “color” in school and university curricula. In the process, multiculturalism became a kind of sub-field in the arena of professional education.

A common theme among many scholars who migrated to this sub-field was a critique of the time-tested description of America as a “melting pot.” Whereas conventional wisdom held that a wide array of cultural, racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds meshed together in America to become one people, multiculturalists increasingly argued that the melting pot theory was in reality a description of assimilationist force used to encourage minority groups to give up their history, culture, or traditions to become appropriately-behaving members of the dominant culture. In this way the multiculturalism moved from the arena of school or university curriculum into the arena of identity politics. It spurred the growth of what its critics called “hyphenated Americans” (e.g., African-Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans).

Meanwhile, the population of various minority groups has jumped significantly during the past few decades and all signs indicate that this trend will continue. As the number of minority schoolchildren has outstripped the number of White students in various states, resistance to multiculturalism has grown louder and more vituperative. These circumstances have led to a concerted call to do away with affirmative action policies—but even this debate has centered itself in the educational realm, university admissions in particular.

Many opponents of multiculturalism fear that it will polarize people rather than unite them. Others believe that if multiculturalists have their way too much time will be spent on a “feel good” pedagogy versus learning “accurate” and pertinent information as it pertains to the curriculum. For all of these critics, multiculturalism is seen as polarizing,

at worst, and unrealistic to attain, at best. They give little consideration to the impact school or university curriculum may have on how students view themselves, or how not seeing themselves in the curriculum may influence their behaviors and actions and thus their success in educational endeavors.

Communitarians, Multiculturalists, and the Problems of Modern Life

While the modern state's preoccupation with order and stability, defended so forcefully by Hobbes, has been a driving concern of governments throughout the past few centuries, the state's interest in measures of social control seems to have increased sharply over the last few decades. As just one example, we spend huge sums each year building and staffing prisons to house a steadily growing criminal population. Studies of trends in the workplace point to "guard labor"—people employed in some manner as agents for purposes of "domestic tranquility"—as one of this nation's fastest growing occupational groups. In fact, the United States leads the world in terms of the percentage of its population engaged in guard labor (Bowles & Jayadev, 2005). "Getting tough on crime" has become a politically expedient slogan adopted by recent candidates for all levels of elected office in the United States. To communitarians this is evidence of a serious cultural crisis.

Ours has evolved into a society devoid of the very communal dimensions that might bind us together around a conception of the common good. Interlocking obligations that one must shoulder with regard to one's neighborhood, home-town, region, or state are becoming less and less important in our sense of who we are. Individualism has left us responsible only for ourselves and for those we permit into the circle of our immediate private lives, and for the latter, even these decisions are often measured solely in terms of utility defined in individualist terms. The traditional liberal conception of community is a group of people who join forces in order to increase the odds for success in the individual pursuit of self-interest (Mulhall & Swift, 1992). When construed in this fashion, the result is a society marked by fragile commitments between people, an inadequate system of social support and, consequently, uncertainty and anxiety. Put simply, in the absence of interlocking obligations among people, keeping domestic tranquility becomes an ever more difficult task, or so communitarians argue. Almost paradoxically, the state finds itself in a bind where preserving the conditions of individual liberty under which citizens might exercise free choice requires action that threatens individual liberty.

In the face of this bind, the communitarian agenda includes certain cultural reinsertions. A sense of belonging to a particular place, of shouldering mutual obligations inherent in living well in that place, would be one such reinsertion. The value in this, they claim, is that by doing so our lives become reinvested with meaning. Fulfillment, in other words, comes from shouldering the burden of interlocking relationships, not from escaping them. These ideas can be referred to as *re*-insertions because they were a part of what historians and political scientists refer to as the civic republican tradition in political theory—a tradition that was very much alive at the point of our nation's founding, but one that has been in steady decline since Tocqueville described it at its high point in the 1830s (Olsen, 2005).

The civic republican tradition helped to bring about the dismantling of the rigidly hierarchical system of social positioning characteristic of the feudal era. But so did the liberal tradition built on the legacy of Hobbes and Locke. It was this liberal tradition, with its emphasis on human freedom and its skepticism concerning the value of human community that carried the day in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787. It was also this tradition that sought to secularize morality and place moral worth within the individual. In so doing it largely curtailed the burden of having to consider moral commitments as springing from one's relationships to others. A farmer, for instance, need not worry about whether the construction of a fence, the quality of which might adversely affect a neighboring farmer, violates an ethics of community, for no such ethics any longer exists. What is important is the freedom to pursue one's own projects, in this case, to use private property as the farmer sees fit based on an assessment of his/her own needs and wishes.

Here then we find a key and incisive criticism leveled by communitarians at contemporary society. Namely, that its staunch advocacy of individual rights and liberty does not adequately take into account the social costs of decisions made by individuals, nor does it promote decision-making that affords a high value to long-term consequences. Though the formulators of modern political and economic theory probably did not have this in mind, the transcendent importance given to individual self-interest in their conception of free society has provided an ideological defense for actions and policies that are destructive of community cohesion and environmental well-being, destructive of the very set of social and natural conditions that must be preserved in order to sustain society's ability to reproduce itself. In a sense, this criticism points to what communitarians see as an oversight in the theoretical formulation of our current political, economic, and educational system.

For many communitarians, nowhere is the evidence of contemporary

society's failure more telling than in the area of economics. Buttressed by the tenets of individually-oriented political theory, "free-market" capitalism has asserted itself as the dominant paradigm of economic organization adopted by modern industrial states. The commercialist economies envisioned by the likes of Hobbes, Locke, and Hamilton descended upon the West with a speed unmatched at other points in history. Accompanying this descent was an important, and according to communitarians, ominous, extension of the individualist creed. That is, individual liberty to pursue self-interest was no longer extended solely to persons but was extended to a new kind of "individual"—the corporation. Whereas the vision of self-interested people competitively interacting in a free market to pursue their own interests and thereby efficiently making use of economic resources has a certain appeal, the vision is dramatically altered, and the appeal is greatly diminished, when super powerful multi-national corporations appear as players. How can a market be "free" with such massive power inequity among participants?

Communitarians point to the nearly catastrophic consequences of corporate industrialism's dramatic growth, fueled as it has been by the pursuit of greater profits above all other ends. Among these consequences are widespread neglect of the environment, disregard for the welfare and safety of workers, engendering a culture of consumption where success is defined in terms of material accumulation, the glorification of wealth over more important social values, exploitation of third world labor and natural resources, and foreign policies designed to protect markets often at the expense of human rights. History provides many accounts of how the widespread and pervasive existence of these abuses has fostered resistance among those most harmed. In turn, it is precisely this resistance that many critics point to in explaining the increasing preoccupation with social control so typical of modern industrial states. Police, prison guards, private security companies, and the burgeoning security manufacturing industry, make up a huge proportion of the new jobs in American society. Almost half of the world's prisoners are in the United States, a fact that has caused a dramatic employment shift. Roughly 15 percent of America's workforce is engaged in guard labor. As a point of comparison, less than two percent of the American workforce is engaged in farming (Bowles & Jayadev, 2005; Walmsey, 2006).

Here we come to another dimension of the communitarian critique of the status quo. It takes a huge, powerful bureaucratic state to effectively govern and keep running the workings of a huge "global" economy. In effect, while government was originally formulated as an unobtrusive arbiter of disputes and provider of basic services whose guiding principle was non-entanglement in human affairs, what has actually developed is

a bureaucratic behemoth, the “corporate state,” an entity that many see as more responsive to the needs of capital than to the needs of citizens. Consequently, democracy is threatened. Democracy in such a state—and here U.S. voter participation rates are evidence—becomes a chimera that must be sold by the corporate-controlled nightly news and other media outlets. As corporate hegemony increases in these and other ideational institutions of a society, prospects for democracy continually diminish (Bagdikian, 2004).

Multiculturalists tend to view problems with the status quo in terms of how individuals, but also groups of people, especially those who for reasons of history, race, language, and/or culture, have been marginalized by the effects of political and economic decision-making. Schools as currently structured perpetuate the disparities that people of color experience through the design of the curriculum and the disconnect that takes place between the teacher and his/her students. Multiculturalists believe that the current system in place is either consciously or unconsciously designed to leave students feeling a sense of cultural alienation resulting in resistance that leads to hostility and at times self-hatred. These developments often result in destructive behavior that can become an economic benefit to society through the construction and operation of prisons. Meanwhile the overrepresentation of minorities in these prisons in turn perpetuates lingering stereotypes about minority shortcomings.

Multiculturalists, therefore, continue to interrogate curriculum, especially textbooks sold for profit, in an attempt to arrive at a pedagogical program that fairly represents the lived experiences of diverse learners. Textbook companies have responded by taking overtly racist images or passages out of their products, but they continue to highlight values and behaviors closely aligned with the White European American experience in this country. While social studies texts, for example, describe slavery and the living conditions of slaves, they omit the sexual exploitation of slave women, the amount and degree of violence that accompanied slavery, and the degree to which the existence of slavery is connected to present living conditions for Blacks and Whites (Gordy & Pritchard, 1995). When multiculturalists expose these curricular shortcomings, teachers are able to move closer to approximating what Geneva Gay calls “culturally responsive teaching” (Gay, 2000).

Toward a Synthesis: Multiculturalism and Communitarianism

Multiculturalism, sometimes called the “politics of recognition,” is an academic movement that has grown in the wake of larger struggles

for political, economic, and civil rights among marginalized groups in America. Having won hard fought victories related to the right to vote, discrimination in the workplace, school desegregation, etc., minority groups have sought to raise the moral and ethical standards of the dominant culture through an educational renaissance that provides new answers to the perennial curricular question: what knowledge is of most worth?

Like communitarianism, multicultural theory is intended to have a positive affect on social and economic policy emanating from the political arena. But unlike communitarianism, K-12 schools and universities have become the site for battles over what multiculturalism means. Multiculturalists taught us, quite persuasively, that school curriculum can demean individuals and can even constitute a form of oppression. This was particularly pejorative because it had the effect of diminishing the sense of worth or sense of efficacy among individuals who never saw people like themselves among those who made societal contributions worthy of study (Gordy & Pritchard, 1995; Pewewardy, 1998; Powell & Garcia, 1985).

Over and above these concerns for identity formation, multiculturalists also argued that the intellectual resources available to the nation's educationally elite were seriously handicapped by a curriculum that ignored the contributions of all cultures. Said simply, the curriculum of the nation's schools and universities had become too narrow, too focused on the contributions of a group of White men selected by other White men for membership in what affectionately became known as the "canon."

Last, multiculturalists have readily pointed out the obvious—that a society claiming to espouse democracy, or claiming allegiance to democratic principles, must elevate multiculturalism in the policy arena. The rock-bottom proposition concerning democracy is the extent to which all individuals affected by a decision have a voice in that decision. Multiculturalism is in many ways a social movement designed to expand the number of voices at the decision-making table.

Because multiculturalism has been primarily a movement concerned with education, or with curriculum, it looks a little different from communitarianism, which has been primarily a movement concerned with political and economic reform. As well, the emphasis on community—or common unity—has set communitarianism apart from multiculturalism which is sometimes described simply as "diversity." But there are significant, even profound, similarities between the two as the following diagram shows:

Multiculturalism

Concerned with differences
Concerned primarily
with education

Communitarianism

Concerned with sameness
Concerned primarily
with politics and economics

Overlap

Concerned with substantive identity formation
Concerned with ethical decision-making
Concerned with promoting moral behavior
Concerned with critiquing difference-blind policy
Concerned with creating democracy out of pluralism

To further make the point, let's briefly compare a few of the primary prescriptions espoused by communitarians and multiculturalists. Communitarians claim that a healthy society must emphasize the "good" as well as the "right." What they mean by this is that policy-makers must be just as attuned to whether decisions will enhance or inhibit the ability of groups to live their definition of what constitutes a good life as they currently are with respect to whether a decision will or will not infringe on the rights of individuals. Without question, minority groups have utilized the notion of individual rights to gain invaluable courtroom victories with regard to a fair workplace, schools desegregation, etc. But American culture has been reluctant to allow room for minority groups to maintain the practices and traditions that make up *their* definition of a good life. It is almost as if the dominant culture has said, "We can't inhibit your participation in the economic arena, but should you choose to do so, you must give up what you value most within your own culture." Communitarians adamantly oppose this informal process, as do multiculturalists (Mulhall & Swift, 1992).

A second communitarian prescription calls for a societal emphasis on "particularity" over "difference-blindness." By invoking the need for particularity they are essentially saying that the goal of equal, or even equitable, treatment cannot be obtained by treating everyone the same. There are too many circumstances related to life and living that are contingent on human and/or environmental exigencies germane to particular places on earth. According to communitarians, informed social policy must look at how different communities will be differently affected by a single policy and adjust accordingly. Multiculturalists have said the same thing, repeatedly.

A third communitarian prescription calls for an emphasis on "participation" over and above a reliance on "juridical proceduralism." Our "procedural republic," according to Michael Sandel, sets up a climate conducive to winners and losers in the policy arena, not a climate condu-

cive to mutually-derived consensus (Sandel, 1996, 4-5). In practice, the presence of juridical procedures relegates American society to democracy only in its weakest sense, that being, essentially, rule by agreed upon law. Martin Luther King Jr. made this point writing in 1967, shortly before his death. "When legal contests were the sole form of activity, the ordinary Negro was involved as a passive spectator. His interest was stirred, but his energies were unemployed. Mass marches transformed the common man into a star performer" (King, 1967, 566). Relying on juridical procedures was not enough. Participation was required.

While the rights of individuals are safeguarded in this system, the rights of groups—particularly cultural groups with their own traditions, their own definitions of the good life—are not. Both communitarians and multiculturalists argue that American society is capable of a far stronger version of democracy—one defined by widespread participation among all groups in the decisions that affect all. Scholars of biological and physical sciences have begun to see human community as essentially no different than any other natural community, pointing out that when diversity is plentiful, communities thrive. When diversity disappears, communities diminish.

Conclusion

Contrary to the way things may look at first glance, there are profound similarities between multicultural and communitarian theory. Multiculturalists and communitarians both struggle to bring about the widespread moral wherewithal required to respect and protect the cultural traditions of various groups in a pluralist society. Multiculturalists tend to look for this development via curricular change of the sort called for by James Banks, Christine Sleeter, Ronald Takaki, and numerous others; and via instructional change of the sort described by Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladsen-Billings, and many others. Communitarians, on the other hand, tend to look for this development as an outgrowth of political and economic policy intended to heal America's communities and American community life. In fact, it could be said that these approaches complement one another. If communitarians have been too silent relative to the nation's educational endeavor, multiculturalists have been too silent relative to community and environmental well-being in this country.

We believe that schools and universities can and should be informed by both theoretical traditions—and there is evidence that this is indeed taking place (Johnson, Finn, & Lewis, 2005; Tolbert & Theobald, 2006). The utility of academic disciplines lies in what they can do to improve the world and the lives of those who share it. This means that K-12 and

university students need at least some educational enculturation into the habit and practice of solving real world problems—meaning they need to get out into the community that surrounds the school or college and build disciplinary knowledge through real world struggle. This kind of hands-on academic work needs to take place across races to the full extent possible, thereby allowing students to come to know one another across the divide of race, religion, or gender. Such work is both communitarian and multicultural. It contributes to the health of communities and to greater sensitivity and understanding between people.

“Service learning” courses and programs have grown by leaps and bounds in recent years—probably the greatest single source of evidence that the communitarian demand for citizens willing to step up and shoulder responsibility for the quality and feel of American society has begun to have a curricular impact. Granted, service learning is still very ill-defined, and much of what goes under that label scarcely merits the idea of service, but it is nevertheless a step in the right direction. In fact, as a concept that can easily be made to fit educational aims that are both communitarian and multicultural, service learning may well be without equal. Service learning can bring students out of the classroom to learn in cross-racial efforts to improve communities—pedagogical work of this type is precisely what this nation needs in order to heal its divisions and return social justice to the status of a shared cultural goal.

Providing another example of movement in the direction of community-oriented curricular work, the *New York Times* has teamed up with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to create the “American Democracy Project” (ADP)—a partnership that has higher education institutions in all states working to generate curricular and extracurricular collegiate experiences designed to achieve greater student sensitivity to the demands of life in a democracy. The stated goal of ADP is “to produce graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy.” Education in the service of democracy is what ought to, and we believe increasingly will, bring the insights and wisdom inherent in multicultural and communitarian theory closer together within collegiate curriculum.

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