

preserve our moral purity single-handedly. Progress toward peace and stability may have to come through international cooperation, not by our own isolated action, however high-minded it might be.

Conclusion:

In a more perfect world, nuclear deterrence would be no one's first choice for how to conduct the world's business. That we aim tens of thousands of warheads at the Soviets as they aim tens of thousands of warheads at us is, at best, a peculiar premise for global harmony. But that nuclear deterrence is morally flawed unfortunately need not mean that any other course of action now open to us is any better. As Shue points out, "It may well be that all the options toward nuclear deterrence still available now are wrong, but that some are more deeply wrong than others. Nowhere is it written that in every situation there is a right way out—indeed, nowhere is it written that in every situation there is any way out." But that all options are flawed does not mean that any choice is as good as any other. It means we must choose the least bad—that is to say, the best available. If this turns out to be a continued reliance on some kind of deterrence, then that may be the choice that now lies before us.

Maybe the first steps we can take to retreat from the nuclear brink will not be major policy initiatives, but more humble, homely measures: a shift away from inflammatory rhetoric, an encouragement of friendship between Soviet and American communities, families, children. If the bomb cannot be "banned," perhaps it can be moved from the center to the periphery of human affairs—a last resort made progressively more remote. If we cannot get rid of the bomb, perhaps we can rid ourselves of the kind of politics that relies upon it, by abandoning the illusion that nuclear missiles create political power.

In the meantime, Schelling reminds us, "Most of what we call civilization depends on reciprocal vulnerability." A balance of deterrence doesn't have to mean a balance of terror: "People regularly stand at the curb watching trucks, buses and cars hurtle past at speeds that guarantee injury and threaten death if they so much as attempt to cross against the traffic. They are absolutely deterred. But there is no fear. They just know better."

The views of C.A.J. Coady, Leon Sloss, and Harold Feiveson are quoted from papers prepared for the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy's Working Group on Nuclear Policy and Morality, to appear in *The Shadow of the Bomb*, edited by Henry Shue (forthcoming). Henry Shue's views are quoted from his papers "The Moral Defense of Strategic Defense" (condensed and adapted as "Are Nuclear Defenses Morally Superior?" *QQ* vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 1985) and "Redistribution of the Risk of Nuclear War" (unpublished manuscript). Jonathan Schell is quoted from his book *The Abolition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984); Thomas C. Schelling from his article "What Went Wrong with Arms Control?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 64, no. 2 (Winter 1985/86).

Diverging Paths for Deterrence April 22–24, 1987

A conference sponsored by the
Center for Philosophy and Public Policy
to be held at the Adult Education Center
University of Maryland, College Park
funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation

Philosophers and strategists from the United States, Germany, Japan, and Australia will explore three alternative ways of departing from deterrence as usual: finite deterrence, the strategic defense initiative, and conventional defenses for Europe.

Civic Education and Traditional American Values

"Something has gone tragically wrong with our society in recent years," begins a recent report of a commission on civic education. What has gone wrong, the report charges, is this: we are failing to educate future citizens for citizenship, and the core of this failure lies in a falling away from traditional American values: "a lack of honesty and integrity among . . . citizens [is] directly related to the failure of our institutions to effectively transmit the values contained in our cultural heritage." This report is very much a product

of its time: countless local and national groups, study commissions, education lobbies, and reform movements are decrying disrespect for traditional values and advocating a rekindling of tradition as a remedy for the various public ills that assail us.

The traditionalist's argument has not met with universal assent, however. What is controversial about inculcating traditional American values? What should we conclude about the persistence of this kind of controversy? These questions force us back to a prior ques-

tion: what is *meant* by "restoring traditional American values"?

Teaching Virtues

"We need to restore traditional American values in the schools" might mean that we need to work more deliberately and consciously at the training of character. We need to teach the virtues, which we can divide into four groups: 1) *the moral virtues* — honesty, truthfulness, decency, courage, justice; 2) *the intellectual virtues* — thoughtfulness, strength of mind, curiosity; 3) *the communal virtues* — neighborliness, charity, self-support, helpfulness, cooperativeness, respect for others; 4) *the political virtues* — commitment to the common good, respect for law, responsible participation.

Now, what could be the argument against teaching some or all of these virtues in school? The moral and intellectual virtues are essential constituents to being a good human being; the communal virtues are essential constituents to being a good neighbor; and the political virtues are essential constituents to being a good citizen. As responsible parents and teachers, surely we can be committed to no less than making our children good persons, good neighbors, and good citizens.

As long as we propose teaching honesty, charity, and respect for others without specifying the operational content of such teaching, then there seems little basis for controversy and dissent. But controversy and dissent will emerge the moment we begin to specify how and what we will teach in teaching honesty, charity, respect, and so on.

Controversy necessarily emerges because of the nature of the virtues themselves. The scopes of individual virtues overlap, and on occasion the same action that will be charitable will be untruthful and a neighborly action will be unjust. Moreover, an action that will be courageous in one situation will be foolhardy in another; a statement that in one circumstance is honesty in another is inappropriate candor. The mature moral consciousness can make the right distinctions here, but the mature moral consciousness comes at the end, not the beginning, of moral training. At the beginning the virtues have to be taught by simple rules: do not lie, obey the law. The rules selected to be taught and the way they will be taught can be controversial.

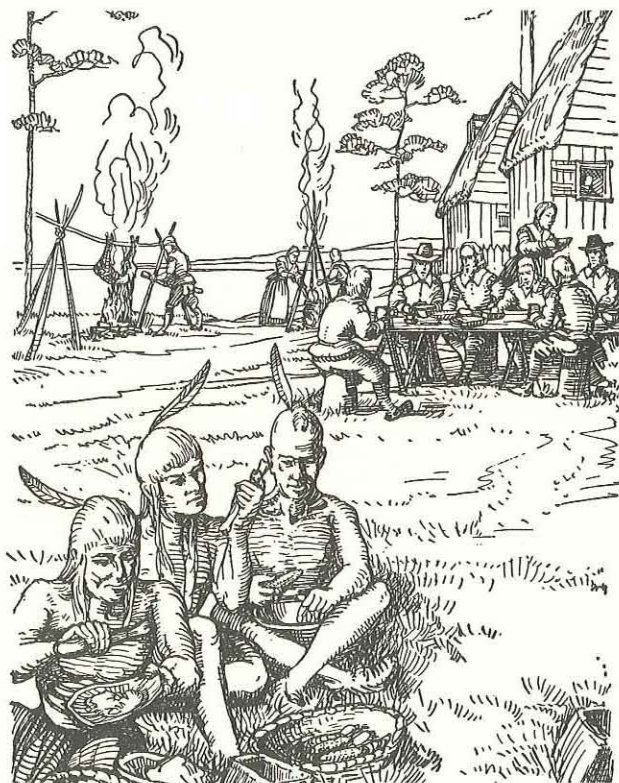
This is especially true when the teaching device is the institutionalization of codes of conduct. According to some university honor codes, for example, it is a violation of honesty not only to cheat on an exam but to fail to report the cheating of others. Such a rule teaches a student about honesty. It also requires him to betray his fellows. Moreover, a fixed rule preempts the student's own judgment on the matter. Another's cheating is wrong, but sometimes the appropriate response to wrong is mercy, not punishment; support, not abandonment; silence, not accusation. Rigid adherence to rules circumscribes the student's autonomy as a moral actor. Thus, both moral and pedagogical concerns might be raised about rules for teaching virtue.

That legitimate concerns can be raised about efforts to teach virtue does not imply that the efforts are not on balance justified, as imperfect as they may be. Given the centrality of the virtues to a worthwhile life, we may have no option but to stumble through as best we can. Controversy is endemic to the enterprise of teaching the virtues but may be contained within tolerable limits by a larger consensus about the goal of forming adults who are honest, decent, respectful, and helpful.

Restoring Customary Practices

However, where differing ideals themselves clash, controversy may become intractable. This point is illustrated by the second thing that the call for traditional American values might mean. It might mean a return to *customary practices* or *norms* of behavior. For example, it might mean a return to older norms of sexual behavior in which sexual activity not confined to marriage is immoral, a matter of central concern to many of those in the back-to-traditions movement.

Controversy about sexual practices is complicated by the fact that prudential arguments and moral arguments can follow parallel lines. Sexual promiscuity can be warned against to avoid venereal disease and teenage pregnancies. Such a prudential argument would seem neutral about sexual ideals, condemning no form of consensual sexual behavior as bad in itself. In fact, it is hard to find prudential policies that are truly neutral among sexual ideals, as the persistent controversies over sex education classes demonstrate. Opponents of sex education classes argue that by their very nature they foster particular sexual ideologies.



Parents may believe that when schools treat sex education in a business-like manner, as another subject along with health, geography, and math, they convey certain attitudes about the place of sex in our lives, attitudes incompatible with the sexual ideals the parents hope to foster in their children. Even sexual knowledge itself in their children may be opposed by parents as incompatible with ideals of chastity and innocence.

When ideals clash, two strategies are available: insulation or domination. On the first, we look for arrangements that allow the conflicting ideals to coexist.

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On the second, we seek the triumph and domination of the “correct” ideal. The back-to-traditions movement uses both strategies on issues of sexual morality. It wants sex education out of the classroom so parents can teach their children their own sexual ideals without fear of counter-teaching in the schools. In the larger national arena, however, traditionalists often want the state to give positive support to dominant sexual ideals by suppressing pornography, prostitution, and other sexual behavior at odds with those ideals.

National Identity

Both of the two meanings of “returning to traditional American values” that we have examined — teaching the virtues and restoring customary practices — have little to do with anything distinctively American. The virtues are virtues whether practiced in Washington, D.C., or Stockholm. And America shares its basic sexual, cultural, and religious mores with many other countries. A distinctively American, and distinctively civic, content requires that we turn to a third meaning of “traditional American values,” *national identity* and *collective aspirations*.

Here the concern is about forming a self-concept as “an American” and acquiring the patriotic attitudes appropriate to such a self-concept. We view ourselves as Americans because we share with other Americans a common history and a common understanding of what America stands for. But if this is true, how can it be that our political life consists in never-ending struggles to define the national purpose, the meaning of our common life, the content of the national interest?

We are a people because we have common icons — the Pilgrims and Thanksgiving, the Founding Fathers, Lee giving his sword to Grant, Babe Ruth pointing to right field — but only at the most shallow level do they

define common goals or projects. Our central authoritative texts — the Declaration of Independence, Washington’s Farewell Address, Lincoln’s Second Inaugural and Gettysburg Address — declare our commitments to freedom, justice, equality. But these vague commitments are susceptible to many different plausible readings. Thus, the continuous political struggles to give specific definition to Americanism and to tie American ideals to this or that policy, this or that cause. What does this say about teaching our children to be Americans?

If we are to make our children into Americans, we have to start with the teaching of national history, and such teaching has a high place in the back-to-traditions movement. But although there may be broad agreement about the importance of teaching American history, consensus soon breaks down when we turn to questions about the content and implication of history. In a speech last year to a conference on “Civic Virtue and Educational Excellence,” Secretary of Education William Bennett urged that students would have a better appreciation of current U.S. foreign policy if schools did a better job passing on a “proper sense of American values and history.” “Our students will not recognize the urgency in Nicaragua if they cannot recognize the history that is threatening to repeat itself,” he said.

But how will history lessons instill support for U.S. policy in Nicaragua? What history lessons about the United States and its Latin neighbors are the schools failing to pass on? The Monroe Doctrine and the Good Neighbor Policy? Or dollar diplomacy and filibustering? Will students be more or less inclined to accept current American policy at face value by studying U.S. machinations to strip Panama from Colombia? By learning of persistent U.S. interventions in the Caribbean

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and Gulf of Mexico to defend American financial interests?

The point is this: there are lessons aplenty to be learned from American history, depending on what we select to teach. Thus, the perfectly sensible proposal to increase the teaching of American history in the schools is bound to raise questions about what parts of that history to emphasize and what not. Ideological divisions about what America really stands for will be reflected in contests about the appropriate picture of the past to present to children. The fights about history in the classroom will have the same character as the

fight about sex education and school prayer. They will be contests of ideals struggling for hegemony.

These contests will also have the same character as the fights about teaching virtue. We can see this by seeing how the teaching of national history works in forging national consciousness. A child learns moral lessons by reading stories of moral deeds — deeds of courage and physical valor, of intrepidity and persistence against odds, of strength of character and integrity in the face of temptation. When such stories are drawn from national history, however, they connect a child to moral deeds in a special way: these were the deeds of *his* forefathers and foremothers. The child's social identity, not just his character, is formed in relation to these stories.

Thus, for young children anyway, there are things history cannot be if it is to be a vehicle of patriotism. It cannot be "debunking"; there have to be forefathers and foremothers worth admiring and emulating, and moral enterprises in which pride can be taken. Nor can it be "objective" where this means introducing the full complexity of all the issues surveyed. Just as teaching the virtues must start with simple rules, teaching national history in order to develop civic attachments must start with simple (and thus selective and distorted) accounts of the course of national development. So, once more, the quest for traditional American values leads to controversy.

Tradition and Controversy

It is not surprising that the quest to inculcate traditional values spawns controversy. The surprise would be if it didn't. Must we be dismayed that the controversies are deep and not easily dispelled? Perhaps not. After all, incessant controversy is itself a great American tradition! It's the genius of American political institutions that controversy contributes to our stability rather than our instability. The ideological struggles

are valuable resources from which we sharpen our own self-understandings of our relationship to community and country, and they do not divide us to the point of political breakdown. Our political and legal practices allow controversies to be talked to death. To the strategies of insulation and domination, mentioned earlier, we have to add one more: the strategy of exhaustion. No one wins big and no victory is long secure. So controversy does not undermine civic education: it is the best part of it, since the lesson the democratic citizen needs to learn is to be able to live with controversy without taking alarm. Perhaps, then, we can end on an up-beat, positive note, after all. That, of course, is itself an American tradition.

This is one way to picture the fruits of controversy. But can we really take pride in a system that dampens and defuses and defrays controversy, co-opting every vital and vibrant dissent? Should we teach our children that the most important thing is to temper their ideals to the exigencies of co-existence and not to trample on the values of others, no matter how pedestrian or banal they may be? Should our democratic civics lessons teach future seekers after Truth, Beauty, and Justice to trim their sails so as not to unsettle what H. L. Mencken called the great "booboisie"?

The real question I mean to pose by these remarks is this: do we perhaps buy the taming of controversy and a stable social peace at a greater cost than we think? I pose this question not because I seriously want us to rethink American institutions but in order to deflate just a little bit that final American tradition — the propensity to pat ourselves on the back.

—Robert K. Fullinwider

This article was condensed and adapted from a talk Robert K. Fullinwider gave to a Workshop on Teaching Philosophy and Public Policy, sponsored by the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy, held on June 18–20, 1986, in Washington, D.C.

Teaching as Politics

The purpose of a liberal education is not to make students well-rounded individuals, who can speak intelligently on a range of acceptable topics at mixed cocktail parties because they have learned a little of this and a little of that. The purpose of a liberal education is to create liberals—or persons, if you like a different rhetoric—creatures who are in a position to guide their lives by their own lights and who can respect others in doing the same. Put bluntly, the proper function of college education is to save students from their parents,

their religion, and twelve years of state-mandated indoctrination into the ordinary. This end chiefly entails two educational tasks for which the philosophical teaching of public policy issues is especially well suited—one methodological, one substantive.

The first is to develop students' intellectual skills to appraise policies and practices so that one's beliefs become freely chosen and appropriated as one's own. The other is to attack petrified social norms so that one can come to see alternatives, which then might be tested