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Am I Patriotic? Learning and Teaching the Complexities of Patriotism Here and Now

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Am I Patriotic? Learning and Teaching the Complexities of Patriotism Here and Now

Introduction

Mark T. Kissling

Essays, Papers, and Other Features by

Mark T. Kissling

Margaret Nell Becker

Patricia Gándara

Hillary Parkhouse

William Ayers

Samuel J. Tanner

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Am I Patriotic?
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to introduce myself as the new editor-in-chief of the Bank Street *Occasional Paper Series*. I have served on the editorial board of the series since 2009, and it has been my privilege during that time to watch it change and grow, transitioning from a small, print-based journal to an online, open-access journal that boasts readership in 126 countries and 1,300 institutions.



I am the first editor of the *Occasional Paper Series* who does not have a formal Bank Street affiliation. During the interview process, I was asked several times why I was interested in becoming the new editor-in-chief. For me, the answers are found in the unique commitments of the *Occasional Paper Series*. This begins with our dedication to narrative research. Under Jonathan Silin's leadership, a clear vision for research as human storytelling emerged, and in the essays we publish, we honor the role of biography and narrative in helping teachers and researchers assess how their own experiences can inform and shape broader educational beliefs and practices.

We have also placed a strong value on nontraditional and creative forms of research. Our online format allows us to explore multiple ways to represent ideas; in the past several years, we have published graphic essays, photo essays, and art. In Issue #38, we published original artwork with the artist's statement and two video interviews—vlogs, I'm told—of participating authors. In this issue, we are publishing our first audio interview, a conversation between Bruce Springsteen and our guest editor, Mark Kisling. I am excited to continue collaborating with contributors to the *Occasional Paper Series* to push the boundaries of what counts as making important contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Equally, I am excited about Bank Street's commitment to providing the *Occasional Paper Series* as an open-access journal, making the ideas and issues presented available to anyone who has internet access. I am pleased with our track record of seeking out and nurturing first-time authors, including classroom teachers, curriculum and program coordinators, graduate students, and early-career scholars. From Jonathan, I have learned a great deal about being an editor-mentor for new writers. I am impressed with our readership, and especially with the practicing teachers who read our essays. Over the years, as I have published essays in the *Occasional Papers Series*, I have had the opportunity to subsequently correspond with teacher-readers, who have inspired me with their insightful questions and comments. They, along with the Bank Street faculty, represent a strong tradition of progressive education. As an elementary school teacher in Honolulu, Hawaii many years ago, I remember turning to Bank Street for ideas and materials—*The Voyage of the Mimi* and the Bank Street Apple Writer among the most important. I am proud to be associated with Bank Street and all it stands for.

As I make this transition from board member to editor-in-chief, I am pleased that Jonathan has agreed to stay on the board, offering guidance and reassurance as needed. The board is strong and active, and I am looking forward to continuing my work with them.

We would not be able to publish the journal without the hard work of our guest editors, and of Kristin Freda, Director of Library Services; Rachel Reda, Communications Officer; Shara Benison, Assistant Vice President of Communications; and, most recently, Alex Iwachiw, our new Managing Editor.

I want to express my gratitude to Josh Thomases, formerly the Dean of Innovation, Policy & Research. Josh worked closely with Jonathan and me to shepherd the *Occasional Paper Series* through many positive changes. His vision for and commitment to the series was invaluable. Since Josh's departure from Bank Street, I have had the pleasure of working with Cecelia Traugh, dean of the Graduate School of Education, who likewise represents Bank Street's commitment to the series. I want to thank my department head in The Department of Curriculum and Instruction as well as the dean of our College of Education at Penn State for supporting this appointment.

Last and certainly not least, there are not enough words to express my admiration for what Jonathan Silin has done to shape the *Occasional Paper Series* into what it is today and for mentoring me into this new role. I have known Jonathan for 25 years, and in our many talks about writing, Jonathan has been consistent in his insistence on fewer but more powerful words. In that spirit, I end with this—thank you, Jonathan.

With Best Wishes,

Gail Boldt

Learning and Teaching the Complexities of Patriotism Here and Now

Mark T. Kissling

Last June, the day before the Philadelphia Eagles franchise was scheduled to celebrate its Super Bowl victory at the White House, U.S. President Donald Trump revoked the invitation.

The majority of the players had made clear that they would skip the event. Instead of attending the presidential spectacle, they planned to celebrate elsewhere in Washington, D.C., including by touring the nearby National Museum of African American History and Culture (Nakamura & Lowery, 2018). In place of the event, the President led a ten-minute “Celebration of America” on the White House lawn that featured the playing and singing of the national anthem and “God Bless America” (Shear, 2018).

The politics of patriotism were at the center of what transpired.



Artwork by Jenna Christian

Ever since the fall of 2016, when quarterback Colin Kaepernick began kneeling on the sideline during the national anthem in protest of racial injustice and police brutality, the President has called Kaepernick and other professional athletes who have joined the cause unpatriotic (Bryant, 2018). But protesting injustice—with precedent in the Declaration of Independence and protection in the U.S. Constitution—is patriotic. Indeed, patriotism is much more than simple loyalty to a country or obedience to its leaders.

This issue of the Bank Street *Occasional Paper Series* seeks to grapple with the complexity of patriotism, particularly in relation to its workings in the lives of teachers and students in schools. Like it or not, schools teach (about) patriotism implicitly if not explicitly. Therefore, much consideration needs to go into what schools should teach about and how they should enact patriotism.

Patriotism is neither simplistic nor arcane, two common tropes. Rather, it is dynamically messy and as relevant as ever, in the present moment of rising populist and nationalist sentiments in the United States and across the world. As the pieces in this issue show, patriotism—and the learning and teaching of it—is complicated and contested, loved and hated, seemingly straightforward but entirely complex.

Patriotism and Schools

As a natural-born citizen of the United States, am I patriotic? Is my teaching patriotic? Do I want my students to be patriotic? My answer for each of these questions: well, maybe. It depends upon how we’re defining patriotic.

At this moment in time in the United States, some are trumpeting a longstanding nationalistic patriotism reflected in slogans such as “America First” and “Make America Great Again,” akin to Westheimer’s (2007) description of “authoritarian patriotism” (pp. 171-188). But equally if not more patriotic are the critical commitments reflected in the exhortations “Black Lives Matter” and “Time’s Up,” which align with Westheimer’s “democratic patriotism.” While knee-jerk allegiance to the country’s symbols or leaders is often simplistically recognized (or dismissed) as the whole of patriotism, it is a “critical patriotism”—with a loving orientation that embraces diversity, equity, and solidarity—that is the foundation for bettering one’s communities.

Critical notions of patriotism focus on the scale of the country or nation-state (i.e., “the national”) but they also include associations at more local and global scales. Informed particularly by the work of Wendell Berry (e.g., 2003), I have sought to unfix the national as the sole scale of patriotism:

While patriotism does involve the national, it must be understood in deep relation to other scales of association. Following this notion, I contend that patriotism must be understood, or at least contended with, as place-based. Thus, I define patriotism as loving one’s shared lands and communities—that is, one’s place—by working for the betterment of all living beings within those lands and communities. The starting point for this patriotism is our places: our local lands and the communities of beings that inhabit them. (Kissling, 2016, p. 49)

Importantly, place-based patriotism is not isolationist. Rather, it is rooted in place(s), always with connections to beings and places elsewhere.

Patriotism is and can be many things. Growing a garden and donating blood are patriotic acts, alongside displaying a national flag during holidays and voting in elections. Working to combat climate change and seeking denuclearization while rooting for one’s country in the World Cup or Olympics are also patriotic acts.

This variety is also true in schools. In the United States, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited at the start of each day. Elementary students often learn and publicly perform “America the Beautiful,” “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” and “This Land Is Your Land.” These are patriotic acts, and so are lessons when teachers explicitly teach about the tensions and injustices of U.S. and world history. When teachers eschew a curriculum focused on the nation-state in favor of local and global inquiries, that can be patriotic as well.

Considering that the teaching of patriotism is foundational to the history of schooling in the United States (e.g., Koch, 1996; Webster, 1790/1965) and patriotism is always embedded in national political debates, patriotism has received remarkably little attention in the scholarly educational literature over the past decades. In social studies education, which is the corner of schooling most often explicitly linked to patriotism, the focus on citizenship far exceeds attention to patriotism (Kissling, 2016), although there is a growing interest in patriotism within the field.¹

¹ Some notable recent work includes: Busey & Walker, 2017; Chua & Sim, 2014; King, Warren, Bender, & Finley, 2016; Kissling, 2015, 2016, 2017; Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Westheimer, 2009, 2014.

“Wondering If”

A staple of the U.S. elementary school curricular canon is Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land.” Early in the frigid winter of 1940, Guthrie made his way from Pampa, Texas, to New York City, hitchhiking the last stretch after selling his car for cash (Klein, 1980). As Guthrie traveled, the most popular song on U.S. radio was Kate Smith singing Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.” Berlin had written the song during World War I for a musical but left it out when he felt it didn’t strike the right tone. Two decades later, he shared the song with Smith as she searched for a song to sing on her radio show on Armistice Day of 1938 (Shaw, 2013).

Upon arriving in New York City, Guthrie took temporary residence at a hotel in Times Square. In the next few weeks, he proceeded to write dozens of songs, one of which was “God Blessed America,” a retort to “God Bless America.” The first of six stanzas read:

*This land is your land, this land is my land
From the California to the Staten island,
From the Redwood forest, to the Gulf Stream waters,
God blessed America for me. (Santelli, 2012, p. 18)*

Over the next several years, Guthrie made some edits, including changing each stanza’s tagline to “This land was made for you and me.” In 1959, music textbooks began printing the song as “This Land Is Your Land.” Today it is known across the country and world, thanks in large part to U.S. schools over the past six decades (Kissling, 2012, 2017).

In schools and out, many people see “This Land Is Your Land” as a classic statement of American patriotism. Yet in two lesser-known original verses, Guthrie wrote:

*Was a big high wall there that tried to stop me
A sign was painted said: Private Property
But on the back side it didn’t say nothing
God Blessed America for me.*

*One bright sunny morning in the shadow of the steeple
By the relief office I saw my people
As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if
God blessed America for me. (Santelli, 2012, p. 18)*

The music textbook companies omitted these two verses that include, as Bruce Springsteen (interview, this issue) suggests, Guthrie’s “radical politics.” The song learned, interpreted, and sung by many millions of people represents only a part of Guthrie’s lyrics.

In the first lesser-known verse, Guthrie speaks to the constraints of a capitalistic system built on the accumulation of “private property” by some, to the exclusion of others. In the second lesser-known verse, with an image of starving people “in the shadow of the steeple,” Guthrie calls the American Dream into question with the seismic “wondering if.”

For Guthrie, it seems, questioning our most cherished convictions and values is patriotic.

In This Issue

Contributors to this issue were encouraged to take Guthrie’s transition from declaration to question as an invitation to reflect upon the complexities and contradictions of patriotism—here and now; that is, in this moment in time and in their specific places. Importantly, with respect to place, the relevance of Guthrie’s inquiry extends far beyond the borders of the United States to all lands and to scales of communities other than the national.

The bulk of the words in this issue are found in five peer-reviewed papers by Margaret Nell Becker, Mark Helmsing, Nina Hood and Marek Tesar, Hillary Parkhouse, and Sam Tanner. Combined, these papers explore the teaching and learning of patriotism in different countries, in different regions of the United States, in the present moment and historically, in schools and out of them, across the K-16 grade spectrum, in planned curricula and lived curricula, and in social studies as well as other subject areas.

Woven among these papers are four short, invited essays about patriotism by William Ayers, Patricia Gándara, Ming Fang He, and Madhu Suri Prakash. The purpose of these essays, as a whole, is to offer multiple perspectives about patriotism from prominent educational scholars.

The remaining two components of this issue are a graphic story by Jenna Christian that investigates the link between patriotism and the military in U.S. schools through the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) and an audio/transcription excerpt of an interview that I conducted in 2008 with Bruce Springsteen about his learning and singing of “This Land Is Your Land.”

While each of these pieces importantly and powerfully stands on its own, it is my hope that readers will engage with the pieces as a whole. There is no simple, straightforward path through the stories and ideas captured here. Rather, we have a complicated array—just like patriotism in theory, practice, teaching, and learning.

Acknowledgments

It was a great privilege and joy to serve as guest editor for this issue, which would not have come together without the meticulous work of Ann Brennan and the Bank Street *Occasional Papers Series* staff. My deep thanks go to the teachers, graduate students, and professors who generously reviewed submissions for this issue. Lastly, it was my pleasure to work closely with the terrific authors who contributed to the issue as well as the incomparable duo of incoming editor Gail Boldt and outgoing editor Jonathan Silin. Gail and Jonathan: thanks for all that you have done, do, and will do for OPS.

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“That’s Quite a Tune”: An Interview with Bruce Springsteen

Mark T. Kissling

This is a transcription of the audio of the interview and its introduction.

Greetings from State College, Pennsylvania.

My name is Mark Kissling. I am an assistant professor of education at Penn State University. I’m also the guest editor of the Bank Street *Occasional Papers Series* issue #40 titled, “Am I Patriotic?” The purpose of the issue is to complicate how we think about and enact patriotism, with a particular focus on how teachers teach and students learn about patriotism.

So how does this relate to Bruce Springsteen and the interview that you’re about to hear?

In mid-December of 2008, I spent two days at the Woody Guthrie Archives—then in New York City, now in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I was working on a project investigating the history of Guthrie’s most famous song, “This Land Is Your Land,” including how teachers in U.S. schools over the past six decades have used the song as a curricular resource to teach about patriotism.

During this time, Bruce graciously sat down with me at his home in New Jersey for an interview about how he learned the song and why he began playing it at concerts in the early 1980s.

The interview fell in between some noteworthy events. Six weeks prior, Barack Obama was elected to his first term as president. In the days leading up to the election, Bruce played several “Vote For Change” concerts at which he sang “This Land Is Your Land.” In the interview, you’ll hear him reference one such concert in Philadelphia.

Five weeks after the interview, Bruce—alongside legendary folk singer Pete Seeger and Pete’s grandson Tao Rodríguez-Seeger—sang “This Land Is Your Land” at President Obama’s “We Are One” inauguration concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Introducing the song, Bruce said, “We’d like you to join us in perhaps the greatest song ever written about our home.” They then sang a version of Guthrie’s song that included the often-omitted—particularly in schoolbooks—two verses that contain, as Bruce says in this interview, “radical politics.”

I encourage you to do a quick Internet search to see Guthrie’s lyrics, including the original, beautifully handwritten version that features his note at the bottom: “all you can write is what you see.”

Thanks for listening—and thanks to Bruce for generously sharing his time and thoughts. Enjoy the interview!

Note: The interview that follows has been edited for length and clarity.

Mark Kissling: I have some questions about “This Land Is Your Land” and your thoughts on it.

Bruce Springsteen: Alright.

Mark: Do you remember when you first learned the song—and any specifics around that?

Bruce: I don’t remember singing it in school. And I don’t remember singing it in the Boy Scouts. The first time I remember singing it was when I put it in our show which was around 1980. I was aware of it—in the folk music boom in the mid-60s, it was obviously sung pretty often and folk music was on prime-time television. It was a momentary boom that had a famous show called “Hootenanny” that was a prime-time, middle-of-the evening, entertainment show.

Mark: Can you remember watching it?

Bruce: Oh yeah. That’s how big folk music at one point got. When the world began to shift, which was sort of just pre-Beatles, post-50s-rock-and-roll, right on the nose of the Civil Rights Movement, people were looking for music to explain what—I mean, what is the purpose of art? It is to contextualize your life. Life is a random mess very often so people move to art, music, films—stories—to assemble, organize, and make sense of human experience.

So when the Civil Rights Movement really began to take off in the early 60s, I think that that was directly connected to why there was a sudden boom in music that, in theory, carried with it some social consciousness—now some of it did at the time and some of it was drained off into current pop music at the moment but still there was plenty of good singers and songwriters. Pete Seeger was on prime-time TV. The Weavers. Peter, Paul, and Mary were superstars. [This is] where people initially heard a Bob Dylan song. Nobody really heard of Bob Dylan doing a Bob Dylan song for quite a while.

At any rate, this was prime-time television, mainstream culture. It was mainstream enough that my cousin, who was an accordionist his entire life, picked up an acoustic guitar, taught me how to tune mine, showed me a few chords and I went down and bought a folk music book. And in that folk music book, of course, would be “This Land Is Your Land.”

I was thirteen then, and fourteen—1964. So I became aware of it though I didn’t really know who Woody Guthrie was, what he did, and I didn’t have any deep understanding of folk music outside of the fact that it simply was the music that was popular at the moment and it was guitar-based. A lot of time went by and shortly after I began reading intensely—I was kind of your age or maybe a little younger, but mostly your age, when I first began to really read; up till then I was kind of solely educated by music and life—I read the Joe Klein autobiography and that just immersed me in Woody Guthrie’s life, the music, and I became just captivated by it. I put it into the show in 1980 because the band was sort of taking a turn towards the political: certainly with *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, a lot of class-based music; *The River*. There was a recession at the time. My brother-in-law was a construction worker—very similar now: construction stopped. No construction jobs. He became a janitor at the high school. This was my sister’s life. Reagan was elected in 1980, which seemed like a disaster in the making for working people. That was when we brought it into the show and I started to sing it.

Mark: Did you consider other Guthrie songs or it was going to be that one?

Bruce: It was going to be ["This Land Is Your Land"] because it was a song I felt people knew but didn't know, [that] they didn't understand its full meaning and its greatness. It had kind of been diminished by overuse. Its popularization had cut away some of its depth at the time. I just looked at it as a piece of poetry, it was so beautiful. I mean, if you take away even the verses that contain some of what you might call the "radical politics," the song still functions. It's enormously beautiful. It's one of the most beautiful statements of ownership of your own Americanness. The insistence of your place, that this is your place. That you have a place, not just geographically, but by birthright you are a player in history. By your belonging to this place, at this time, and making your claim of ownership of this place, at this time, marks you as a player in this moment in history. As such you are empowered, rather than disenfranchised.

That's the core of the song. That's what I believe was his intent, to provide empowerment, ownership, and a sense of each individual as a player in his moment in history. That was the essence of the song and that was a lot of what we were trying to say at that particular point in time. [It] was that "don't allow your energies, your life, your youth, your strength to be wasted." That "through joint effort and a commonality of an idea of the society you're living in, you can be a player in history and a link in a long chain of meaningful lives and action." And that was really the way that I saw our band, as a link in that chain, and that was the fundamental message of that song.

Its title: this land is your land. That's a big statement. That's a big statement. And particularly in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. He's bucking an enormous amount of evidence to the contrary. So that's why the song was oppositional. It was demanding. It was asking for something. It was asking for something.

At a particular moment when the country particularly was going in the direction of—the division of wealth was increasing tremendously. The mid-80s was when the rust belt crashed, so the steel mills were shutting down and we were out in quite a few of those places and I met Ron Weisen, who was a steelworker out of Pittsburgh and organized a food bank and was a union organizer in Pittsburgh. Central Los Angeles was an enormous steel-producing part of the country that nobody even knew about, in the middle of the city. So one guy was kind of turning on to the other guys, and I was meeting a bunch of these fellows, and at the time they were crashing, the steel mills were going down, and all these folks were being put out of work. That's where a lot of our thoughts were and what the band was interested in. It was always there but there was the whole Morning-in-America moment. I suppose the irony being at the time: I wrote "Born In The U.S.A.," which was also a song that was sort of taken this way or that way—what verses do you need to hear and what don't you?—it's a funny irony. But I think using at the time "This Land Is Your Land" was also a way of trying to have our intentions more explicitly known.

We sang other [Woody Guthrie] songs. I think we sang "Plane Wreck at Los Gatos" and "Pastures of Plenty" and other songs that made their way in and out a little bit. But mainly it was ["This Land Is Your

Land”] and it became a big part of the show at the time. We sang it pretty regularly, every night. And that was [in the early 80s] around *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A.*; I seem to remember singing it over those series of years.

We had a young audience. I was 30, so the audience was in their 20s, my age maybe. I hadn't known a lot about it. I assumed a lot of my audience might not have been aware of Woody Guthrie or a lot of Woody Guthrie music. I sang it to clarify the work that I was doing at that time. It was a way of trying to get people to make the connections and focus in on what our concerns were during those years. I felt they were very similar to the song's. It was also a time when I was going back into the past a little bit to Hank Williams, and I was interested in making the connections between people who I thought were people who had influenced me or were in the process of influencing me or were my forbearers whose ideas and artistry I hoped to try to carry along in some way.

So that was a big part of it too. You're staking your claim to be a part of a certain lineage. And, the importance of lineage, of, like I say, people making the connections between what is happening in present-day America and what has happened in the past. The sense that history is important. The old story, if you don't know who you were, it's hard to know who you are. And I was interested in making all those connections, so that people saw that the political developments of our day were not isolated, that there was an ongoing thread running through American history where working people ended up on the short end of the stick. This was something coming to the fore in the 80s and it felt dangerous to me and undemocratic.

I had kind of grown up...on very class-conscious pop music—the Animals, which were very powerful—records that had a lot of political implications for me at the time. And then just maybe some natural inclination to side with the underdog through the fact that I was such an outsider myself. Which is where, I suppose, most artists start out. So that has something to do with it too.

I think I was in the middle of trying to forge an identity that I wanted my band and myself to be about. I thought these were the issues of the day that needed to be talked about, needed to be engaged. And I searched everywhere for things that would assist me in communicating what I thought was important. But the discovery of Woody's music—on one hand, it was another day, it was another time, I was as much a child of Elvis Presley, who wanted the pink Cadillac and the big house, so I might have been not that comfortable with the private property line myself. I wanted the pink Cadillac! I was in the unusual situation of feeling that both of these people were forbears of mine in some way. And that was just a part of who I was, what I did, the way that I did it...

I was just trying to make sense out of all of these conflicting urges and ideas that were coursing through my own music at the time. But it was a very important part of my musical development because it was essential in presenting the idea that your music and your gifts were to be of service and were to be at the service of some greater idea.

I think that struck home with me very deeply. It didn't exclude a variety of life's pleasures but it meant that a certain thrust of your songwriting and your power and your work, in order to be fully connected to your own life, and to the lives of the people around you, which is the only place where you find the true meaning of your work, that you needed to be at the service of some community, some philosophy, a set of ideas, that were intent on being a part of that joint effort that pushes things progressively forward.

Mark: How much would you say that your service, in that sense, is to an American idea, like a possibility rooted in country, or do you see it much larger than that?

Bruce: I think it's probably humanist. It must be larger because we have enormous audiences in Europe. I think it's more of a human idea, though there may be some American characteristics to it. I think the American idea, the democratic idea, is incredibly, incredibly powerful, and it's maintained its power, even in the shadow of the enormous doubt of the past eight years.

When we went overseas, we played in France, I think, just weeks after we invaded Iraq and people came out. I sang "Promised Land." That idea was always—I believe certainly in the European mind—has always been separate from any particular administration that was governing over here and our policies at any given moment. I was very interested in what it meant to be American.

I was very interested in what that American idea was. What I thought it was. What I thought it was supposed to guarantee. What I thought its birthright was. How I thought that applied to each and every citizen. And that this was an essential set of values that kept the country on a progressive heading and that made life here worth living. It was how I made sense of my own fortune, of my own luck and position that I found myself in. The fact that I had a voice and there were people interested in listening to it. It was my introduction to the idea of freedom as so much more than simply personal license.

We were politically active as teenagers. I remember doing a benefit for McGovern. I remember doing a benefit to send Vietnam War protesters to Washington. That was probably in my teens, you know. Because we grew up in the 60s, it was always a part of your artistic development and creative development but it was refocused again for me in the late 70s and 80s: by the Woody Guthrie music and also the fact that I had stumbled into the American dream myself, into what was considered its fulfillment. Right?

I had to stop and ask myself, "Okay, what's this about now, cause I'm in a completely different situation than I've ever been before in my life? What does that mean to me? What is its meaning?" And the only place I found that mattered to me was through the investigation in my work in the community I came out of, the community I wanted to forge and build and join and be a part of. And where do I fit in that American idea?

So those were all things that I was thinking about at your age—and that's ever since, to this day. To a couple of weeks ago when I found myself on stage in Philly, and you're trying to redefine that idea again and again and again and again. Moment after moment after moment after moment. Because its only power is in the present. And because democracy is only real right now. Today.

As long as the citizens are alert and guarded. There are all sorts of maps to follow. But in the end, they lead you to the present and to this very moment. That's why when the band is on stage at night—what are we still trying to define? This very moment. What do all these ideas mean in this very moment? And so from this time on, when I started to sing this song and before, that was, what do all these things mean in this moment right now? And where can we possibly take these things when we step outside of this building, this theater, this club, this arena? What are the relevance of these ideas when you take them out into the real world? How do they apply? How can you apply them?

Those are the issues that we've dealt with over the past 40 years of my playing, that still fascinate me, that still put an enormous fire in the furnace and still make me want to go out each night and play and take it to the limit. These are all the things that are at stake when you're an American. On a daily basis, on a nightly basis, these are what's at stake. This is your moment to be that player. This is your historical moment.

Along with entertaining people, and writing romantic songs, and sexual songs, and dancing songs, and fun songs, underneath all those things, every night is that suggestion. In the beginning of the show it gets talked about: "Long Time Coming," "Long Walk Home," "Last to Die for a Mistake." It gets talked about at the end of the show. It's threaded through the show. It's not rhetoric. I thread it through the show the way I feel it's threaded in your life. Along with your girlfriend, and your daily job, and you've got to make your bills. It's at the center but I try to make it a part of the show the way that I think people live their lives.

Which is why these initial three Guthrie verses are so important because if the song just had the two verses that explained its radical politics there just wouldn't be enough there. You wouldn't understand where that fire was coming from. You've got to initially get into, you've got to see where, those first three verses, they set the context, they set, once again: what can you lose? All this beauty. What is there to lose? All of this beauty. All of this possibility. All of these riches, gifts of God. He's letting you know, by the descriptive poetry in the first three stanzas, he's letting you know what's at stake. This is what we can lose. That's quite a tune.

Loving America with Open Eyes: A Student-Driven Study of US Rights in the Age of Trump

Margaret Nell Becker

When Emma Goldman was put on trial for encouraging young men to resist the draft during World War I, she was accused, among other things, of being unpatriotic. In her speech to the jury, Goldman (1917) offered her own definition of patriotism: “The kind of patriotism we represent is the kind of patriotism which loves America with open eyes” (p. 158).

What does it mean to love America with open eyes?¹ It is a question I have pondered greatly, in and out of the classroom, since the election of Donald Trump. Goldman (1917) said, “[W]e love America...but that must not make us blind to the social faults of America” (p. 159). Inspired by Goldman, I believe that to be a patriot is to question one’s country and seek the answers to those questions. Part of the way in which I enact this patriotism is through my teaching. That is, my students and I ask tough questions about the past, present, and future of America, and we seek to answer them. In doing this inquiring, we are learning and striving to be patriotic. In fact, I see such patriotic learning and teaching to be vital to the future of America.

This paper recounts how, during the 2016–2017 academic year, my group of fourth graders, prompted particularly by the election of Donald Trump, asked tough questions about their country and then sought to answer them. I begin by placing this story in the context of our school and its commitment to teaching and learning to promote social justice. I then story our curricular work in the wake of the election, focusing on our exploration of constitutional rights and the Civil Rights movement. I conclude in the spring of 2018, as my students (then fifth graders) marched for tougher gun legislation with students nationwide.

My School

As I tell my students during writing workshop, setting matters. Thus, it’s important to understand my school community and how this curriculum was able to blossom there. I work in a progressive public elementary school in New York City’s East Harlem neighborhood, a community with a rich history and culture that has been undergoing gentrification in the last few years. When walking from the subway to school, I pass new businesses replacing old ones, signs in both Spanish and English, a strong police presence, housing projects next to partially constructed luxury housing, murals on the sides of buildings, old brownstones, community gardens and centers, and a variety of public, private, and charter schools. Mount Sinai Hospital is across the street, as are the Museum of the City of New York, El Museo del Barrio, and Central Park.

1 When I use the term “America,” I am referring to the United States of America, but I am mindful that “America” is also used to denote the entirety of the continents of South America and North America.

The students come from all the different types of families who live in this neighborhood, as well as from other neighborhoods across the five boroughs. As a result, our community is uniquely diverse in a way that many New York City schools are not, though the diversity of our population continues to change with the neighborhood and with public school policies. Moreover, while our school has a strong reputation, it is certainly not for everyone. We don't believe in grades, punitive discipline, or lots of homework. Most students come here because their parents and guardians believe in progressive education.

In my school, progressive education means that students' voices are central to the learning process and that we as teachers must create space in the classroom for the diverse voices of our students. Play and creativity are important, and both teachers and students are trusted to make choices about learning. Therefore, my classroom may look very different than another classroom because in my school, learning and teaching are personal.

Central to our school's shared pedagogy is the importance of teaching for social justice. We believe that education is not simply a pursuit of knowledge and truth, but also the development of an awareness of the world around us, our differences, the inequities that exist within those differences, and how to fight those inequities. While our dedication to teaching for social justice influences how we teach social studies, it also informs how we teach all subjects, the choice of books we have in the classroom, what stories we read, what trips we go on, how we navigate problems, how we speak to our students and to each other, and how we as a school respond to world events.

To be the patriot Emma Goldman describes, I think it's essential to have a school that values multiple perspectives as well as the questions and passions of the people in that school community. I was able to pursue this inquiry with my students in part because the idea of asking questions about one's world and finding answers is already deeply embedded in my school's culture.

Living the Questions

The night Donald Trump was elected, I asked questions: How did this happen? What will happen next? I tried to make sense of what seemed incomprehensible. I had been confident that Trump would not be elected because I had been confident that the hate he wove into his campaign did not have a place in America.

Then came a more pressing, practical question: What am I going to teach my fourth graders tomorrow? It was a tough question. I didn't know how I would feel when I woke up, let alone how they would feel.

In moments of confusion and distress, I always find myself turning to questions. While answers can be constraining, questions often open things up. In *Mosaic of Thought*, Keene and Zimmerman (2007) describe the transformative power of questions in the classroom:

[T]he root of *question* is *quest*. We must think of setting out on a quest to learn more, to better understand friends and family, to pursue passions and interests, to make sense of our worlds. Many questions don't have clear, direct answers, and these are often the most intriguing ones—questions worth lingering over. (p. 107)

I wanted to give my students an opportunity to make sense of what was happening to them. To make room for their questions, I decided to lead a restorative circle, a structure I use in my classroom to allow students to talk about issues that affect them, in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. This particular circle would focus on asking questions.

At the beginning of the circle, I read students the following excerpt from Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet :

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer. (As cited in Clifford, 2013, p. 27)



Figure 1. Students in my classroom participate in a restorative circle (November 9, 2016).

My students lay in the center of the rug on their backs with their eyes closed (see Figure 1). Without being called on individually, they were invited to offer questions to the group with the expectation that they would not get an answer. Even though they didn't need to ask their questions in any particular order, I still expected my students to ask them one at a time, which meant the students had to listen closely to the questions that were being raised and wait a moment before asking their own. In this way, their questions lingered in the silent space of our room. Among questions about deportations, sexual violence, war, and discrimination, two basic questions continued to be asked in various forms:

- What rights do we have?
- How do we protect ourselves when we disagree with the government?

These questions would become the focus of our inquiry into our rights as Americans, a curriculum that would teach us, through questioning and research, to love America with open eyes—a curriculum that bloomed out of this restorative circle after the election of Donald Trump.

Changing the Curriculum

In my school, each teacher is with a group of students for two years. I teach fourth and fifth grade. When Trump was elected, we were in the first three months of the cycle. The plan had been to study indigenous Americans in fourth grade and social movements in fifth grade. Shortly after my class held our circle, my grade team met to plan our social studies curriculum for the rest of the year.

Various curriculum maps and books about indigenous Americans were spread out on the table before us. However, these materials lay untouched as our conversation veered toward the recent presidential election. I shared the questions my students had posed in the restorative circle. My colleagues shared similar stories about their own students, the concerns they had, and the discussions that were taking place everywhere: in the classroom, in transition from one activity to the next, during morning meeting, in their writer's notebooks. We also thought about the urgency we felt to take action ourselves. Lawyers were volunteering to assist immigrants worried about being deported, the ACLU was bracing itself to defend the US Constitution, and women across the country were preparing to march in what became the biggest single-day protest in US history (Waddell, 2017).

What if, my grade team mused, we simply switched the order of our curriculum?

I'm lucky that my school allows teachers autonomy, that we value the responsiveness of curriculum and student voice in the classroom. When my grade team ran the idea by our administration, they were supportive. Similarly, when we told parents, they were enthusiastic and grateful that we were listening to their kids.

Back in a restorative circle, I proposed the idea to my students. I told them that I had been inspired by their questions and that I wanted to know if they wanted to explore those questions further. I told them that we would study indigenous Americans the next year; we would address the students' urgent and pressing questions this year.

The air in the room changed. Flickers of smiles appeared on my students' faces. They made eye contact with one another, sat up, straightened their spines, and leaned in to listen to what I was saying. They were excited. They were ready.

What Rights Do We Have?

It was a bright November morning. Sunlight poured through the large, old windows in my classroom. My students sat in a circle, leaning forward to read questions written on pieces of chart paper: What is a right? What rights do you have? Who has rights? Who doesn't have rights? (See Figures 2, 3 and 4.) The questions alone energized them. They grabbed for markers and pens. My student teacher and I repeatedly gave silent signals to calm the students down to listen to the directions. They were split up into groups of

As we discussed each amendment, there were many surprises. For instance, the children were shocked about the order of the amendments—that the right to bear arms was the Second Amendment while the right for black people to be free from slavery was Thirteenth, and the right for women to vote was the Nineteenth. Students were especially surprised that people have a right to not be searched without probable cause, as many of them had witnessed a very different reality in their own neighborhoods.

We ended our study by creating our own classroom constitution. Each table became a “state” that collectively listed the rights they thought we all should have in our classroom. Each state voted on a delegate to represent them. Then the delegates met together, each with a list of the rights their states had generated, and collaborated on a final constitution:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF ROOM 410, HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

1. BE OURSELVES

- (a) We have the right to do work in our own way.
- (b) We have the right to not be judged for anything on our outside or our inside.
- (c) We have the right to choice in our classroom.
- (d) We have the right to express our feelings in a comfortable way.

2. BE CARED FOR AND RESPECTED

3. PRIVACY AND SPACE

4. TO BE TREATED FAIRLY

- (a) We have the right to be treated the way others want to be treated.

5. TO LEARN

6. TO HAVE A RIGHT

7. TO HAVE FUN

8. TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH

9. TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT OURSELVES

10. TO FEEL COMFORTABLE IN ANY GROUP

- (a) We have the right to not be discriminated against because of our genders, races, or personalities.

We taped our constitution to each table so it could be referenced when we were struggling with conflict in the classroom. If a student made noise during quiet work, other students would claim their right to learn was being violated. When I would require students to show their work during math, they would remind me that they had the right to do work in their own way.

We were using this constitution to figure out how to treat one another and how to interpret policies that the authorities of the classroom (including me) tried to enforce. In short, we were doing the work that Americans do.

Already, a quiet understanding was forming: the rights we are afforded in our country are not as straightforward as we might initially think; some people have rights while others don't; the idea of freedom is complex; and most importantly, hidden in our country's philosophy and policies are countless inequities.

How Do We Protect Ourselves When We Disagree with the Government?

One of my students leaned in close to a photograph taped to the wall. He held a stack of sticky notes in his hand, but he seemed to have forgotten about them for the moment. His eyes were locked on a black-and-white photograph that was curled and spotted with age. In it, a man carries a hand-painted sign that reads "WHITES ONLY" in large red letters. My student's eyes glazed over. For a moment, I wondered if he was crying. He stood there for a long time. Other children milled around him, chatting, writing, and sticking their notes to other photographs and quotes taped to the wall. The student stood gazing, frozen in the sea of moving bodies. I wanted to ask him if he was okay and to talk with him—but before I had a chance, he hastily bent over his table and scrawled something on the sticky note. Fixing it to the photograph, he moved on, leaving his friends in his wake. They hovered over the note, and instantly there was a big reaction. Their eyes grew wide, their hands went to their mouths, there was a stray giggle here and there. I walked over and read what was written on the sticky note: "*THIS IS BULL\$%^&.*"

A few weeks before this lesson, I had embarked on my own research of the Civil Rights movement. I read books, watched documentaries, examined photographs, and listened to freedom songs—all work that I would eventually ask the students to do. I scrawled questions and reflections in my notebook. I jumped out of my chair to share videos and words with my husband. Our conversations about John Lewis, Claudette Colvin, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the Freedom Rides were punctuated with discussions about what was happening in the news. Women marched across their cities. People crowded the airports and courthouses to protest the illegal barring of Muslim people from entering the United States. With the threat of the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, citizens crowded town halls and demanded lawmakers to answer their questions.

I chose the Civil Rights movement as a case study in order to explore the broader topic of rights in our country because I felt that while there were many answers to the question of how we protect ourselves when we disagree with the government, the Civil Rights movement told a clear and accessible story of action within a context that most kids in my classroom were familiar with. Moreover, the tactics of the movement—nonviolent protest, marches, sit-ins, and boycotts—illustrate a variety of acts of peaceful resistance that have been used effectively in our country to make change. Most importantly, my students already understood and talked about racism. Many of them had either experienced or witnessed racism themselves, and they were all aware of the inequality and mistreatment to which people of color have been and still are subjected in our country.

We began our unit by viewing a gallery I had constructed in the classroom of various images and quotes from the Civil Rights movement (see Figure 5). Around the room, I hung photographs of protesters lying in

the street while police clubs were suspended in mid-swing; signs that called for white supremacy forever; quotes from activists explaining how it felt to participate in a sit-in; and quotes from segregationists arguing that black people are inferior to white people. Students walked around that gallery of primary sources, holding a stack of sticky notes, writing down what they noticed and what they were wondering about each quote or photograph, and attaching those notes to the primary source that had elicited those reactions. These primary sources would stay up throughout our study, alongside the students' comments and questions—including the vulgar response to the “WHITES ONLY” sign, because the hate in our country is vulgar and that student was right to be angry about it.

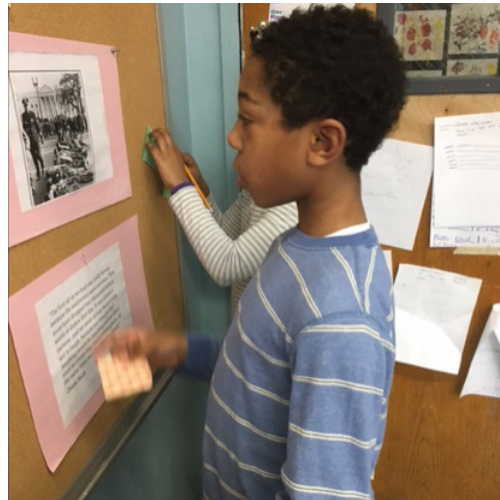


Figure 5. A student in my classroom inspects a photograph of a protest from the Civil Rights movement era (January 2017).

If my students were going to learn to love America with open eyes, I thought it would be important to teach them to answer questions they had about their country for themselves. Therefore, I decided to anchor this work in literature and text, with the hope that the students would use the researching skills we would learn in class to continue their pursuit of the truth about America long after our unit was finished.

We began by reading *Witnesses to Freedom: Young People Who Fought for Civil Rights* (Rochelle, 1993), a text that mixes primary and secondary sources to tell the stories of young people during the Civil Rights movement. As we read, we took notes in a variety of ways, all adapted from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project's *Constructing Curriculum: Alternative Units of Study* (Calkins, Ehrenworth, Khan, & Mooney, 2010). We asked ourselves what the people we were reading about wanted and needed and which groups were most likely to get what they needed (p. 259).

The first chapter of *Witnesses to Freedom* begins with an account of Barbara Johns and the resistance she led at R. R. Moton High School. Many students said that Johns and her classmates wanted better conditions at their school, such as heat and books that didn't have torn or missing pages. They concluded that the students of R. R. Moton High School wanted change, equality, and educational freedom. When asked what the school board and the KKK, which was threatening Johns, wanted, my students felt they wanted conditions to stay the same.

We also applied these note-taking strategies when examining other primary sources, like excerpts from PBS's *Eyes on the Prize* documentary (Ambrosino et al., 1987) and listening to and reading the lyrics of the protest song "We Shall Overcome" (Tindley, 1900). Students watched, frowning, as Elizabeth Eckford walked through a mob of violent, furious white people at Little Rock Central High School in 1957. Students recorded their reactions to the scene, entering them in two overlapping circles drawn on pieces of paper. One was labeled "past," and the other was labeled "present." Students wrote frantically about how different the clothes were and about how black children no longer need protection to go to school, but that segregation still exists in our schools.

When we listened to "We Shall Overcome," we sang together and then reflected on communal singing as a social movement strategy. We asked ourselves why protesters sang. Our answers to these questions became a class book we wrote together (see Figures 6 and 7). Each student had their own idea about why protesters sang, but one message was clear: many voices were stronger than one.



Figure 6. A student reflects through words and pictures why protesters sang, interpreting song as a way protesters expressed themselves and gained power (March 2017).

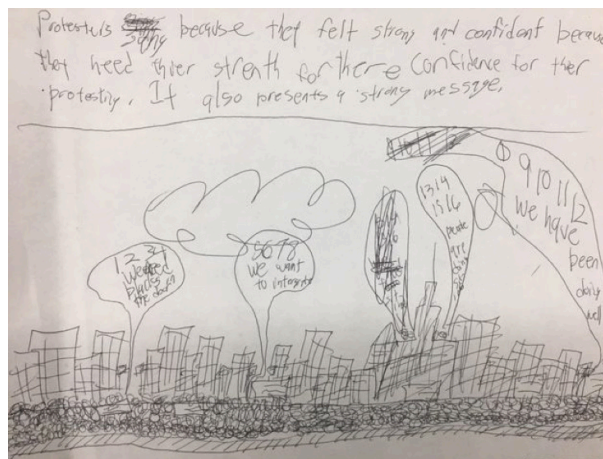


Figure 7. Another student reflects on why protesters sing, considering that protesters sang together to gain confidence and strength (March 2017).

In almost every lesson, children would raise their hands and ask the same question, “How did all this happen?” Potent silence filled the classroom as we struggled to respond. Being confronted by this question forced us all, no matter who we were, to face something: not a specific, concrete answer, but rather the necessity of asking the question in the first place. In these moments, I would invoke the thought exercise that had started our work. I would tell the students that I couldn’t answer the question; rather, we would have to live it, through our work, through our research, and through our own experiences.

And we were living it. Events in the country dripped into our classroom like a leak. We started reading the newspaper, especially on days when protests occurred, and they occurred often that year. Students made connections between the contemporary protests and the protests they were learning about from the Civil Rights movement. A portrait was forming in their minds, not just of America, but also of their tentative places in it.

In the spring, I collected a series of nonfiction texts from Capstone Press’ *We Shall Overcome* series (2014-2015). Each told the story of one aspect of the Civil Rights movement. Over two days, students previewed the books. They took notes, looked at text features and photographs, reflected on what they thought the book might be about, and noted what questions they had and what they found interesting. Then each student ranked their top three choices of books to read. From these choices, we formed research groups, in which four to five students each read the same book about the same topic and discussed what they were learning together.

From their research and discussions, students ended our yearlong study by creating performance projects to display what they had learned. They were allowed to choose how to express their knowledge, in whatever format they wished. Some students taught lessons, some wrote songs, and others wrote plays or performed spoken word poetry.

One group made comics. One of the students in that group had been studying the Freedom Riders, and when I saw that he had created a comic about a man not being able to board an airplane, I realized that he hadn’t understood the text at all. However, he insisted that he knew what the Freedom Rides were and that his comic was how he imagined them. Then he said that he wondered if it even mattered if he got it exactly right.

It was an important question. What *did* it matter if we got this right? To answer that, I decided to show the group a video I had found early on in my planning, of Jim Zwerg, a Freedom Rider, in a hospital bed after being brutally beaten by segregationists. Face bloody, eye swollen, he said:

We’re dedicated to this. We’ll take hitting. We’ll take beating. We’re willing to accept death, but we’re going to keep coming until we can ride from anywhere in the South to anyplace else in the South without anybody making any comments, just as American citizens. (Fayer, 1987)

As they watched, my students were quiet, their brows furrowed. When it was finished, they asked to watch it again. And again. More people from other research groups came to watch. As we discussed the

video, my students talked about all that Zwerg had risked to fight for the right of African Americans to ride interstate buses and how he was even willing to face death for the fight for integration. They decided he was doing this because it was important to him as well as to society. They wondered honestly if they could do what he had done if they were in his position. Some said they could and would because it was just as important to them. Others weren't sure because of all the risk it would bring along with it. In the end, they all concluded that it was an incredibly brave thing to do. The student who hadn't understood the book went back to his comic and started afresh. This time, his comic told the story of Zwerg in the hospital bed. Every frame was drawn with the intent of depicting exactly how it had happened (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Through writing and illustrating a comic book, a student visualizes Jim Zwerg's Freedom Ride and subsequent hospitalization (May 2017).

What Is a Patriot?

To be a patriot means to love one's country with open eyes. This means that to be patriotic, we must listen to the questions we have about our country and seek answers. In our study of rights in our country, my students and I loved America with open eyes. We asked what rights we have in our country, and we found our answers in both expected and unexpected places. We came to know the amendments of the US Constitution. We learned that, as Americans, these amendments express our rights; but we also learned that these rights are open to interpretation, that they do not protect everyone, and that debate and discourse over them are as much a part of our country as the rights themselves. We also learned that in many situations, this discourse over rights can be used to oppress and exclude.

Through the study of the Civil Rights movement, we sought to answer the question of how people have fought for their rights in our country. What we found were stories of community organizing, civil disobedience, protest, and song. In our study, we found a country to love—and this included not turning away from our country’s faults.

Time has passed, and I find myself thinking daily about one of the questions I asked myself the night Trump was elected. What will happen next? I, like my students, am still seeking answers. I conclude here with a story of 25 patriots I witnessed last spring. While their actions don’t fully answer my question, I think they brought me closer to doing so.

On February 14th, a high school student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, shot 17 people. On February 15th, a group of students who had survived the shooting got together to try to end gun violence in our country. They started a national movement that inspired thousands of students across the United States, including my now fifth graders, the same students who a year before had learned about the Civil Rights movement. Once again, my students lay down in a circle, their gazes directed upward, and offered their questions into our classroom: How did a student get his hands on a gun? Will teachers really be armed? How are we being protected? What can we do? Why do these guns even exist? How can we help the students who survived?

As a class, they decided they wanted to take action. When I asked them what they wanted to do, they offered strategies that they had learned about the year before: make posters, write songs, raise money, boycott, walk out, produce a newscast, write about the event, and educate people.

On March 14th, 22 of my 25 students marched out of the classroom carrying signs with slogans against gun violence. (One student chose not to participate; the other two were absent for medical appointments.) In the hallway, other students who wanted to participate in the walkout waited for them. My students handed them extra signs. In whispers, as they walked down the stairs, they taught chants to each other that they had heard at other protests or made up in the days before the march. When they got outside, they raised their signs and voices and led the other students in chants while they walked up and down Madison Avenue, for 17 minutes, without stopping (see Figures 9, 10, and 11).

Why does this make them patriots? Because at the heart of Emma Goldman’s definition of patriotism is the word love. To love something means to care about it—and to fix it when it’s broken. My students have asked important questions about our country, questions that through our research revealed not only the ways in which our country was and is broken but also how we can repair it: through using our voices, by standing up for what we believe in, by organizing and coming together. This has been the work of our patriotic classroom. I can’t say what will happen next, but watching my students on that cold early spring afternoon, I saw a glimpse of a possible future, and in that future, there is love.



Figure 9. Students from my class gather in the hallway with the rest of our school community to join in the nationwide student walkout (March 14, 2018).



Figure 10. Students in my class lead both children and parents in the walkout in our neighborhood (March 14, 2018).



Figure 11. Students from my class carry handmade signs and lead chants as they walk down Madison Avenue (March 14, 2018).

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Patriotism and Dual Citizenship

Patricia Gándara

I am a citizen of two countries—the United States and Mexico—and I have a deep love of both, for different reasons. I believe that being a citizen of two countries allows me to be a partial outsider in each, which perhaps gives me an uncommon perspective on both. I know that there are those who argue that it's impossible to be truly loyal to one country if one is also a citizen of another, and there are those for whom any criticism of one's country is tantamount to treason. I reject both of those positions.

First, I believe that a patriot is a person who loves his or her country and therefore wants it to be the best it is capable of being. The United States has been the leader of the free world for most of the time that the majority of us alive today have existed. This sets a unique standard. I believe this means that we should not only be the best we can be for ourselves, but that we should also set an example for those we would lead. Importantly, to be a good leader, it is essential to know something about those one is leading. In other words, it is helpful to know what makes other countries good, or even best, at some things in order to build on those strengths and perhaps adopt them whenever possible, as well as to lead in a way that acknowledges the strengths of others. This, in my mind, is precisely why promising to “Make America Great Again” is antithetical to true leadership. Making America “great” without helping those we hope to lead also be “great” is the very abandonment of leadership and therefore false patriotism.

I believe that the United States is an amazing country and that it holds a unique set of values that reflect a deep desire for goodness. Americans believe in equity, and this is reflected in a governing constitution that gives anyone born in the country full citizenship, including the vote. And we wrote equality of opportunity into our laws with the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Americans also believe deeply in second chances, and so we build institutions that are meant to be, at least to some degree, open to everyone (e.g., community colleges where students can redeem a weak academic record and go on to excel in a prestigious university). We have struggled, and not infrequently failed, to live up to these values, but we are also a country with a conscience, and we believe in the right of citizens to demand that the nation live up to its principles.

The United States is also known for its efficiency, and efficiency can be related to opportunity. In an inefficient economy, only the well-off can afford the time and have the levers to make institutions work. The poor cannot. But efficiency also comes with a price. Americans are direct, perhaps to a fault. The Mexican economy is not nearly as efficient, but a Mexican CEO would never begin a conversation without first inquiring for your health and your family. Inefficient use of time? Maybe. But it builds bonds that make cooperative endeavors much more likely and probably leads to fewer conflicts.

One of the things that being a citizen of Mexico has taught me is that a great attribute of the United States is its culture of organizing. The United States is a country of enormous creativity, a “can do” spirit, and an aptitude for organizing. Got a problem in the neighborhood? Organize! Got a government that is abhorrent? Organize! See a need? Organize and donate! Mexico does not have this tradition, and its

absence is deeply felt in civil society. Americans have also developed a tradition of philanthropy that is not so common in other places. Mexico is only just beginning to discover this, but it's not in the Mexican DNA. In the United States there is a tradition of believing that if you manage to become very wealthy, you owe something back. This has allowed the United States to address needs that would otherwise go unmet and to create institutions that have enriched the society.

But there is another way in which Americans are not so generous. We are not as generous in our human interactions as are Mexicans. Step into an elevator in the United States, and if there are other people already in it, I bet you look the other way and don't acknowledge anyone else. That doesn't happen in Mexico. Others will greet you, wish you a good day, say goodbye when you exit. Sit down at a restaurant, and as you order, the table next to you is likely to wish you a pleasant meal. That would almost never happen in the United States. When you are introduced to the friend of someone you know, it is expected that you will greet them with a kiss, and maybe even a little hug. For many Americans these are invasions of personal space. While these may seem like minor cultural differences, I think they also reflect a different sense of humanity. It is, perhaps, a byproduct of American individualism—every person for themselves. I think we could be a better nation if we lived our connections to others more intimately—if we weren't so protective of our “personal space” or so tied to a belief in individual merit.

Along with American “rugged individualism” comes the notion of American exceptionalism—the idea that we Americans are so unique that we can't learn from anyone else. I've heard countless complaints from people in other countries about the absolute lack of knowledge about any place other than the United States that most Americans exhibit. Meanwhile, Mexicans know a great deal about the United States. Newspapers routinely carry stories about US politics and current events, as does television news. Mexicans also know a great deal more than we Americans do about what is happening in the rest of the world. If we were a little less self-absorbed and a little more curious about other countries, we would know that Mexico offers preschool to virtually all of its children by age three and that in the last couple decades, the United States has fallen from first place to 19th among OECD countries in the rate of college completion. Ignorance of these facts—and the failure to examine how and why other countries have achieved these goals—has critical implications for the future of the United States.

Finally, Mexicans have a deeply passionate love of country. It is not about its wealth or power but about its lived culture. In the United States we pride ourselves on being “a nation of immigrants”—of many cultures—but in reality, we often reject those cultures as inferior. This has never been more evident than today, with the closing of our borders. If our love of country were more closely tied to its unique strength—its cultural diversity, which is a source of much creativity—we might be a better and more humane country.

So, what does patriotism mean to me? It means loving two countries for the good things that each offers the world, appreciating the uniqueness of each, and also noticing and calling out the areas that fall short of what each CAN be. Pledging allegiance to two nations allows me to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each and to see the possibilities for both being better nations by learning from each other.



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Fostering Democratic Patriotism through Critical Pedagogy

Hillary Parkhouse

When I was a high school US history teacher in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City, I sometimes wondered about the relationship between patriotism and critique of one's nation. Specifically, I questioned just how critical students could be without becoming disaffected toward the United States. I tried to be honest with my students about the nation's mixed record of democracy—how the country was founded on ideals of equality and yet stole land from Native Americans, kidnapped millions of Africans as part of a massive system of chattel slavery, and denied the vote to women until 1920. But I wondered if these realities, paired with enduring inequalities, would make students want to dissociate themselves from this country and participation in political life.

I had one student who made me think that perhaps the inverse was true: that the more students understood American failures to promote equality, the more motivated they would be to engage in fighting for it. He was the son of Nigerian immigrants. In ninth grade, he threw ketchup packets at his global history teacher, skipped class, and was regularly suspended. But in 11th grade English class, he read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and became a different student, seemingly overnight. He adopted a serious demeanor, wore a tie to school each day, and became a leader in class discussions. In reading about the injustices that drove Malcolm X to lead a movement for Black civil rights, this student saw a reason not for despair but for pursuing education so that he too could contribute to that movement. From that moment on, I wondered whether it was in fact impossible for schools to develop the type of citizens needed to protect and improve our democracy *unless* students were taught to be critical of the nation's flaws.

Much history instruction in American schools, as in other countries, seeks to unify the populace and instill pride through establishing a collectively shared narrative (Helmsing, 2014). In the case of the United States, the narrative is a story of progress toward ever-expanding equality and liberty for all (VanSledright, 2008). Critique of the nation is often seen as a threat to national unity (Finn, 2003) and thus a threat to the well-being of the country. During times of national crisis, such as in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, this fear of critique becomes amplified (Westheimer, 2011).

A more recent example of such fear is the backlash against National Football League players who kneeled for the national anthem in protest of institutionalized racism. While the players and their supporters argued that those actions were taken precisely to defend the American foundational principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, critics accused the players of disrespecting our flag and troops (Friedersdorf, 2017). When President Trump joined the critics, he legitimized an authoritarian form of patriotism and the repression of critique. With a president who is modeling those positions, we might expect growing support for the belief that critique of the nation undermines its indivisibility and threatens its future. But does it? The answer to this question should shape how we design citizenship education

experiences for our students; to find it, we need to know more about how students' attitudes toward the nation are affected in classrooms where candid critique is common.

To date, there has been little research in this area (Chua & Sim, 2017). This paper draws on a study of critical US history teaching to explore the question: Do students who recognize problems with the narrative of ever-expanding progress feel less patriotic as a result? Westheimer (2011) reminds us that the answer to such a question depends on which type of patriotism—authoritarian or democratic—is meant. Given that authoritarian patriotism is unhealthy for democracy and that democratic patriotism is necessary for it (Westheimer, 2011), this paper specifically explores students' expressions of democratic patriotism.

Using data from student interviews and classroom observations, I argue that critique originating in democratic values not only does *not* erode patriotism, but actually strengthens it. In particular, such critique strengthens the kind of democratic patriotism we in the United States need in our current context of political polarization and authoritarian leadership. In the conclusion, I elaborate on why such critique-informed patriotism is as crucial as ever.

Do We Want Students to Be Patriotic?

This is a question with which I have wrestled, having studied postcolonialism, critical race theory, border pedagogy, and other perspectives that seek to challenge neo- and internal colonialism, entrenched racism, and narrow conceptions of citizenship that have excluded so many living in the United States. While feeling a strong sense of concern for fellow Americans, I have struggled to feel such a connection to the nation-state itself, wondering whether our allegiance might be better oriented toward all human beings, since commitment to one group seemed to confer a different (higher) status on that group than on others. Indeed, patriotism can easily be viewed as opposing multicultural understanding, tolerance, and internationalism (see, for example, Young & Sharifzadeh, 2003).

I have gained some clarity in this struggle through studying the work of the moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum, who has wrestled with the same question. In her essay, "Toward a Globally Sensitive Patriotism," she described her shift away from her earlier endorsement of cosmopolitanism and its prioritizing of responsibility to all humanity over all other obligations. She came to believe that this perspective is in contradiction to people's psychological inclination to prioritize our families and those closest to us and that we should "accept the constraints of some strong duties to humanity, and then ask ourselves how far we are entitled to devote ourselves to the particular people and places whom we love" (Nussbaum, 2008, p. 79). She believed that the largest unit that can possibly represent the interests of individuals, and be accountable to them, is probably the nation. Therefore, on both psychological and pragmatic grounds, patriotism—at least in certain forms—may be justified.

I now find myself largely in agreement with Nussbaum (2008), particularly after having learned more about the strong influence that intuitions have over moral reasoning. Having as much concern for people who live far away as for those who live nearby is noble and worthwhile, but many people whose

moral foundations emphasize group loyalty may view attempts to ignore human “groupishness” with suspicion (Haidt, 2012). The push to replace patriotism with cosmopolitanism may thereby contribute to polarization between those who prioritize caring for people everywhere (who tend to be on the political left) and those who prioritize loyalty to one’s group (who tend to be on the political right) (Haidt, 2012). Polarization within the United States, in fact, is another large contributor to the shift in my own beliefs about patriotism. As increasing polarization threatens American democracy (Duncan & Murnane, 2014), I am realizing, more than ever, the consequences of neglecting national cohesion. Having once renounced allegiance to a country that is so far from achieving its democratic ideals, I now believe some allegiance is necessary for maintaining peace and being able to continue to pursue those ideals.

Defining patriotism.

One perennial problem with debates over patriotism is that people often use very different definitions of it. In “Is Patriotism a Mistake?,” political theorist George Kateb (2000) easily dismissed patriotism as dangerous because he defined it as a readiness “to die and kill for one’s country” (p. 906). This radical form of patriotism is rooted in violence and in a subordination of the well-being of foreigners. However, Nussbaum (2013) frames patriotism around internal cooperation as opposed to external competition, defining it as “a willingness to live together and face adversities for the sake of common goals” (p. 210).

Given the plethora of definitions of patriotism, some scholars have proposed frameworks that can help distinguish its various forms. These include blind vs. constructive patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999), loyal vs. critical patriotism (Merry, 2009), and authoritarian vs. democratic patriotism (Westheimer, 2011). There are subtle distinctions among them, but in general blind, loyal, and authoritarian forms of patriotism are characterized by unquestioning allegiance to one’s country and condemnation of any criticism of it, while constructive, critical, and democratic forms of patriotism promote questioning and criticism in the interest of advancing one’s country’s ideals.

Forms of patriotism that encourage questioning have been critiqued for focusing solely on the relationship between citizens and the state, at the expense of considering citizens’ relationships with one another (Peterson, 2012). As Busey and Walker (2017) argued, some of these forms—specifically democratic patriotism—have historically failed to apply to Black people and have “ignored how citizenship is mediated through race” (p. 461). The authors developed a framework of Black critical patriotism that forefronts personhood over liberal democracy and that includes Black physical resistance, Black political thought, and Black intellectualism as its tenets (Busey & Walker, 2017).

Mindful of Busey and Walker’s (2017) critique, I work here cautiously with the construct of democratic patriotism, as I feel it can encompass critique, questioning, and appreciation for the specific democratic values of justice, equity, and freedom as well as a concern for one’s fellow citizens (Westheimer, 2011). From my perspective, this concern does not need to be greater than concern for people in other countries; however, it is perhaps the strongest motivator available for ensuring that one’s own nation upholds values

of justice, equity, and freedom. I believe democratic patriotism can also encompass particular attention to the concerns of disempowered groups as part of an effort to place persons, rather than liberal ideologies, at the core (Busey & Walker, 2017). If we define patriotism in this way, then the answer to the question, “Do we even want students to be patriotic?” seems to me to be a clear “Yes.”

Teaching with and for Critique

If we want students to be patriotic, then how can schools teach democratic patriotism? Kahne and Middaugh’s (2011) survey of 2,366 California high school seniors found both encouraging and troubling patterns in the current levels of democratic patriotism among this group. One encouraging finding was that 69% agreed with the statement, “If you love America, you should notice its problems and work to correct them” (Kahne & Middaugh, 2011, p. 97). However, 43% of respondents agreed with the statement, “It is un-American to criticize this country” (Kahne & Middaugh, 2011, p. 98).

What sorts of schooling experiences might increase the likelihood that students reject such blind patriotism? Critical pedagogy is a form of education that places students’ lives at the center of learning experiences and, through dialogic relations with the teacher, helps students understand systems of power and the root causes of social inequities (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Freire, 1970/2008; McLaren, 1989). Many social studies scholars have documented critical pedagogies that cultivate students’ critical consciousness of the United States’ mixed record of democracy and equality (Blevins & Salinas, 2012; Epstein, Mayorga, & Nelson, 2011; Howard, 2004; Parkhouse, 2018). King and Brown (2014) described how Black history can be taught through connections to students’ contemporary realities and the Black Diaspora, as well as through counternarratives to mainstream depictions of periods such as the years of the Civil Rights movement. Stovall (2006) cultivated students’ critical consciousness through analysis of hip-hop lyrics, and Martell (2013) did so through discussions of how conceptions of race have changed over time.

Like these last three studies, most classroom-based research on critical history pedagogy has focused on students’ understandings of racism and racial justice (Epstein & Gist, 2015; Epstein, Mayorga, & Nelson, 2011; Howard, 2004). I located only one study that explicitly examined the intersections of critical pedagogy and patriotism. Chua and Sim (2017) investigated two teachers in Singapore who encouraged critical patriotism by asking students to identify the groups that are disadvantaged by particular national policies. They also asked students to consider incongruities between messages produced by the government and those created by other groups, in order to avoid “indoctrinating students with shaky truths or painting over problems that plague society” (Chua & Sim, 2017, p. 9). However, the study did not examine students’ responses to this teaching approach or how students’ conceptions of patriotism may have changed as a result of it.

Ms. Ray's¹ Critical Classroom

I will now provide evidence from one classroom to show how critical pedagogy in a US history class may contribute to students' democratic patriotism. In the spring of 2015, Ms. Ray taught 11th-grade US history in a Title I public high school in a midsize city in the Southeast. Demographic information about her school and the class I observed is given in Table 1.

School and Classroom Demographics

Ms. Ray's school	400 students 76% female, 24% male 61% Black, 20% Latinx, 9% White, 6% Asian, 3% other ² 55% of students received their free or reduced-price lunch in 2013
Ms. Ray's fourth period class	28 students 22 females; 6 males 22 Black, 3 Latina, 3 White

I observed Ms. Ray's 90-minute, fourth-period US history class for ten weeks. I also interviewed her twice formally and interviewed her informally after each observation; collected instructional materials; and interviewed seven of her students about their opinions of the United States, patriotism, and citizenship.

A young, White woman with bachelors' degrees in history and women's studies, Ms. Ray prioritizes helping students make sense of the inequities they have experienced related to race, gender, class, sexuality, ability status, immigration status, and language. She loves teaching history because of the opportunities it provides for showing the roots of contemporary social conditions. Even more importantly for her, US history offers countless examples of oppressed peoples fighting for freedom, equality, and justice. So while she speaks candidly with students about contemporary racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, she always pairs these conversations with examples of resistance, in an attempt to instill hope rather than disillusionment or cynicism. She centers her curriculum around these examples in order to convey the message that wherever there is oppression, there is collective struggle against it, and that wherever there is collective struggle for equality and justice, there is a shared commitment to—and hope for—democracy.

Like many history teachers, Ms. Ray teaches about organized resistance when the class studies social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, including the women's rights, African American civil rights, Chicano, American Indian, free speech, and Black Power movements. However, she is intentional in surfacing the struggles for equality within every period in US history. For instance, during the unit on World War II, Ms. Ray explains that by threatening to hold a march on Washington, A. Philip Randolph succeeded in convincing Franklin D. Roosevelt to ban wartime employment discrimination; Roosevelt knew that such a march would reveal the United States' hypocrisy in fighting for democracy around the world while denying it to African Americans at home.

¹ All names of participants are pseudonyms.

² Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

Ms. Ray is careful to emphasize that ordinary people—not just the famous activists mentioned in textbooks—were also involved in those struggles in important ways. The year I observed Ms. Ray’s class, students did a “Civil Rights Mythbusters” activity in which they used primary source documents to dispel common misconceptions about the movement, including that “Although women did help out a little bit behind the scenes, the most effective organizers and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were men” and “The Civil Rights Movement was an unplanned, spontaneous uprising of exceptional individuals who acted without organization or premeditated strategy.” Students had already learned that the movement did not begin in the 1950s, but had been underway since Africans were first taken as slaves to the Americas. They then learned that Rosa Parks was not simply a woman who was tired of giving in to discrimination when she refused to give up her seat on a bus, but a trained activist working with the NAACP, and that thousands of “ordinary” college and even high school students contributed to the movement’s success.

One important goal of this lesson was to show students how they could personally contribute to social change, even if they did not have the superhuman-like characteristics of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X (Woodson, 2016). In sum, Ms. Ray’s two overarching aims were to help students pair a critique of inequalities with the knowledge of the strategies groups have used to reduce those inequalities and for students to see how they can personally play a role in ongoing and future struggles for justice.

When I asked Ms. Ray if she considered herself patriotic, she answered:

Yeah. Definitely. And definitely from that place of critical love. . . And going hand in hand with love for the U.S. is love for what the U.S.—what I hope the U.S. can be. And will be. And what I want it to be. And want to be a part of it becoming. But to me those two things are so interwoven that it’s hard for me to understand people whose definition of patriotism is unconditional loyalty and praise and support for the government, basically regardless of what it’s doing.

Ms. Ray did not discuss patriotism explicitly in any of the 40 lessons I observed, but students were nevertheless forming opinions about the concept and its relationship to history teaching.

Students’ Critical Attitudes toward the Nation and Patriotism

I interviewed seven students from Ms. Ray’s spring 2015 class: one Latina (Kiara), one young White man (William), four African Americans (Sahirah, Melony, Diamond, and Jamilah), and one young woman of Egyptian and Jamaican descent (Amina).² I asked them questions about their attitudes toward the United States, their definitions of patriotism and citizenship, and whether they would describe themselves and their teacher as patriotic.

Overall, students were openly critical of ways in which the United States does not live up to its democratic ideals, but this did not interfere with their appreciation of the freedoms that the United States does protect nor their commitment to the country. When asked whether they thought the United States protects all citizens equally, all seven students answered “no” or “not entirely.” Many students cited the racism that continued to plague the country, despite the election of the first Black US president, which some people have offered as evidence that the United States had become a postracial society (Rich, 2013).

² All names are pseudonyms.

During the school year that I interviewed the students, protests in Ferguson and Baltimore following police killings of unarmed Black youth inspired nationwide protests calling for attention to institutionalized racism. Ms. Ray paused the curriculum to discuss these events, and students made #BlackLivesMatter posters that hung outside the classroom for the remainder of the school year. Several students mentioned Ferguson, Baltimore, the murder of Trayvon Martin, or police brutality in general in their interviews. However, their awareness of this social injustice did not dissuade them from feeling hope for the United States. Melony, for instance, said “there’s just a lot of police brutality” but added that she could imagine herself becoming an activist working to address this problem. She went on to say, “I don’t think it ruins my pride in the U.S. or anything. It just shows the problems that we face every day.”

When asked if they would describe themselves as patriotic, several of the students were unsure of how they wanted to answer, while others said “a little” (Melony) or “slightly” (Diamond). Part of the hesitation appeared to arise from their uncertainty about whether being patriotic implied a belief in authoritarian or blind patriotism, which is a common view. Sahirah, for instance, defined a patriot as “a person that’s willing to do anything for their country.” When I then asked if she would describe herself as patriotic, she did not answer immediately. Then she replied, “Wow! Umm, can I explain why? I think I can explain it.” She went on:

Ok. Don’t get me wrong. I love the U.S. However, I feel like, like . . . it’s one thing to love your country or to like it highly and [another] to be willing to sacrifice your life for it. I’m not saying it’s wrong, like the people that are risking their lives. I completely appreciate them for that. But, I think that—to a certain extent—the country itself doesn’t really protect its people enough for me to want to go out and put myself in a predicament, should I say. And that’s the only reason I say that. Like I said, if police brutality and other things like that—you’re not ensuring my safety here, so what would make you think I would feel safe outside of here? . . . [F]or instance [with] Trayvon Martin and the other situations, I’ve kind of wondered to myself, “Well is the U.S. really capable of protecting me?” Not just me—anyone, you know? . . . It’s just [that] everyone isn’t really protected, honestly. And because of that I wouldn’t want to risk my life for a country that doesn’t really protect me or my family or friends.

In opening with the statement, “I love the U.S.,” she indicates a positive and particularistic feeling toward the country, even though that feeling does not extend to being willing to die for the United States. Her response implied that if the United States guaranteed freedom and justice equally for people of all races, she might even be willing to risk her life to defend it—a definition of patriotism that goes beyond that articulated by proponents of democratic patriotism.

The remainder of Sahirah’s statement is a clear rejection of blind patriotism; she balanced critique with appreciation for the democratic freedoms that are protected. At another point in our interview, she said:

Here we can actually like voice our opinions and get to stand up for what we believe in, versus in other places, [where] you can’t. It’s just what one person thinks that goes [in other countries]. So I think it’s a privilege to just be somewhere where you’re able to speak for yourself.

She later argued that, in the United States where freedom of speech is protected, people have a moral responsibility to take advantage of this liberty and speak out because that privilege is denied to many across the world.

Students' opinions about the impacts of critical teaching on patriotism.

I asked the students how they would describe Ms. Ray's attitudes toward the United States and whether they thought that teaching history so critically might negatively impact students' feelings toward the country. Amina and I had the following conversation:

Amina: I think [Ms. Ray] is proud to live here. I think she's very patriotic, but she does know that just because you love your country doesn't mean—like if you love something, you can say, you know, "that was wrong" or "this was wrong." She's not one of those people that just blindly follows something. Just because you love it doesn't mean it didn't do something wrong in the past. Or won't do something wrong in the future. But I think just because she loves something doesn't mean that she just blindly follows after it. She can stand up and say something's wrong. I think she definitely loves America.

Me: Do you think standing up and saying something is wrong might cause other students to lose patriotism?

Amina: I don't think so, because actually her class makes me love America more. Because people like her are what make America better. Because if there was nobody in America saying segregation is wrong, we would still be segregated. I would be sitting in the back of the bus or different things like that. Because if she teaches her students to, you know, stand up, or if she teaches her students to look at sexist ads and say, "Oh, that's definitely sexist" when they might've just scrolled through the TV before her class, then I think she's making America a better place. And eventually, if someone isn't patriotic, they will begin to love America because there are people saying, "this is wrong" and then, "we're changing it to fix it and make it better."

This response truly surprised me. Amina not only thought that Ms. Ray's critical pedagogy does not undermine students' patriotism; she thought that such teaching actually enhances patriotism. She was clearly working from a democratic-patriotism stance (rather than from an authoritarian-patriotism position), arguing that loving one's country is what motivates people to try to improve it. Here she made a point that has not been deeply explored in the literature on students' understandings of patriotism: critique may in fact inspire patriotism.

This claim makes sense in conjunction with Rubin's (2007) finding that students from marginalized communities already perceive a disjuncture between the idealized narratives of history and citizenship they hear in school and their lived experiences of discrimination and inequality. Thus, they may have initially been skeptical of curriculum that attempts to instill patriotism through a shared pride in the wonderful equality and opportunity supposedly afforded in the United States. However, when these

students were in classrooms that discussed power and privilege frankly, they were more likely to view inequality as a reason to fight for justice than as a reason to despair (Rubin, 2007). Similarly, Levinson's (2012) research suggests that political participation can actually be bolstered among disenfranchised groups—despite their exclusion from many avenues of power—when they perceive that institutions need improvement and that they have the capacity to contribute to that effort.

In sum, students from marginalized groups may be unlikely to demonstrate blind patriotism because their lived realities have exposed them to the shortcomings of US democracy—shortcomings that authoritarian or blind patriots typically deny. However, these students may still appreciate that the degree of freedom of speech and of religion, for instance, guaranteed in the United States is not found in most countries and thus not to be taken for granted. They may be looking for a reason to believe in the nation's potential—to hope that its democratic ideals will one day be achieved—and curriculum that highlights the many groups who have fought for these ideals may provide exactly that. When examples of collective resistance are taught alongside lessons about oppression, students can find reason for critical hope and thus reason for patriotism.

Democratic Critique in a Time of Intensified Blind Patriotism

The years since I observed Ms. Ray's classroom in 2015 have been a trying time for democratic patriotism in the United States. Increasing political polarization in the country is showing no signs of abatement. In fact, the poles appear to be moving farther from one another as partisan news outlets combined with fabricated news stories are essentially creating almost irreconcilable perspectives of the world. One perspective is that the media cannot be trusted because of its liberal bias and that any critique of government actions is therefore just "fake news." Such immediate dismissal of all critique is a dangerous threat to democracy.

Another perspective is that the media is accurately representing a rise in White supremacist movements; government actions that dehumanize transgender people, immigrants, and Muslims, among others; and an abdication of our shared responsibility for caring for the planet. From this perspective, it may be hard to feel democratic patriotism for a country that appears to be flagrantly violating commitments to democracy. Patriotism may even be seen as irrational or indefensible in these contexts. However, as Nussbaum (2013) cautioned:

If people interested in relief of poverty, justice for minorities, democracy, and global justice eschew symbol and rhetoric, fearing all appeals to emotion and imagination as inherently dangerous and irrational, people with less appetizing aims will monopolize these forces, to the detriment of democracy. (p. 256)

Currently, an authoritarian form of patriotism is monopolizing national symbols, just as Nussbaum (2013) warned, and stirring emotions through exploiting fear and appealing to tribalism.

Yet this study shows how critique can inspire the kind of democratic patriotism needed to counterbalance authoritarian forms of patriotism. The students in Ms. Ray's class demonstrated that awareness of institutionalized racism and other barriers to equality not only fails to produce disillusionment or despair among students but has the opposite effect: the more students learned about ongoing struggles for justice, the more they felt personally motivated to join those struggles.

I do not know how the shift in the presidency from Obama to Trump or the amplification of political discord has impacted Ms. Ray's students in the years since I interviewed them. Given their democratic patriotism, I imagine they support protests for racial justice, including kneeling during the national anthem, and I imagine they are frustrated with the number of people who continue to view such protests as antipatriotic and un-American. However, there is evidence that disapproval of the current state of affairs is motivating greater political engagement (Sydell, 2017). Therefore, the trends that are most disturbing may be the very trends that motivate youth to put their democratic commitments to work and become more actively involved. This past spring's March for Our Lives for tighter gun control demonstrates the power of youth when they recognize a problem in current policy and use their democratic right to protest as a means of addressing that problem.

Conclusion

Critique of the United States, without a commitment to the nation and its ideals, can lead to cynicism and disempowerment. Commitment to the United States, without critique, is an acceptance of current inequalities and thus an abandonment of those ideals. Teachers, then, must attend simultaneously to two aims of citizenship education: appreciation for the democratic values of equality, justice, and freedom, and critical analysis of the nation's past and present shortcomings in fully enacting those values. Teachers must also help students see how their participation in addressing these shortcomings is needed. Today's youth are inheriting a country that appears to be tearing apart. Their ability to repair these fissures will depend upon their patriotic commitment both to democratic ideals and to working with compatriots who have diverse ideologies—something their adult counterparts are showing an inability or unwillingness to do. The task of suppressing our political tribalism and human tendency to confirm our own biases is not an easy one. But if students prioritize commitment to a more just nation through honest assessment of its shortcomings (including the current growing political discord), they may be able to reverse the damage this discord is inflicting and put the nation on a course toward greater equality and justice.

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On Patriotism

William Ayers

What's so great about America?

Near the top of my list is sweet home Chicago—a mesmerizing metropolis, once home to generations of Illini, Winnebago, and Miami peoples, rising along the shore of that immense inland sea and sweeping toward the dazzling prairie just beyond.

There's Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*, and Richard Wright's *Native Son*. There's Nelson Algren's *The Man with the Golden Arm* and Studs Terkel's *Division Street*, Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha* and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*.

So great, and there's more: Haki Madhubuti, Kevin Coval, Eve Ewing, and Chance the Rapper, Chris Ware, and Aleksandar Hemon, the Wachowski siblings, Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf, Koko Taylor, and Yoko Noge, Lil Hardin, Bo Diddley, Jimmy McPartland, and the Sun Ra Arkestra. On and on.

What's so great about America?

The arts and the artists, the truth-tellers and the-never-say-die-ers, the land and *the people, yes, the people*—the opening lines to Carl Sandburg's classic love song to America.

Taking a teaching position at the University of Chicago, the philosopher John Dewey wrote that "Chicago is the place to make you appreciate at every turn the opportunity which chaos affords" (Dewey, 1894/1991).

Chaos and opportunity—there's constant contradiction in Chicago, in America, colliding and overlapping, always another incongruity or disparity or deviation to look into, always a challenge, an opposition or an absurdity, always another path opening. And that's surely a good thing, for contradiction is the force that may save us yet: nothing is settled, once and for all, everything is on the move and in the mix, and each of us is tripping the light fantastic in an endlessly refreshing and often exhausting dance of the dialectic.

In *Chicago, City on the Make*, Algren (2001, p. 14) wrote:

Not that there's been any lack of honest men and women sweating out Jane Addams' hopes here—but [the Do-Gooders] get only two outs to the inning while the hustlers are taking four.

When Jane Addams established the first settlement house in America with an intrepid group of crusading women in 1889, and went on to create the first Juvenile Court in the world, the first playground in a public park, the first public kindergartens, and a thousand other projects and reforms, she argued that building communities of care and compassion required more than "doing good," more than the beneficent but ultimately controlling stance of a Lady Bountiful. It required, rather, a radical oneness with others in

distress, an identity of purpose so that when she opened the Hull House and lived there with families in crisis and need, she acted *in solidarity with*—rather than *in service to*—the marginalized and exploited, and in fighting for their humanity, won a measure of her own.

Chaos, conflict, and contradiction: “City of the Big Shoulders.... Stormy, husky, brawling.... Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning... half-naked, sweating, proud.” Carl Sandburg’s (1914) defiant chant gets Chicago in a vast Whitmanesque idiom, and, in that, gets something great about America.

What’s so great about America?

Centuries ago, a Genoan adventurer and his band of fellow travelers plunged into the unknown, rode the waves until they stumbled upon the Bahamas and, as the authorized texts tell us, “discovered America.” We all know that foundational myth by heart, and we know as well that centuries before that, another group of voyagers summoned their imaginations and visions, their own resourcefulness and courage to travel thousands of miles on foot across the Bering Strait, down through forests and mountains into the Great Plains of North America, to settle there and bring forth generations.

And there’s a third story to go with those two, also a central part of our shared American narrative and another piece of what’s so great about America: those Americans who rose up to oppose the Castilian invasion and to resist the Columbian genocide—Osceola and Crazy Horse and Cochise summoned courage and resourcefulness as they mobilized their own visions and their own American hopes.

We can see right away that every story has a prologue, every opening a foreword. History is in continual creation at the dynamic intersection of *what happened* and *what’s said to have happened*—the facts themselves, and then the narratives we construct to understand and circulate those facts. Each of us is both actor and narrator, thrust into a world not of our choosing, destined to choose who to be and what to become in the dynamic, unfolding drama that catches us and propels us forward. Every ending is necessarily temporary, too—there’s always more to say.

And so there it is, wherever you begin, deep within our human DNA, embedded in our collective American experience—imagination and hope, vision and resourcefulness, initiative and courage, conflict and contradiction.

There are the muckrakers and the whistle-blowers from Upton Sinclair to Daniel Ellsberg and Jeremy Hammond, Chelsea Manning, and Edward Snowden—and then there are the liars and the spies from the FBI to the CIA.

There are the Abolitionists—Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman with that inconvenient pistol in her pocket, John Brown, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Nat Turner—one of the great things about America—and then there’s slavery itself, an essential, foundational horror.

There's Seneca Falls and the feminist fighters like Sojourner Truth and the Grimke sisters, and then there's the sturdy legacy of patriarchy to overcome.

What's so great about America?

The spirit of democracy—the precious but fragile ideal that every human being is of incalculable value, endowed with certain inalienable rights—and a faith in democracy, using faith in the Biblical sense of “the evidence of things unseen,” a conviction that people need neither gods nor masters, and that we are quite capable of making the decisions that affect our lives—politically, economically, globally—and indeed that the people with the problems are necessarily the people with the solutions.

The inspirations of liberty—a sense that we are free to invent and reinvent ourselves, to shape our collective identities in every sphere of existence without traditional constraints of royal court or church, and whether we are concerned with our social character or our economic order, our manners or our sexuality, we can resist convention and strike out on a path of our own making.

Our radical imaginations unleashed—the rebels and radicals like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who envisioned a world without lynching and then organized a movement to end it; Emma Goldman, Eugene Debs, and W.E.B. Du Bois, who went to the root of things and organized for a world in balance and powered by love. The legacy endured in the work of Ella Baker and Septima Clark, Martin Luther King Jr., Fred Hampton, and Malcolm X fifty years ago, and on up to today—Barbara Ransby and Bryan Stevenson, Undocumented and Unafraid, #MeToo, #Black Lives Matter. Ella Baker noted that the “movement made Martin, and not Martin the movement”: for every remembered leader there were multitudes putting their shoulders on history's wheel.

The country is as it is—a mass of contradictions and tragedies, rich with beauty and human accomplishment and possibility, vicious with human denial—a system that both drains us and replenishes us, gives us life and kills us: a trillion dollars a year on war, invasion, and occupation, a tiny group of over-privileged on the wrong side of any hope for a world in balance, acting as if large swaths of humanity are entirely disposable... and more.

All of this might move us to note that every human being is indigenous to planet Earth, and that there is, therefore, no such thing as a foreigner. We might work, then, to replace national patriotism with human solidarity—*sin fronteras*—in the spirit of Chicago's poet laureate Gwendolyn Brooks (1971, p. 14): “we are each other's harvest:/ we are each other's/ business:/ we are each other's/ magnitude and bond.”

The tools to become a patriotic internationalist are everywhere—humor and art, protest and spectacle, the quiet, patient intervention and the urgent thrust—and the rhythm is always the same: open your eyes and look unblinkingly at the world as it really is; be astonished by the beauty and horrified at the unnecessary suffering all around; dive into the wreckage and swim as hard as possible toward a distant and indistinct shore; doubt that your efforts made enough difference, and rethink, recalibrate, look again, link arms with others across the globe, and dive in once more.

Repeat for a lifetime.

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This Is About Us: Drama Education as Patriotic Education

Samuel J. Tanner

For 15 years, I was a drama teacher in two large urban high schools in Minnesota. My classes were designed with the belief that theatre requires the downplaying or even sacrifice of the individual for the success of the collective. Yes, these classes involved practices that helped students rehearse basic tools of performance but, more importantly, they required participants to work together as a group. Each semester-long class ended with a theatrical production written, produced, and performed by the students for audiences of their peers. Careful not to impose my vision on the content of their productions, I worked to facilitate open-ended playbuilding, which is a complex process by which people collaborate to consider a concept through the creation of a dramatic production (Norris, 2009).

In this piece, I invite readers to consider that preparing students to embrace the potentials of democratic patriotism goes beyond the purview of social studies education and should be part of how students and teachers interact with one another across disciplines. Westheimer (2006) argues that “caring about the substantive values that underlie American democracy is the hallmark of democratic patriotism” (p. 612). Among these values are freedom of speech, protection of civil liberties, high participation in governance, and working for social and economic equality.

In what follows, I trace aspects of democratic values from my experience of working with a drama class of high school students who created and performed a play entitled *Yes, Even Him*. This production tells the story of a gay high school student named Matthew who struggles with growing self-hatred. I argue that although some students were hesitant and even resistant to engage the subject chosen by the class, my pedagogical approach created space in which group members connected and worked together successfully in spite of, and even because of, their differences. I worked deliberately to foster their ability, as a diverse and sometimes contentious group of people, to support each other. This productive collaboration developed into students’ willingness to practice empathetic care as they worked with differences that were often deeply felt. Students became willing to embrace an us that transcended individual differences to express loyalty, love, and connection to the group. What took place was democratic, patriotic education.

To be clear, there was no talk of democracy or patriotism in the class. Although I recognize the value of explicitly connecting the work we did to larger cultural and social issues—particularly in the face of growing and dangerous partisan divides in the United States—in this piece I step back to consider how members of this class practiced certain dispositions that led to an experiential encounter with democratic patriotism in practice. I argue that this kind of patriotism is a doing; it is a way of being in the world. Democratic patriotism is not just about love of country; it is about working in a community for the betterment of all (Kissling, 2016; Westheimer, 2006). This story is an example of just that—working to explore and push boundaries within a community with differences. It is not focused on nation-state patriotism but on

patriotism at the lived daily level, akin to Dewey's (1916/2011) notion that democracy is "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 101). My students shared and communicated a uniquely democratic experience in their work in creating and performing *Yes, Even Him* for a larger audience of their high school peers.

Following Kissling (2015), this story is also an example of how confronting controversial issues in classrooms, rather than passively accepting passionate nationalistic rhetoric, is crucial in presenting and engaging students in democratic, patriotic education. The choice in 2011—when this class took place—to write a play about a gay high school student was a risk in many ways. Debates around LGBTQ issues continue to be contentious. Civil (and often uncivil) discourse includes discussions of gender-neutral bathrooms, gay marriage, and civil rights for gender-nonconforming people. Indeed, while the Twin Cities are often considered progressive, gay students in this high school, including Aaron and Mark¹, whom we will meet later, expressed how uncomfortable they were talking about their sexual identity in school. Aaron and Mark routinely remarked that our drama class was unique because it felt acceptable to openly talk there about being gay. As we will see, other students, including Marcus and Allen, did not hide the fact that, for personal and/or religious reasons, they found gay sexuality to be objectionable. For the benefit of themselves, their peers, and their school, Aaron, Mark, and their classmates learned to work through their sometimes profound and contentious differences related to gay rights and acceptance of gay individuals. Not all of the students embraced gay rights by the end of the play. Indeed, democracy does not and cannot require uniform consensus. It does, however, require us to embrace the often messy and contentious experience of dialoging with difference or even controversy and of maintaining relations with other members of our community.

This article relies on a narrative approach to educational research (Barone, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Jacobs, 2005; Lensmire et al., 2013; Moen, 2006) to both present and consider the playbuilding pedagogy experienced by students in my high school drama class in the fall of 2011. *Yes, Even Him* was a script that 32 ninth- to twelfth-grade students wrote, produced, and performed for audiences of their peers. Their work was the result of a playbuilding sequence in a section of a drama workshop at Primville Area High School (PAHS), a large urban high school in the Twin Cities. I used methods of ethnographic teacher-research to document this process (Lensmire, 1994). As their teacher, I facilitated the experience, paying special attention to the democratic process that resulted, somewhat surprisingly, in the *Yes, Even Him* project.

Drama Workshop

I'd been teaching for nearly 10 years by the time I worked with the students who produced *Yes, Even Him*. I worked with this group of freshmen through seniors for one semester in an elective course, Drama Workshop, at PAHS. My drama classes attracted a diverse group of students who often did not interact in other spaces in the school.

1 All names of people and of the school are pseudonyms.

Drama Workshop had three distinct phases. In the first month, I taught basic acting skills and used drama pedagogy to create a disciplined, collaborative ethos in the class. I gradually ceded responsibility to the group during the second month as they made drama together. Finally, I gave them a great measure of collective autonomy in the third month as they created and produced a play. Making these careful shifts in the class arose out of frustrations I'd experienced earlier in my career. Students were almost always eager to be creative and autonomous as they made theatre in my elective courses. Still, I'd learned that students required a disciplined context as well as collaborative dispositional ways of being if they were going to work together without things descending into contentious chaos. Indeed, playbuilding is unruly, and a much different approach to making drama than staging a production of, for example, *Romeo and Juliet* or *Legally Blonde*. Students don't follow the will of the director or teacher when they playbuild; instead, they create and express content together. Certainly, not all of my classes embraced the togetherness I tried to foster in Drama Workshop, and most did not take up controversial subjects in their productions. The group described below enthusiastically embraced the idea that we were a community, and their capacity for togetherness resulted in *Yes, Even Him*.

I led a directive warm-up during each day of class throughout the semester. It was an exercise in becoming blank, in letting go of the selves and the preoccupations that students brought into the room. Students stood in front of the stage, closed their eyes, and breathed deeply three times. I asked them to imagine and practice erasing the inward and outward characteristics of the characters they played in their everyday lives. Next, I led them through vocal and physical warm-ups. This routine ended with a call and response.

"This," I said, projecting my voice loudly across the auditorium.

"Is not about me," students shouted loudly.

I told them that we were warming up our bodies and voices for the work of creating theatre. This was true. But, more importantly, each day I was reminding them through embodied practices that they would succeed or fail as a group, not as individuals. I didn't want the racial, socioeconomic, gendered, and ideological differences that separated students in their everyday lives to disrupt the togetherness I knew was necessary for us to make drama together. My intention was for students to make theatre, but in looking back, I see now that my routine was also an impetus for students to practice emptying themselves of the selves they brought into the room. At the very least, these warm-ups prepared my drama class for the contentious work of making collaborative theatre and, eventually, building a play together.

After warm-ups during that first month, I gave students performance tasks. These performances were always born out of collaboration and support from their peers. For instance, students each selected, rehearsed, and performed a solo acting performance—a monologue—at the beginning of the course. To prepare these monologues, I had them spend a week in a monologue-practice group that was facilitated by a student in the class. I selected group leaders who I thought would bring their groups together.

Vanessa, Aaron, Mark, and Robby—all students who later played an important part in the creation of *Yes, Even Him*—were selected as monologue group leaders. Vanessa was a senior. She was Black, Christian, a

popular student in the high school, and a star on the school's basketball team. I mention Vanessa's race because PAHS was a predominately White high school. Still, there were six Black students in this section of Drama Workshop. Further, Vanessa's religious beliefs became an important factor in the group's interactions as they moved into a discussion of sexuality. Aaron was a freshman and had been very open during the class about being gay. The monologue he performed during the first month was even about coming out to his parents. Mark was a sophomore who was also vocal about being gay. Like Vanessa, Robby was a senior athlete. He was very popular and considered a class clown. He took Drama Workshop because, in his words, he wanted to make a fool of himself in front of his friends.

I met with each of these group leaders after warm-ups, before each of their monologue-group facilitations, and coached them on how to work with their small groups. Then I gave them the hour to work through a series of assigned tasks with their groups. This was an efficient way to help students rehearse their monologues, but mostly I did this in order to model ways of being that inspired autonomy beyond the scope of my authority and ask students to practice them. Further, students connected with each other in these groups by telling stories, helping each other select monologues, and practicing together. Eventually, students supported each other through the stressful, often anxious work of performing monologues in front of the class. Our collaborative work continued as students next worked to create short dramatic scenes. Finally, each of the four group leaders was assigned a small group that built a 20-minute piece of theatre—a short play—using only random words generated at the start of the assignments. Members of the class were impressed by what the groups created.

"I can't believe how good these plays were, Mr. Tanner," Connor, a sophomore, said during a reflective discussion in class after the performances. "We kick ass."

Connor was on the autism spectrum. Other teachers warned me that he would constantly disrupt my class. His sense of humor was crude, to be sure, but he never disturbed our group processes. In fact, Connor's assigned aide, James, who was with him at all times throughout the school day, told me that he had never seen Connor so focused in a class.

"There's something special about this class, Mr. Tanner," James told me one afternoon as we watched the students work. "Connor loves it. This is the only class he actually cares about."

I credited Connor's engagement to teaching practices that created autonomous, empathetic peer groups that supported the vulnerable work of creating theatre together. Students in special education often thrived in my drama classes, so I was unsurprised by Connor's comment during our discussion. Regardless of the quality of their work, most students in my classes were proud of what they created there. They had made something together, and we celebrated that act as much as the actual product.

"Drama is like basketball," Vanessa said during the same discussion about the creation of our short plays. "It's about the team, not the individual. I get it. I'm a point guard."

I laughed with Vanessa. I was a (bad) point guard too.

“We’re making good drama because we’re playing good basketball, Mr. Tanner. We know we need to do this work together. We’re a family.”

I was surprised by the enthusiasm of Vanessa’s comment, but not so much by the spirit. Indeed, I was trying to make members of the class feel that we were a family, especially as I knew that we would need to build a play together. Although I had no idea at this point about the challenging content the group would choose for the play, I knew that togetherness was key to working with the vulnerability that public performance entails. Building empathy and connection was something I’d done with countless groups by the time I met Vanessa’s class; outside of Drama Workshop, there’d be little reason for Connor and Vanessa to interact, let alone celebrate each other’s work.

As we moved into the final phase of the class, students sat in a circle on stage and discussed potential concepts for their play. I observed from the first row of the auditorium. I’d learned that it was important to physically remove myself from the group so they’d make decisions without looking to me to provide answers. I wanted the group to practice largely autonomous collaboration as they discussed possible ideas for a play—in other words, as they engaged in democratic process.

“We should write a play about race,” Vanessa said early on in the discussion. She laughed. “Race is all jacked up in this school. We should write a play about an interracial couple. You know, like *Romeo and Juliet*.”

Many of the students in the circle nodded to express agreement.

“We should write a play about sexual orientation,” Aaron said. “I’ve felt comfortable talking about being gay in this class. We should explore that.”

“This is the only class I’ve ever felt comfortable talking about being gay,” Mark said in agreement with Aaron. “We could definitely write about that.”

At this point, I saw Marcus look at his friend Allen. Marcus rolled his eyes. Both were seniors. They were the only two people in the class who seemed irritated when Aaron and Mark talked about being gay. Although they got along and worked well with Aaron and Mark, Allen and Marcus both identified as straight and were quick to point this out when the group talked about doing a play about being gay.

“I’m straight,” Marcus told the group. “I don’t know if I want to do a play about being gay. It would be embarrassing, you know?”

Allen nodded adamantly.

“I like it because we’re still talking about oppression,” Vanessa said. “I want to do a play about race, but I have to remember this isn’t about me.”

The conversation grew more intense. It was clear that Marcus, Allen, and a few other classmates didn't want to participate in a play about being gay. Ultimately, the class agreed that, either way, they wanted to explore oppression in their play—whether the script was about race or sexuality. Eventually, as the bell rang, the group decided—perhaps because Vanessa, Aaron, Robby, and Mark had been the leaders I had selected earlier in the class—that those four would be the lead writers. Marcus and Allen were skeptical of this choice, but the consensus in the discussion outweighed their expressed doubts. Vanessa, Aaron, Robby, and Mark agreed to meet in a coffee shop after school to begin planning a potential outline for our script. It was not uncommon for students to meet outside of class to work on their plays for Drama Workshop. The approach to drama pedagogy I've described above, giving autonomy to the group, often led to radical student engagement. Again, students often seemed to care for and about our class.

The four lead writers came back with a potential outline for a play the next day. The majority of the group agreed to proceed with a play about sexual identity. Marcus and Allen were opposed to the idea. The class broke up into small groups to start working on writing scenes over the next week. Each member of the class contributed to the script. Marcus and Allen weren't enthusiastic about the play, but each of them participated in writing the scenes. Vanessa, Aaron, Robby, and Mark met at a coffee shop after school again to make final revisions of the play. Students sat in a circle the next day and read the script aloud.

I was careful not to directly involve myself in the group's process. Still, Marcus and Allen approached me after reading the final version of the script.

"A play about being gay, Mr. Tanner?" Allen asked hesitantly.

"I don't know," Marcus told me. "I don't think I want to do this."

"I'm straight. I don't think it's right to be gay," Allen said.

"There are plenty of roles in this play for straight characters," I told them. "The challenge of acting is pretending to be somebody else. That's still the work here. This is what the class decided to create."

"This isn't about me," Marcus said, with a trace of sarcasm. "It's about us."

I laughed.

Marcus' sarcasm signaled that he wasn't happy with the decision, but the statement told me he had decided to go along with it. This double marking—participating and distancing himself—was a strategy he used throughout the rest of the semester.

Marcus and Allen seemed skeptical as they left class.

Vanessa and Aaron stood nearby during my encounter with Marcus and Allen. "They'll come around, Mr. Tanner," Aaron told me with a smile. "This is going to be a really good play. It's just hard for Marcus and Allen to talk about being gay. They're not bad people."

“We got this, Mr. Tanner,” Vanessa said. “I’m Christian, so I don’t know about being gay or whatever. But we’ll do this together. Aaron’s my boy.”

Aaron laughed.

The group spent the remainder of the course creating, rehearsing, and performing *Yes, Even Him*. Marcus and Allen were hesitant, but they continued to participate daily. Eventually, they were cast to play characters from the video game *Mortal Kombat*. Connor was also cast as one of these characters and, as rehearsals for the production were underway, the three boys relished the opportunity to choreograph karate moves.

In the brief narrative of the first phase of our class, I sought to describe my use of a set of pedagogic practices designed to create an environment of civil discourse. It is perhaps ironic that I imposed a set of disciplined drama practices to promote a powerful experience of democratic patriotism. I argue that my students developed their capacities to care about democratic values as they engaged in the processes of doing warm-up exercises, crafting and performing monologues, and then writing, staging, rehearsing, and performing a play.

Practicing democracy across difference is unruly and challenging. The topic of sexual identity this class ultimately took up was exciting for some, challenging for most, and alienating for a few, simultaneously giving rise to hope, joy, fear, resistance, and anger. My teaching was deliberately designed so that students would negotiate these responses by practicing civil discourse throughout the process of the class, by which I mean learning how to talk with one another, be together, and work collectively in productive relation to their differences, many of which stemmed from diverse religious, racial, sexual, gendered, and social class identifications.

As Marcus and Allen’s reactions showed—and as our current national political situation demonstrates—these differences are real. So far as I know, we did not succeed during our time together in convincing Marcus and Allen to become gay rights activists. Nor did Vanessa reflect on the limitations of her statement, “I’m Christian, so I don’t know about being gay or whatever.” If civil discourse means that members of a community must come to share a set of beliefs and values, then the future of civil discourse and democratic patriotism is dim. As I will show below, civil discourse in our community required much more subtle compromises.

Yes, Even Him

Yes, Even Him told the story of a boy named Matthew. He is eight years old at the beginning of the play. He discovers that he has feelings for a male friend. Matthew tells his father and gets reprimanded and told that it is not okay to be gay. The play follows Matthew as he becomes a teenager and struggles with his continuing attraction to boys. He tries to repress his feelings and grows angrier and more isolated. During this time, Matthew’s toys provide commentary. Characters from the film *Toy Story* were reappropriated to represent Matthew’s childhood toys. Characters from the video game *Mortal Kombat* represented

Matthew's adolescent toys. The toys struggle to make sense of the word "gay" after a teenage Matthew loses a *Mortal Kombat* match, throws his controller to the ground, and calls the game "gay." The *Mortal Kombat* characters come out of the television and have a conversation about what the word "gay" means. I share their dialogue below because this excerpt was a clever way for students to make a space in their work for everybody in our class.

MKC 6: What does gay mean boss?

Kano: Obviously it means bad. Duh. Did you hear him stomp off? It's like, this weather outside is so gay. Or, your nose is so gay.

Sonya: Yeah, well you're gay.

Kano: Your shoes are gay.

MKC 5: Your hair is gay.

MKC 4: You fight Gay-ly.

MKC 3: This is a gay bed.

MKC 2: Yeah, well, the floor is gay.

MKC 1: That's a gay closet (points to closet).

In this scene, Marcus and Allen performed lines ("Your hair is gay," "You fight Gay-ly") that expressed their aversion to the word. This allowed Marcus and Allen to gain some distance from the message of the play—which in turn allowed them to perform in front of friends who, like them, found gay sexuality objectionable—and at the same time to anticipate and include the kinds of homophobic language that contribute to Matthew's struggle with his sexuality. Marcus and Allen contributed to a play which, ultimately, becomes a celebration of Matthew's sexual identity.

Soon after the previous scene, the *Toy Story* toys and the *Mortal Kombat* characters join together to try to figure out what the word "gay" means. The characters look the word up on a computer and learn its meaning, prompting the following lines:

Beanie Baby: It almost seems to me that the only reason the word gay was used in this play was to express how foolish people look when they use it in ways that have nothing to do with its definition. But the writers would never put such a blatant political statement into the script, would they?

I argue that this is an instance in which the playwrights anticipated and humorously worked to defuse anxiety about sexuality and cynical criticism of the goals of the play. In fact, I contend that these lines break the fourth wall, directly yet gently inviting the audience to join in the shared community of people who care about and respect one another even across their differences.

This invitation to the audience to join in the civil community continued throughout the script. Eventually, the *Mortal Kombat* characters and the *Toy Story* toys realize that Matthew is in an abusive household.

They decide they can only reach Matthew through his video games. They climb into the game and tell Matthew that it is okay for him to be gay. Matthew hears their message and moves in with his aunt, who is more accepting of his sexuality. The play ends with the following clever conversation that preempts criticism about the choice students made to create and perform a play about sexual identity:

Beanie Baby: Jeez Arnie, this is a really political show. I don't know how to deal with all the feelings I'm feeling right now.

Arnie: That's perfectly normal, Beanie. Remember, thinking through your feelings makes you stronger, not weaker.

Beanie: I get it. I know though, that a lot of people out there are saying to their neighbors "But I'm not gay, why does this play matter to me?" What should I tell them?

Arnie: Tell them that there's more to this play than just being gay. It could easily be about racial inequality, gender inequality or simply growing up. I know everyone (*Sweeping hand gesture*) out there has felt at some time or another that the world is out to get them.

Yes, *Even Him* was a powerful way for the students in Drama Workshop to invite the larger school community to engage in civil discourse about a controversial topic that had become meaningful to them. Indeed, the play was performed seven times for school audiences. Following each performance, Vanessa, Aaron, Robby, and Mark facilitated a discussion between the audiences and the students in Drama Workshop.

"This was a really good play," an audience member said during one discussion. "Were all of you supportive of making a play about being gay?"

"No!" Marcus said loudly. Many of my students on the stage laughed.

"We weren't," Mark said. "But, like Mr. Tanner says, making drama is all about working together as a group. So we just had to remember that this project wasn't all about ourselves."

"Yes," Marcus said. "Mark is right. We worked really well together. And it was really fun to be a *Mortal Kombat* character."

Recall again Westheimer's (2006) claim that caring about values of American democracy is a hallmark of democratic patriotism. The story of how my students produced *Yes, Even Him* is a story of students practicing democratic values. In essence, I am claiming that even without having explicit discussions about patriotism, there was a doing of democratic patriotism at work in my classroom. We named it as "This isn't about me; it's about us." When we met on the final day of the semester to discuss our experiences together, my students articulated the complexity of enacting these values.

"I'm so proud of this play," Aaron told the class during our final reflective discussion. "This is one of the coolest things I've ever been part of."

“You told us to become blank,” Robby said. “And some of us did it better than others, but all of us tried. That was how we ended up being able to build this together.”

Jack, a sophomore, spoke up. “Mr. Tanner, you gave us unobstructed space to explore the subject matter in this class.”

“And you also gave us the chance to try and be somebody else,” Connor said.

Vanessa talked next. “I wouldn’t have chosen to make a play about homosexuality, but I told myself to remember this isn’t about me. I got to get over my ego.”

“What we did here is really important,” Mark told the group. “This is one of the few times I’ve really felt accepted in this school. I know not everybody in this class believes that it’s okay to be gay, but I think we tried to build together anyway. That’s awesome.”

Marcus and Allen were quiet as the group talked. I was curious what they were thinking but wasn’t going to force either of them to speak. Marcus finally spoke up toward the end of the class.

“I had a lot of fun making this play,” he said. Allen nodded.

The bell rang, and our class was over. Students seemed genuinely proud of themselves as they left Drama Workshop and returned to the hallways of PAHS.

Democratic, Patriotic Education

Democratic patriotism necessarily entails complexity. Students in my Drama Workshop class allowed themselves to engage in an exploration of difference they would have not chosen for themselves. Some did better than others at becoming blank, and, of course, they always returned to who they were—their unique states of “un-blankness”—after each class session and the semester as a whole. I contend that this becoming blank helped students understand who they are in their un-blankness better. It was a process that pushed egos aside in favor of working for the collective, and this contributed to students embracing difference and diversity in their everyday lives. Ultimately, a community that allowed difference to productively emerge around a controversial topic was created collectively. Voices not usually heard in traditional discussions in school were included as the group constructively negotiated and included different viewpoints in our conversations and, ultimately, the art we created. Did all students reach the same conclusion? Of course not. But they produced a democratic experience through their doing together. Indeed, Dewey (1916/2011) wrote that “democratic society repudiates the principal of external authority” and must find substitutes in “voluntary disposition and interest” which “can be created only by education” (p. 87).

Yet students do not often walk into a classroom ready to engage their differences productively. The first and second phases of the class, in which I was directive in both expectations and practices designed to encourage students to be dependent upon one another for success and support, were critical to

what followed. This was an exercise of the teacher's authority, but it was not authoritarian; I undertook it with the goal of having my students develop the capacity to discover within themselves dispositions and interests that would result in a piece of work that felt to them like a genuine expression of the group. My students entered into civil discourse around a controversial subject and, in doing so, experienced practicing the democratic values of talk, compromise, collaboration, and respect across difference, which I argue are patriotic ways of being.

Kissling (2015) suggested that students need to confront controversial problems in their schooling, particularly related to patriotism. The problems addressed in my drama class were (a) the marginalization of LGBTQ people in a heteronormative culture and (b) accepting difference and participating with it in a polarized society.

Participating in one Drama Workshop class that chose to explore issues of sexual identity is not enough for students to achieve a democratic, patriotic disposition. It is not, on its own, enough to prepare them for the serious work of participating in democracy. And yet they shared a powerful experience that may have, in fact, helped them be and become in more democratic ways.

I saw Marcus in the hallway after the semester ended.

"Hey, Mr. Tanner."

"How's it going, Marcus?"

"I miss our drama class," Marcus told me.

Marcus's comment made me smile.

"I miss it too," I admitted to Marcus.

Marcus grinned playfully at me. He gestured to the hallway around him.

"You know what, Mr. Tanner," he told me sarcastically. "It is about me now."

I laughed with Marcus.

With this joke, Marcus showed me that he recognized the difference between a space that was deliberately about us—the drama class, in which he had been able to step back from his existing identifications and consider other perspectives, experiences, and desires—and the rest of his high school spaces. He signaled that asking him to participate in, and indeed defer to, the collective will was out of the norm in his high school experience, and let me know that he missed it. It is my hope that readers are provoked to wonder how lessons from this teaching project might inform diverse pedagogical interventions, across grade levels and age groups, that equip students with the tools to participate in their communities with respect and, dare I say it, with affection for one another.

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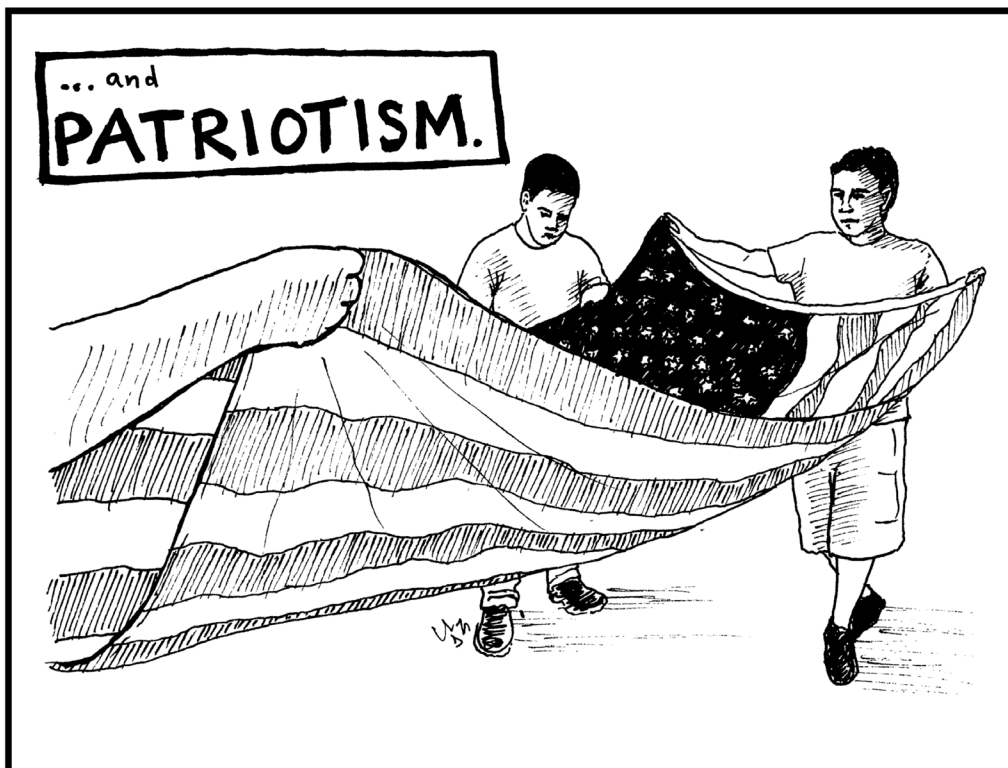
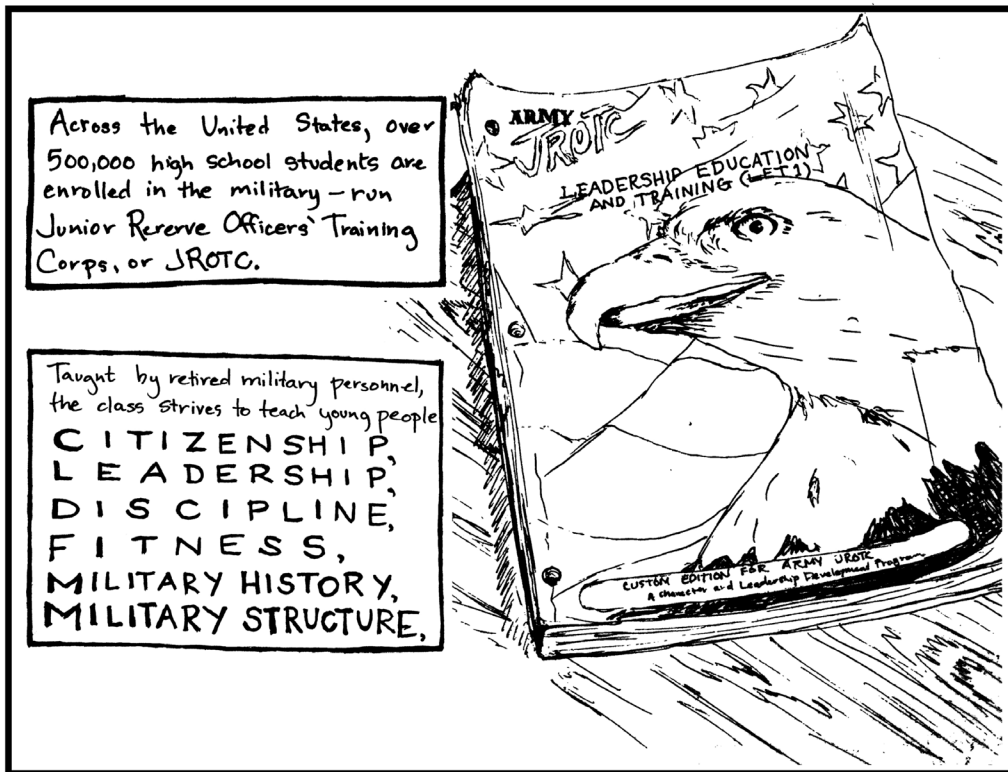
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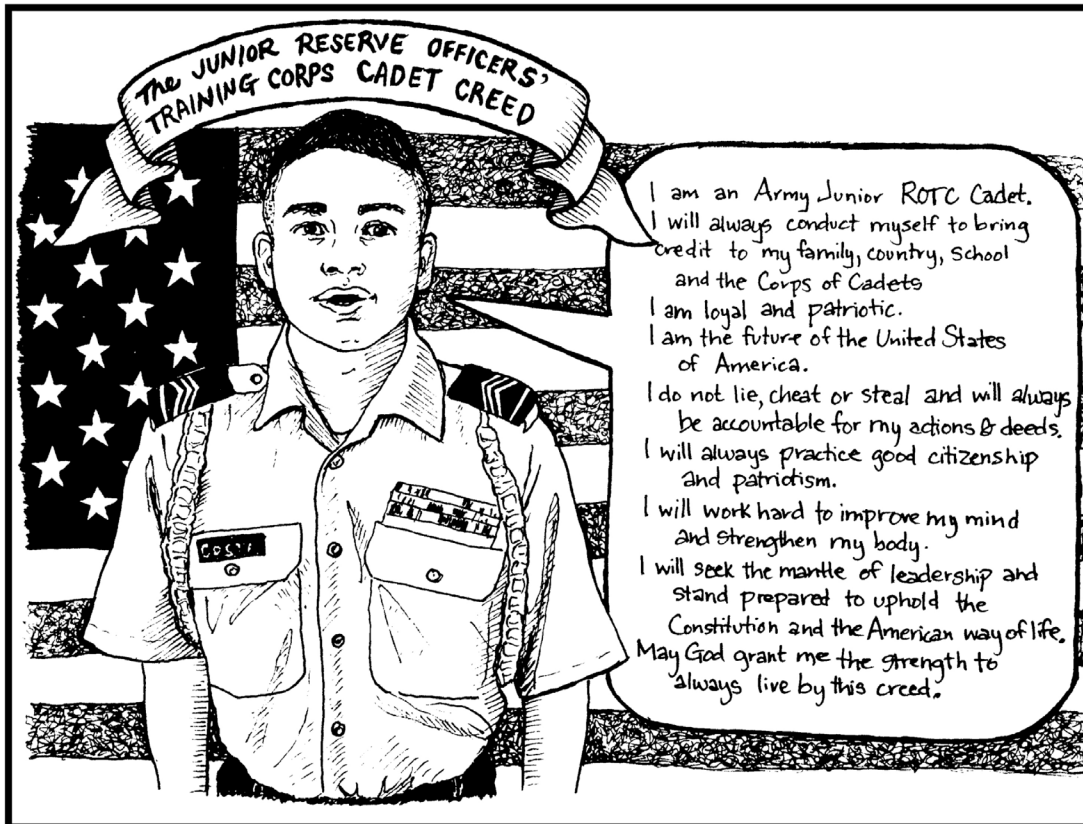


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Military Patriotism and the JROTC

Jenna Christian





For three years, between 2014 and 2017, I did ethnographic research on how race and citizenship shaped military recruiting and enlistment in Houston, TX.

For six months of that time I worked with high schoolers in a JROTC program. I talked to students about their experiences in the JROTC, and their feelings about the military.

I observed class,



...and I made art.



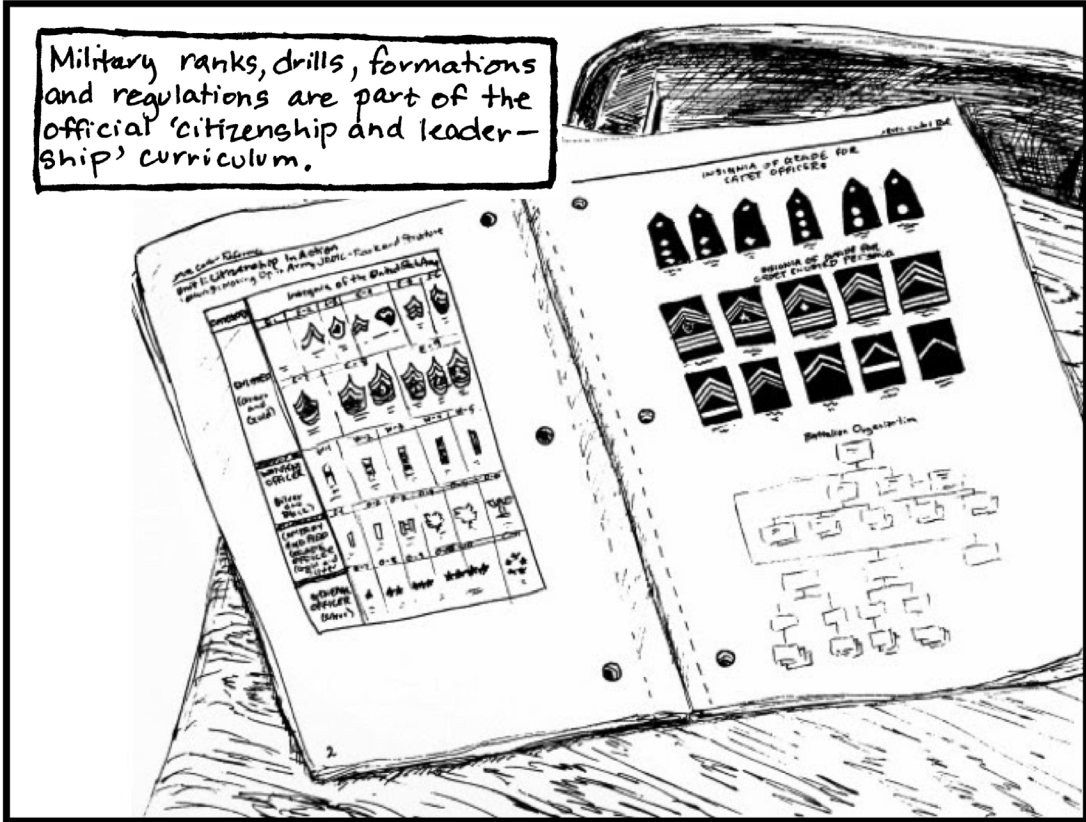
The JROTC is a space where patriotism and citizenship are both inextricably linked to support for the military.

"When you are wearing a uniform, you are representing your school, this JROTC, and every soldier who has ever worn a uniform."

-JROTC Instructor



Military ranks, drills, formations and regulations are part of the official 'citizenship and leadership' curriculum.



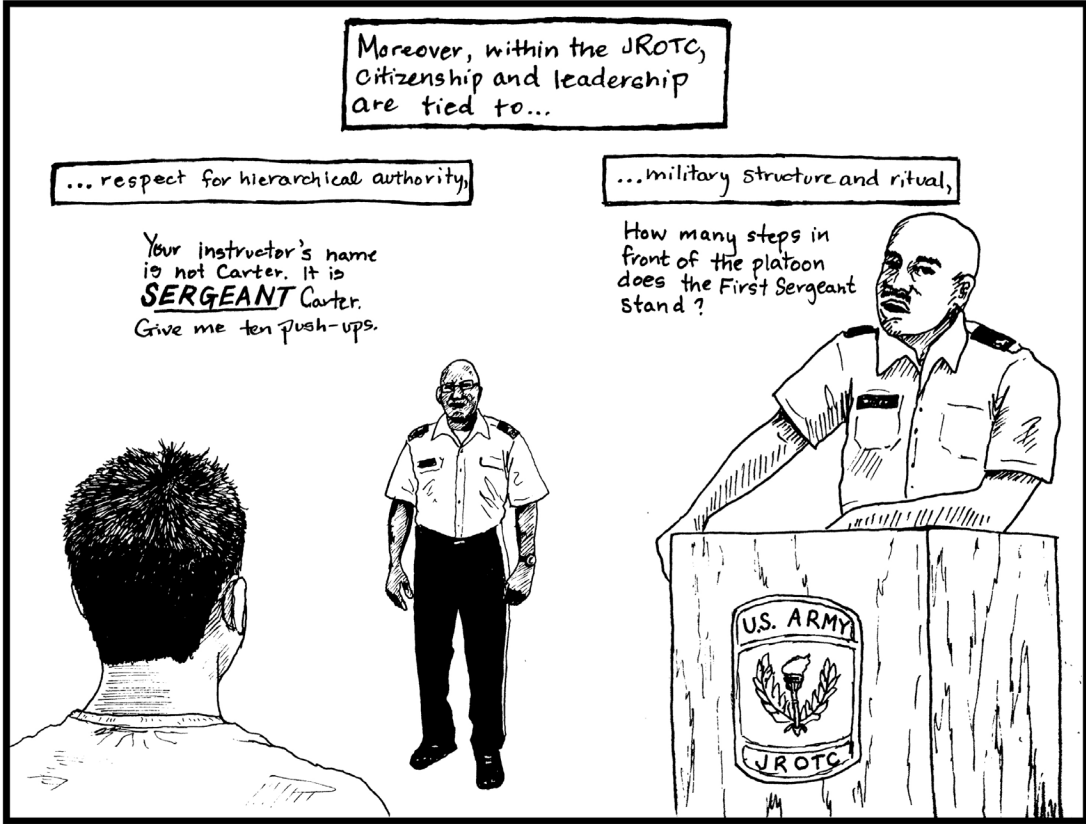
Moreover, within the JROTC, citizenship and leadership are tied to...

... respect for hierarchical authority,

Your instructor's name is not Carter. It is **SERGEANT** Carter. Give me ten push-ups.

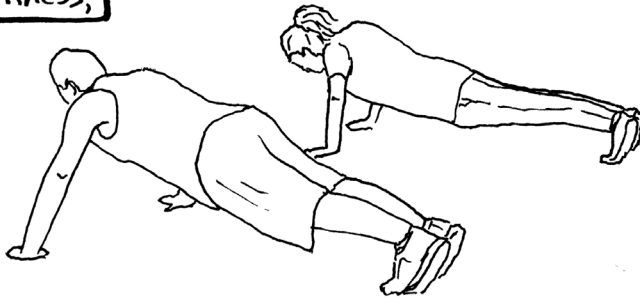
...military structure and ritual,

How many steps in front of the platoon does the First Sergeant stand?

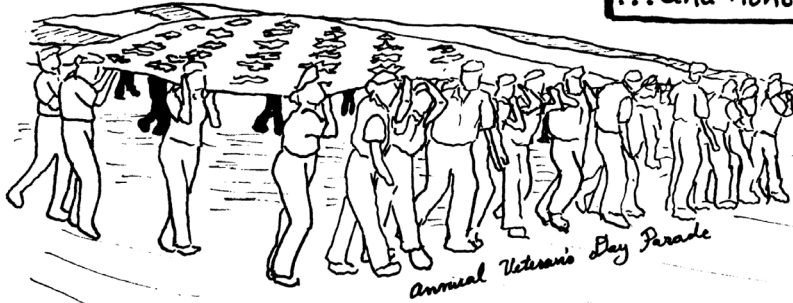


...physical fitness,

"Push-ups are brain food!
Plus, guys like women with
big arms!"



...and honoring the military



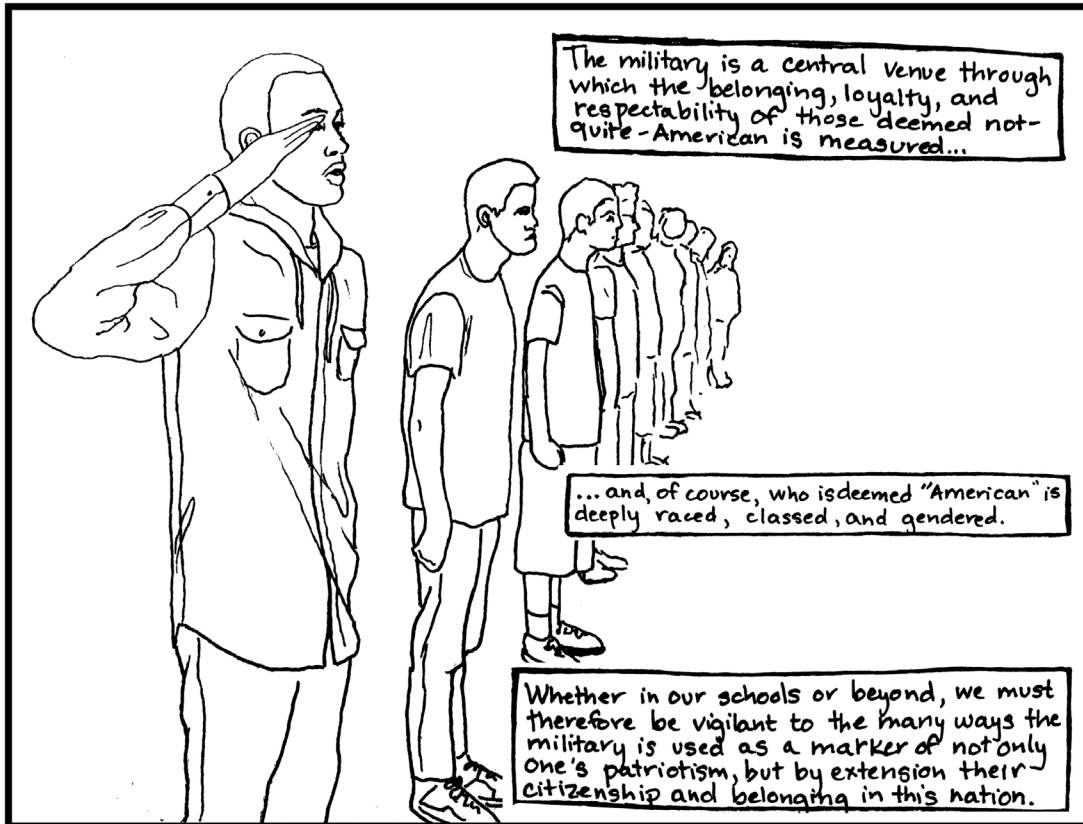
However, the JROTC is not the only site where patriotism and citizenship are linked to the military. There are stakes beyond the walls of the school, in contemporary struggles over racial justice and citizenship.



(Naturalization Ceremony)

For example, recent debates about the validity of Colin Kaepernick's NFL protest against police brutality regularly focused on whether it was disrespectful to the military...

...and the military service of immigrants is regularly held up as one of the reasons to protect them from exclusion or deportation.



Jenna Christian recently received her PhD from the Pennsylvania State University in the Geography and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. She is currently working as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Bucknell University. Her research and activism engage art, feminist theory, and critical geography in the study of the U.S. military, citizenship, education, incarceration, and social movements.

Constructed Patriotism: Shifting (Re)Presentations and Performances of Patriotism through Curriculum Materials

Nina Hood and Marek Tesar

What does it mean to be patriotic? How are notions of patriotism (re)presented and performed in curriculum materials? In attempting to answer these questions, we contend that it is necessary to move beyond the word *patriotic* as an isolated concept to explore it in relation to specific temporal, geographic, political, economic, and institutional contexts. Patriotism, or to be patriotic, is conceptualized and means something quite different—and manifests differently—in different eras and in different countries.

We utilize curriculum materials and documents as a lens through which to explore different conceptions and manifestations of patriotism as they pertain to the education of children in two very different national and historical contexts: communist central European Czechoslovakia of the 1970s and 1980s and contemporary New Zealand in the deep South Pacific. Patriotism in education in Czechoslovakia of the 1970s and 1980s took the form of positioning oneself loyal to one block (communist or non-communist) or another (enemy vs. non-enemy). In contrast, this form of nationalistic patriotism is largely absent from contemporary New Zealand education where, at least as it is conceptualized in educational policy, there is, as Roberts (2009) suggests, a “new patriotism” focused on success in the global economy. This new patriotism of contemporary New Zealand is more global and neoliberal in nature and stands in distinct contrast to the first-world, second-world structure of the patriotism visible in communist Czechoslovakia.

On the surface, comparing representations of patriotism in the education systems and curriculum materials of two such different times and countries may seem rather arbitrary. Indeed, as described above, the (re)presentation and performance of patriotism in each context is remarkably different. However, utilizing disparate case studies provides an added layer of depth to our understanding of both the mutability and context-rich nature of patriotism and being patriotic. Further, we see how differently patriotism is presented and performed in educational curricula and, by extension, how differently patriotism infiltrates the education, development, and entire lives of children.

The choice of these contexts is also a personal one. Marek grew up in communist Czechoslovakia; Nina grew up in New Zealand as it was transitioning to a neoliberal ideology and its new patriotism. However, both of us left our respective homelands on the cusp of adulthood and experienced education systems and societies in other nations and, in doing so, gained a certain distance—geographic, temporal, ideological—from the educational and ideological systems of our childhoods.

This essay links the very different geographies, histories, and ideologies of our respective homelands and the very different ways in which performances and (re)presentations of patriotism are perceived and utilized in education and everyday mundane experiences. As such, it is an essay in two halves. The first is a close reading of children’s stories from forty years ago. The second is a birds-eye view of how policy documents shape an educational agenda and its enactment in a contemporary country context.

The focus, tone, and treatment of each section is deliberately different. This difference reinforces the mutability and contextual nature of patriotism, which is always informed by political, social, economic, geographical, and historical contexts.

Fighting Dragons with Tanks: Patriotism in Communist Czechoslovakia

The Iron Curtain represented polarized states, clear black-and-white divisions, within which it was easy to understand political subjectivity and patriotism. Large-scale country blocks were united by common beliefs that operated apparently under similar ideologies. It was clear that if a patriot was to love her/his land and country, s/he must somehow position herself/himself into a meaningless binary between these two blocks, where citizens were to fear, misunderstand, or hate each other. Within both blocks, it was clear who and what children should love and adore—and who and what they should hate. Marek, as a child attending school, learned from the outset to love his homeland—to be patriotic, to feel intensely for his country and its associated ideology.

In communist Czechoslovakia the education curriculum was heavily prescribed. Even at the kindergarten level, curriculum materials were developed by the state and issued to every school as a means of controlling and shaping children's understanding of political ideology and power. Patriotism was embedded in the kindergarten curriculum materials, most notably children's stories. To demonstrate the nature of this patriotism, the remainder of this section provides a close study of a children's magazine, *Vcielka* (translated to *Little Bee*). It was distributed to all kindergartens in Czechoslovakia with the understanding that teachers would read and discuss the stories with their students. Marek has clear memories of reading it in kindergarten.

Curriculum materials represented children in Czechoslovakia as active supporters of the country, as young patriots. One way this was done was through messages that portrayed soldiers and weapons as necessary for happy and peaceful childhoods. Peace was advanced as the ultimate goal of Czechoslovakia and every citizen, including children, contributed to it through their "work." Children's work entailed learning, playing, making art, and performing. Through these activities, children were exposed to the notion that peace could be protected through engagements with soldiers or border patrols. They also learned that peace was to be celebrated, through marches, drawings, drama performances, and plays.

After the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, undertaken in response to the attempted reform efforts of the Prague Spring, *Little Bee* presented stories of tanks and soldiers as positive forces that children should celebrate and admire. The half million Soviet soldiers and tanks sent to crush the Prague Spring and occupy Czechoslovakia were cast as friends and protectors who had liberated the country from fascism in World War II and who had supported the children's homeland in its development ever since. According to *Little Bee*, the Soviet army, with its tanks, artilleries, and machine guns, had the best interests of the children in mind. For example, the story, "9th of May," which celebrates the victory in World War II, describes city streets filled with posters and flags as thousands of people come to celebrate: "Glory, glory to all the soldiers, all artillery and all tanks," as all citizens now live in "freedom and peace" (*Little Bee*, 1973, p. 11).¹

¹ All *Little Bee* references refer to the volume/issue of the archival document of *Little Bee*. Archival documents of *Little Bee* available in: Archive of Univerzitna Kniznica in Bratislava, Slovakia. *Little Bee* was written in Slovak, however, for the purposes of this paper all quotes have been translated by the author into English.

Little Bee introduced children to “Army Day” and encouraged them to honor the army. In text written in the form of a play, kindergarten children sing the praises of the soldiers and the army in a celebration of peace (*Little Bee*, 1974). The kindergarten children “are preparing to celebrate the Czechoslovak army. They like to play like soldiers; they have their toy weapons such as wooden rifles and paper hats on their heads. At the front of the line of children stands a boy, holding a trumpet” (p. 6). The children were expected to recite stories and poems, such as: “We are brave kindergarten children, we like to play, and today we will sing a song to our soldiers. We have hidden our dreams and our desires in a poem, and those who want to know more, need to walk with us” (p. 6). In the poem, children are grateful to all soldiers, but at the same time they wish for peace around the world and for nothing to fight for.

Children were encouraged to say hello “to all soldiers with pink cheeks, who protect our homeland and stay awake, so you can go to the kindergarten and sleep easily through the night. Thank you our soldiers!” (p. 2). Children could practice their knowledge about the army, for example in the game of “misplaced pictures,” where the objective was to identify the mixed-up uniforms of different types of soldiers (*Little Bee*, 1977d).

Soviet soldiers were also featured in the stories that used fairy-tale notions, for example in the tale of the Soviet soldier Kolja and his arrival on a white horse to liberate Czechoslovakia (*Little Bee*, 1975b). In the story, the Soviet army arrives in a village and all the children fall in love with Kolja. They follow him everywhere and Kolja takes four children at once for a ride on the white horse. Despite the children’s protests and pleas, Kolja has to leave to fight fascism elsewhere: “We have to move on fighting. We must continue in our fight, so all people and children are free” (p. 5).

In this fairy tale, the Soviet soldiers are described as people with “smiling faces with beautiful red stars on their hats” (p. 4) and their relationship with children is central. The picture that accompanies the story shows a brave soldier on a white horse, emphasizing purity and goodness, fighting against the evil monster. The monster is often portrayed as a dragon, with Soviet soldiers as fairy-tale princes fighting against it with their tanks and flowers to free the homeland, which is portrayed as a little princess (*Little Bee*, 1975a; see Image 1). The children in one fairy-tale poem promise that “we are bringing flowers and our children’s happiness” (p. 6) to the memorial of Soviet soldiers.

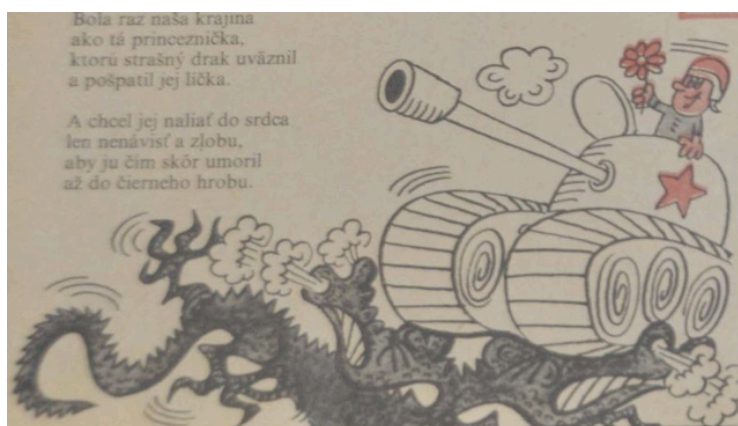


Image 1. Soviet soldier as the fairy-tale prince slaying the dragon (*Little Bee*, 1975a, p. 6)².

2 The images of *Little Bee* are not subjected to copyright.

Little Bee also presented children with the brutalities associated with war. The poem “Ilja” graphically describes the death of a Soviet soldier in Czechoslovakia during World War II, with a detailed description of blood and his wounds (*Little Bee*, 1975c). This poem thanks Soviet soldiers as saviors of “happy childhoods, and of peace without cannons, bombs and mines” (p. 7). The poem “On a military march” gives children ideas about who the soldiers are and what they represent (*Little Bee*, 1977a). The boy in this poem is searching for his brother in the military parade, wondering whether he was driving a tank, was in the artillery, or with the border guardians and their dogs. He then realizes that it does not matter where in the parade his brother is, “as all these soldiers can be my brothers” (p. 6). Soldiers were represented as tall, tough, smiling men, with faces “full of courage and bravery” (p. 6), admired by the children as “the sun is reflecting on their shiny machine guns” (p. 6). Another poem asks children if they are curious about the soldiers’ new uniforms (*Little Bee*, 1980b). It emphasizes that “soldiers like children” and that they “defend peace, with smiles on their faces, and stripes on their shoulders” (p. 2). In the accompanying illustration, boys are hugging each other and looking at marching soldiers with proud, romantic looks in their eyes (see Image 2). This romanticized notion of soldiers as defenders of peace and friends of each child was present throughout *Little Bee* in songs, poems, texts, reports, and stories.



Image 2. Children are portrayed in *Little Bee* as the youngest admirers and supporters of soldiers and their work (*Little Bee*, 1980a, p. 1; 1980b, p. 2).

Little Bee also published reports and photographs of Soviet soldiers visiting kindergartens and spending time with the children. The children were very happy, according to these published reports, as they sang songs about soldiers and taught them how to sing them as well. In one report the kindergarten was “visited by soldiers and children were very excited. They sang them a song “Soldiers walk, our soldiers walk” (*Little Bee*, 1976b, p. 2). In another report, kindergarten children placed flowers on the graves of soldiers in “gratitude for a happy and cheerful childhood” (p. 2). The report “Beautiful Day” outlines how kindergarten children take a trip to the military barracks (*Little Bee*, 1976a). The teacher explains that “all soldiers that defend our homeland, have a huge celebration” (p. 2). Peter adds that he knows that soldiers are “safeguarding our peace and quiet life” while little Hortenzia says “I have a flower for a soldier” (p. 3). Children give flowers to a soldier by the gate and “happily return to kindergarten” (p. 3).

Kindergarten teachers’ letters reporting on many such visits were published in *Little Bee*. In one complex report, the teachers describe Major Šramko’s visit to a kindergarten carrying a “machine gun and pistol, but children were

not scared of him. They knew, that in peace time no one shoots” (Little Bee, 1977b, p. 2). It says they first exercised together, to prove to the Major how “strong and healthy children are” (p. 2). The children sing for him and they all walk to a memorial, each child with a flower, and a boy named Pet’ko “guards the memorial for one minute like a real soldier” (p. 2). The Major then tells the children “the saddest fairy tale” (p. 2) about childhood during wartime. However, the Major states that there are also “happy fairy tales” and he creates a white mist from a smoke grenade “just like the one from Cinderella” (p. 3).

The report portrays children as excited, playing all kinds of games in the white mist. The Major explains that soldiers use this white mist when they do not want to be spotted by enemies. The children stand silent for a moment in front of the memorial to pay homage to those who fought for a better life. The children sing: “We feel good here, it is a beautiful day, the sun is shining and the earth smells nice. With grass and flowers together we grow, we feel good and love our homeland.” Uncle Major likes the song and learns it straight away. Uncle Major says: “Because you were so well disciplined and brave, everyone gets a badge.” And he puts a badge on each child’s coat and fires three rockets: one for the fallen heroes, another for freeing the town, and a third for this meeting (p. 3).

Soldiers were also featured on the cover of *Little Bee*. In one, a soldier marches with excited children, and as he turns around and salutes to them, a young boy with a paper soldier hat salutes back (see Image 2). The notion of peace associated with soldiers is emphasized by children carrying flowers in the foreground of an illustration that has a tank surrounded by green bush in the background. The poem that accompanied this picture explains that the tank “is guarding our homeland so we can all be happy” (*Little Bee*, 1980a, p. 1). According to *Little Bee*, kindergarten children admired soldiers and enjoyed marching with them, drawing them, and pretending to be them in their play (*Little Bee*, 1977c). In short, the children were learning how to become active supporters and the country’s youngest patriots.

Neoliberal Patriotism in Contemporary New Zealand

Defining or conceptualizing patriotism in contemporary New Zealand is a challenging undertaking. The East-West, communist-capitalist binaries that so influenced the (re)presentations and performances of patriotism in communist Czechoslovakia no longer exist. Indeed, a time of brutal terrorist attacks on civilian populations has replaced the cold war theater performances of patriotism in schools and on streets. Now, instead of fighting empires, the “enemy,” who in the past children should learn to fear or despise, is represented by a cruel if not evil ideology, which is widely diffused. It is no longer located in one person or government but is represented by small groups of terrorist cells. However, in contrast to other Western countries, which are actively grappling with notions and constructs of patriotism in relation to global issues—the unstable world politics, global terrorism, simmering unrest, and tensions among nations—New Zealand has remained somewhat immune, or at least distanced from and largely ambivalent towards these issues.

This isolation or at least separation from broader trends stems in part from New Zealand’s position in the world. Geographically, New Zealand is an isolated country, with no near neighbors, and seemingly

at the ends of the earth. This geographic distance impacts the psyche of many New Zealanders, making them feel in a position of inferiority—the distant, poor cousin—and consequently builds the notions that New Zealand and New Zealanders have something to prove. This is enhanced by New Zealand’s position as a relatively minor player on the world scene. Internationally, New Zealand is perhaps best known for its rugby team, the All Blacks; for being the setting of the Lord of the Rings films; for the Flight of the Conchords, a male comedy duo; and for Lorde, the female singer-songwriter. Indeed, these are likely the very things about which New Zealanders would demonstrate the most patriotic fervor.

This places New Zealand somewhat at odds from the rising patriotism that is infiltrating the education policy and curriculum materials of other Western countries. For instance, following the 2005 terrorist attacks in London, patriotism has gained increasing prominence in the United Kingdom’s education policy. Conservative politician Michael Gove, in 2009, before he became Minister of Education in the United Kingdom, proclaimed:

There is no better way of building a modern, inclusive patriotism than by teaching all British citizens to take pride in this country’s historic achievements. Which is why the next Conservative government will ensure the curriculum teaches the proper narrative of British History – so that every Briton can take pride in this nation. (Gove, 2009, n.p.)

This statement builds on the words of Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who in 2006 stated:

Just as in war time a sense of common patriotic purpose inspired people to do what is necessary, so in peace time a strong modern sense of patriotism and patriotic purpose which binds people together can motivate and inspire.... [W]e should not recoil from our national history – rather we should make it more central to our education. I propose that British history should be given much more prominence in the curriculum – not just dates, places and names, nor just a set of unconnected facts, but a narrative that encompasses our history. (Brown, 2006, n.p.)

In contrast, there is a decided ambivalence about making nation-state claims in New Zealand, beyond what could be perceived as superficial claims of the superiority of the rugby team and the beauty of the natural landscape. Perhaps some of this reluctance is the result of New Zealand continuing to grapple with its colonial past. While to many, New Zealand—Aotearoa in Maori—has gone further than most countries in addressing and redressing its colonial past, its official position as a bicultural nation remains contested. For some, the biculturalism is misplaced in light of the multiculturalism that now defines New Zealand society. For others, the current form of biculturalism does not go far enough in ascribing Maori rights as tangata whenua, the guardians and original inhabitants of the land. For both camps, the current bicultural positioning and its manifestations in public policy and public institutions, including the education system, create an uneasy relationship to any claims of nation-state patriotism.

It is in this context of geographic isolation and a continued grappling with the country’s colonial past that a new, neoliberal patriotism may be positioned and understood. In the absence of a defining historical narrative and a continued debate over New Zealand as a bicultural nation, a global neoliberalism is present in New Zealand and in the institutions and institutional and political thought that govern the country. As Roberts (2009) has suggested,

this “new patriotism” is not so much centered on a love of one’s country but on the love of a neoliberal orientation to economic and social life, focused more on individual advancement than on communal or national growth. Neoliberal ideas have played an increasingly significant role in New Zealand policy over the past twenty years, not least in the educational models and approaches being adopted. Roberts (2009) claims:

This has been promoted in tandem with the notion of advancing New Zealand as a knowledge economy and society. The new patriotism encourages New Zealanders to accept, indeed embrace, a single, shared vision of the future: one structured by a neoliberal ontology and the demands of global capitalism. (p. 1)

This interplay of patriotism with neoliberalism is evident throughout the current New Zealand Curriculum (2007). As a document, the New Zealand Curriculum is deeply rooted in the neoliberal agenda, with a focus on competitive globalism and how New Zealand and its interests, including her citizens, connect with and contribute to the broader economic world order. The foreword, written by the then Secretary of Education Karen Sewell, includes the following:

There has been no slowing of the pace of social change. Our population has become increasingly diverse, technologies are more sophisticated, and the demands of the workplace are more complex. Our education system must respond to these and the other challenges of our times.... The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education. It takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved. It includes a clear set of principles on which to base curriculum decision making. It sets out values that are to be encouraged, modelled, and explored. It defines five key competencies that are critical to sustained learning and effective participation in society and that underline the emphasis on lifelong learning.

The neoliberal agenda is evident in this statement. There is an argument for a new educational paradigm framed by a rapidly changing world, the advent of the so-called knowledge society and knowledge economy, and exponential developments occurring in digital technologies.

The removal from the curriculum of all content in favor of a concepts, skills, and competencies approach plays into the neoliberal agenda and this new patriotism. New Zealand has one of the most autonomous school systems in the world, in which each school is self-managing, and this has resulted in there being limited channels for building consistent patriotic purpose across education. Unlike the content-rich curriculum of the United Kingdom or the ministry-produced and mandated curriculum materials of communist Czechoslovakia, each New Zealand school has the opportunity to determine how it interprets and teaches the New Zealand Curriculum, including the curriculum materials it utilizes.

The impact of this outcome-based approach, as opposed to a content- or knowledge-based approach, is evidenced through the limiting and narrowing of the historical content being taught in schools (Ormond, 2018) and a corresponding absence of a centrally determined notion of New Zealand history that is

deemed essential for all school children to learn. In their comparison of the history curricula and the teaching of history in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, Harris and Ormond (2018) demonstrate that in New Zealand the history curriculum has become increasingly more generic and less prescriptive, with “selections of historical content largely made on the grounds that they are suitable for addressing the concepts or disciplinary procedures assessed in a particular achievement standard” (p. 9). Even in an assessment that requires students to evaluate an historical event that is “significant to New Zealanders,” Harris and Ormond (2018) found that “the importance of significance as an historical concept can be sidelined as teachers focus upon the suitable selection of an event [for assessment purposes] as their priority” (p. 10). The focus on achievement standards and objectives is prioritized with the teaching of specific content and the role of historical content is increasingly marginalized. This educational development is one offshoot of the impact of neoliberalism on schooling.

An orientation towards the achievement of generic standards and outcomes provides one lens for understanding how the New Zealand education system and curriculum materials sideline more traditional nation-state notions of patriotism in favor of ideas embedded in neoliberal patriotism. However, while nation-state patriotism, such as that developed in the *Little Bee* stories in communist Czechoslovakia, are easily visible in curriculum materials, the “new patriotism” present in the New Zealand Curriculum document is less obvious. Instead, it is embedded within the vision of a “twenty-first-century curriculum,” which emphasizes the development of students’ individual learning capacities and competitiveness rather than a specific national narrative.

It is this focus on generic twenty-first century skills and knowledge that are outlined in the “vision” laid out at the beginning of the curriculum document. This vision positions the purpose of education as the advancement of New Zealand as a nation through ensuring that all young people develop the knowledge, skills, competencies, and dispositions to be effective contributors, not least to the economic progress of the country:

Our vision is for young people:

- Who will be creative, energetic, and enterprising;
- Who will seize the opportunities offered by new knowledge and technologies to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for our country;
- Who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori and Pakeha recognize each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring;
- Who, in their school years, will continue to develop the values, knowledge, and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives;
- Who will be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners.

(Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8)

There is a semblance of nation-state patriotism in this vision as young people are imagined to contribute actively to the advancement of their country. The importance of the future and ensuring future outcomes—

presumably both individual and national—is captured in one of the eight principles underpinning the curriculum document. The Future Focus principle reads: “The curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalization” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). The document tasks education with ensuring that young people will be able to contribute to their country and with establishing the nation’s place in the wider world. However, while positioning the advancement of New Zealand as a nation at the heart of the document’s vision, there is no corresponding content or historical knowledge or understanding of New Zealand as a nation-state embedded within it.

As a consequence, it can reasonably be argued that the vision set out in the *New Zealand Curriculum* is little different from the neoliberal rhetoric that infiltrates the policy documents of numerous international organizations—such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or European Commission—or individual countries. Indeed, it is only the occasional reference to New Zealand as a bicultural country and mention of Maori and Pakeha and the Treaty of Waitangi that provide any sort of contextual anchor to the document. The document as a whole is characterized by generic language and absence of specific content or references that link it specifically to New Zealand. This genericism reinforces the neoliberal patriotism argument being developed here. Rather than a patriotism built on what is uniquely New Zealand, a sense of duty, history, and love of one’s country, patriotism is love of an economic and social orientation. Patriotism is no longer linked to a specific country and its socio-cultural and historical context but to a generic set of global skills, competencies, and ideals.

Shifting (Re)Presentations and Performances of Patriotism in Education

The governing political ideology together with the temporal and geographical context impact the ways in which patriotism is (re)presented and performed through curriculum materials. The political and educational systems of communist Czechoslovakia and contemporary New Zealand could not be more different. The (re)presentations and performances of patriotism through curriculum materials are intimately connected to and informed by their political, geographical, temporal, economic, and social contexts.

The depth of the analysis of the *Little Bee* stories and accompanying images reflects the central importance of patriotism to the government of communist Czechoslovakia. Patriotism was a form of power and control over the citizens and the centralized and heavily prescriptive nature of education enabled curriculum materials like *Little Bee* to play a substantial role in communicating what it meant to be patriotic in communist Czechoslovakia. The neoliberal patriotism that appears to be shaping New Zealand society and school-level education through the curriculum document is in stark contrast to patriotism in communist Czechoslovakia.

By basing the analysis and argument on documents, this essay has provided a reading of patriotism in education in each country context. However, such a reading can only take us so far. There is often a discrepancy between what is communicated (implicitly and explicitly) through texts and what is enacted on the ground. That is, there is a difference between (re)presentations of patriotism in curriculum materials and the performances of patriotism those materials may inspire. To more fully probe the constructions of patriotism in education, it is critical to go beyond texts to engage in the natural settings of schools and classrooms, where the curriculum is enacted.

It is entirely possible that the intended patriotism of both the *Little Bee* stories and the New Zealand Curriculum in fact are operationalized and understood in very different ways by teachers and students. Did kindergarten children in communist Czechoslovakia understand or subscribe to the patriotic visions communicated to them in the *Little Bee* stories? Or did they resist the messages? Similarly, do New Zealand teachers understand and promote the neoliberal agenda and vision as it is presented in the *New Zealand Curriculum*? How do New Zealand schoolchildren encounter, and do they actually understand, neoliberal patriotism?

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Patriotism for People in Diaspora Is Love of Humanity

Ming Fang He

Patriotism is always contested. It is even more contested for people in diaspora. Diaspora (in Greek, διασπορά – “a scattering [of seeds]”) refers to the movement of a population sharing common ethnic identity who are either forced to leave or voluntarily leave their indigenous or ancestral lands and become residents in areas often far removed from their former homes (He, 2010).

In a broader sense, diaspora refers to the situations when indigenous peoples, immigrants, and emigrants are forced to leave or voluntarily leave their tribes, native lands, territories, communities, or countries due to such reasons as imperialism, colonialism, political persecution, economic exploitation, trade or labor migrations. While people in diaspora might not maintain strong ties with their homelands or native lands, they lack full integration into the host lands. This mobile and unsettling existence of diaspora complicates the meaning of patriotism to people in diaspora.

The meaning of patriotism becomes unprecedentedly complicated for people in diaspora in the United States since the recent rise of “draconian, enforcement-based policies and executive orders” (Huerta, 2017, para. 1). These enforcement policies and executive orders have given license to an outbreak of hate speech, harassment, bullying, and violence targeted at immigrants, Latinos, Blacks, Muslims, Jews, Gays, girls, women, and other individuals and groups in diaspora across the United States of America.

Immediately after the 2016 presidential election, the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance Project administered an online survey across the United States. The survey results indicate that “schools with significant numbers of African-American and Hispanic students and immigrant students of color” are experiencing what many teachers describe as trauma, fear, bigotry, anxiety, physical harm, emotional breakdown, despair, division, tension, loss of trust, and hopelessness (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016, p. 4). The enforcement policies and executive orders perpetuate “an isolationist and white nativist philosophy, hearkening back to the more oppressive periods of U.S. history” when individuals and groups in diaspora with diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, religious backgrounds, and sexual orientations “lacked basic civil rights, privileges and freedoms under the law” (Huerta, 2017, para. 1).

What does patriotism mean to people in diaspora at this moment? In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) states,

[H]umanism is the only, and I would go so far as to say, the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history...The human, and humanistic, desire or enlightenment and emancipation is not easily deferred, despite the incredible strength of the opposition... to human freedom. (pp. xxix-xxx)

Thus, patriotism for people in diaspora is love of humanity, which embodies “the common heritage of humanity and common good of humanity” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 29). To protect the common heritage of humanity demands volunteer exile (He, 2010) from commodified, acquisitive, and deskilling societies

to make the impossible possible (Ayers, 2016), to keep boundless human potential evolving (Lorde, 1984/2007), to keep questioning and challenging authoritarian and dominant narratives, to fight against all forms of oppression, to seek a balanced human condition in between contradictions and complexities, and to cultivate beauty, integrity, justice, love, and humanity (Nussbaum, 1997; Schubert, 2009).

To love humanity in inhuman and unjust times calls for radical imagination that keeps “an optimism of the intellect” alive (Harvey, 2000, p. 6); cultivates “educated hope” that evokes “different histories and different futures” and “substantiates...ambivalence while problematizing certainty” (Giroux, 2007, p. xiii); inspires “optimism over despair” (Chomsky, 2017); “provides radical new ways to think about the art of loving” (hooks, 2000, p. xxix); and politicizes possibilities (Olson & Worsham, 2007) without romanticizing or cynicizing the world where we live.

To love humanity in inhuman and unjust times demands engagement in solidarities and joined efforts to move beyond boundaries, transgress orthodoxies, and bureaucratic procedures (Giroux, 2017).

To love humanity in inhuman and unjust times requires us to develop creative insubordination strategies for “challenging forms of domination,” to create “more equitable and just public spheres within and outside of educational institutions” (Mohanty, 1989, p. 207), and to passionately participate in the life of schools, families, and communities.

To love humanity in inhuman and unjust times thrives on passionate involvement, strong commitment, and unfaltering advocacy for disenfranchised, underrepresented, and invisible groups and individuals in diaspora. This passion, commitment, and advocacy cannot be cultivated in isolation. It calls for an exile community, “the hybridity of imagined communities” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5), a movement of community organizing, involving teachers and educational workers with shared experience of teaching against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2001, 2004; Simon, 1992).

To love humanity in inhuman and unjust times, we need to work together as allies, take to heart the predicaments of the oppressed, suppressed, and repressed groups and individuals, and develop ideas, languages, and strategies to enact positive educational and social change that fosters equity, equality, freedom, and social justice. This exile community can only flourish when the efforts of teachers join with the efforts of researchers, educators, administrators, parents, students, community workers, and policy makers to “hope radically, imagine creatively, and act inspirationally” (Ball, O’Connor, & Wilson, 2017, p. 2). This community can only thrive when we work together to cultivate humanity (Nussbaum, 1997), a space where we might live more robustly and develop our human capacities more fully in an increasingly diversified, complicated, and contested world.

As Alice Walker writes in her book *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* (1983/1967): “Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless” (p. xii). Patriotism for people in diaspora is love of humanity.

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A Love-Hate Relationship: Personal Narratives of Pride and Shame as Patriotic Affects

Mark Helmsing

The Office of Alumni Relations for George Mason University—in Fairfax, Virginia, where I teach—is located centrally on the campus. The exterior of the building faces a busy walkway, displaying in vinyl lettering the official slogan of the university’s alumni association: “once a Patriot, always a Patriot.” This motto refers to the university’s Patriot mascot and implies that once a person joins the university as a student, that person becomes a Patriot and will forever remain a Patriot, which, the alumni office presumably hopes, will result in feelings of goodwill that prompt generous financial contributions from alumni donors.

In considering the questions posed to authors for this issue of *Bank Street Occasional Papers*, I think about the way the alumni association slogan performs its own assumptions of patriotism: because you *are* a (George Mason) Patriot, you must feel things for the university as a (George Mason) Patriot. Patriotism works as a kind of sociocultural cement to bond and hold members of pluralistic communities, nations, and states together (Soutphommasane, 2012; Taylor, 2002). Identifying the bonding agents that activate the properties of patriotism as a type of cement can help explain how patriotism works.

In this essay, I (re)construct three autobiographical moments that recall how I experienced patriotism as a student, high school teacher, and university professor. In these narratives, I read encounters with patriotism to look for the affective components at work when patriotism takes shape in moments of performing some aspect of my relation and affiliation to America. In thinking about how patriotism shapes these moments, I focus on two specific affects: pride and shame. For Fortier (2005), whose work I draw on to theorize my experience in this essay, a consideration of pride and shame helps us see patriotism as a mode of relating to the nation, a kind of affiliation that binds citizens to a community, nation, or state. By describing and explaining how I have experienced patriotism in different moments of my life, I offer readers a way to consider how patriotism allows us to simultaneously celebrate and question our own relationship and affiliation to the nation – a love-hate relationship of sorts (Smith & Watson, 2010).

Loyalty and Affiliation

I see patriotism as an issue of belonging, particularly a type of belonging through emotional ties to one’s country of close affiliation. Defining what counts as a close affiliation is tricky, but Bodnar (1996) specifies that one can define a close affiliation by loyalty and the strength of the tie or bond one has to one’s country. I want to consider and unpack the implication this may have for teaching.

As a social studies educator in the United States, I am often expected to have a close affiliation to the idea of America, defined here as both the country of the United States of America and as the imagined construct of America as an idealized space in the world, a home for me by virtue of my U.S. citizenship. Because I teach its history, its cultures, and its character and identity through narratives, beliefs, and

understandings of what America is, has been, and will be (or what it should be through strict normative understandings of America as a national, collaborative civic project), many people I meet think that I must love all things American: the Fourth of July, George Washington, and other strong symbols and icons of a particular vision of America that pervades the field of social studies education. Indeed, when I moved to Northern Virginia outside of Washington, D.C., many of my friends assumed I would be excited to be “so close to it all,” by which they meant colonial history in Williamsburg and Mt. Vernon; U.S. Civil War-era history at Harpers Ferry and Antietam; and the memorials and monuments of American national identity on the Mall near the White House and U.S. Capitol building.

Patriotism as a construct of belonging through emotional ties to one’s country carries the assumption that any American should want to see, visit, or be near all of these markers of American patriotism. For me, by virtue of my profession as a social studies educator I am doubly expected to possess a loyalty and affiliation to these markers. Thus, I am assumed to possess an inclination to take in and enjoy America because it is a primary object I teach to students. I am expected to demonstrate bonds of loyalty and affiliation to America just as teachers of other subjects are presumed to have an affinity and affiliation to the content they teach.

Pride, Shame, and Patriotism

For me as a social studies teacher in America, this notion of affiliation is fraught with emotional difficulties. On the one hand, I am expected to speak virtuously of the ideals of the nation. Patriotism works to support, nurture, and solidify feelings of pride for one’s country, one’s history, one’s national identity. And in fact, I do often feel a strong emotional tie and even pride for my country. Patriotism can give rise to or arise from pride, which allows one to celebrate bonds of affiliation, closeness, and love for a place and an ideal, a sense of connectedness and belonging. These feelings can, in some instances, induce actions that occur out of a “sense of pride” for one’s country: volunteering to serve in the nation’s military; donating resources and energies to a cause or campaign; laboring to preserve, create, and protect particular spaces and places rooted to history, heritage, and belonging. I have often been moved by these forms of patriotism.

And yet, I also feel ashamed by the nation when it has failed to live up to my ideals and I struggle with a version of patriotism that “is repeatedly rehearsed by way of sanitizing the attachment to the nation under a veneer of guiltless pride, one which knows no shame or guilt” (Fortier, 2005, p. 565). When patriotism encounters feelings of shame, my recognition of patriotic pride is called into question.

While I would argue that a critically oriented patriotism includes feelings of shame and uses perceived failures of the nation to imagine how we can do better in the future, most normative performances of patriotism do not allow for feeling shameful for the nation failing to live up to a certain ideal. As a patriotic person, must I refuse or disavow feelings of shame, guilt, and embarrassment for my nation? Fortier (2005) conceptualizes patriotism as a politics that upholds pride and refuses shame; thus, any actions or feelings that question national stories and national identities, express dissent, or attempt to criticize

or condemn the nation are positioned as unpatriotic (p. 566). These actions are threats to the emotional project of loyalty and affiliation to one's country through which patriotism operates.

A patriotism that allows me to feel shame for mis-steps the nation has made allows me to acknowledge that something has gone wrong and must be fixed, corrected, or improved. If necessary, connecting my patriotism to shame allows me to express dismay or even outrage at what is troubling, problematic, or disturbing about my country and how specific events done in the name of the country alter how the idea of my country is interpreted by others both within and outside of its borders. These feelings can induce actions: protesting against a person, action, group, or cause; organizing to improve or ameliorate a bad situation; calling out and criticizing the failings of the past and present histories of one's nation. This is especially true when we shame ourselves by accepting uncritically the patriotism wrapped up in Trumpism and other fascist dogmas that shape public discourse at the time I write this.

However, actions arising in response to shame can appear to threaten or displace patriotic pride and can be seen as diminishing or cheapening the love we have or should have for the country. Thus, pride and shame can collide in the face of competing ideas about what constitutes patriotic acts and feelings.

An event from a family celebration illustrates this process. On Thanksgiving Day in 2017, my uncle, my two adult cousins, and I spent some time debating the actions of the professional football players in the National Football League who chose to kneel during performances of the national anthem before the beginning of games. My uncle argued that to kneel is unpatriotic because it expresses being ashamed of America, as he phrased it, and is a disgrace to the national flag and to the fans. I argued that kneeling is patriotic because the players want their nation to improve and be a better version of itself. Our conversation reached an all too familiar impasse that abruptly ended with the sentiment that we can agree to disagree on what constitutes a patriotic act from a professional athlete in the United States.

Following our conversation that afternoon, a football game aired on the television. As the national anthem started, my uncle instructed one of his young grandsons to place his hand over his heart. The boy refused, loudly proclaiming, "I am not an American!" and "This song is dumb!" His grandfather, predictably, was furious. He instructed the young boy to "act" American: "You are an American, so act like it and show it." I am confident my cousin's six-year-old son was, like many kids his age, seizing the opportunity to capture the attention of people gathered around the television rather than engage in a performative stance of his patriotism. In one sense, the young boy's statement to our family was a way to be contrary and garner attention from us. In another sense, though, he was rejecting the command from my uncle to act American in a specific way that has to accord to normative expectations of pride. To say "I'm not American," even if said in jest as I believe was this case, is taboo in our family. It created tension that went beyond a response of something irritating to something forbidden. I was well aware, perhaps in a way my younger cousin was not, that there are expectations of how to show what is considered a formalized respect for patriotic moments, such as rising for the anthem, or standing at attention to the rising of the national flag.

I share these two different moments from a family holiday gathering to illustrate an imaginary line that separates approved norms for being patriotic from patriotic actions or discourse that can be seen as sub-

versive or detrimental to the cause of the nation. In keeping with what Fortier (2005) says about the politics of pride that circulate around patriotism, my uncle turned his grandson's dissent into a shameful act, assertively laying claim to define for his grandson what a decent, correct relationship is to the nation: full of pride, support, and loyalty, and never, ever renouncing one's identity as an American.

A Patriotic Student

My own questioning stance on patriotism extends backwards into my childhood. As a young boy growing up in the 1980s America of Reagan and Bush, being unpatriotic or simply non-patriotic was one of the most serious transgressions a person could make. Not loving America was such a profound taboo that it ranked highest in my internalized pathological list of shameful feelings, which also included my growing attraction to persons of the same sex, my unease and rejection of doctrines and attitudes professed by my family's Methodist church, and my disappointment at not conforming to expectations of how I should perform my gender as a boy. These transgressions, I suspected, would be marginally more accepted and condoned than the cardinal sin of not feeling love for one's country.

This performative act of showing love and adoration for my country took on an explicitly theatrical mode in 1991. I was in third grade, wearing a red, white, and blue necktie along with other male classmates as we stood on our school stage, singing Lee Greenwood's song, "God Bless the USA." We were part of a pageant honoring soldiers fighting in the Gulf War's Operation Desert Storm. I have a few clear memories of this moment, one of my mother sitting in the audience with tears streaming down her face. I also have a muscle memory of making a fist and jerking it in a rightward motion to accompany the lyrics, "and I'm proud to be an American," as each word reaches a successively higher note. Sometimes I feel this muscle memory in my arm as I walk past the Office of Alumni Relations on campus or stand for the national anthem at a baseball game.

I oscillate between the politics of pride and the politics of shame encircling patriotism. As a child, I associated patriotism with crying, tears, and sadness. Being proud of one's country was a feeling visible only in the presence of tears. I remember seeing my parents cry as we watched Whitney Houston perform the national anthem at Super Bowl XXV during the Gulf War in 1991. I also remember this happening four years later, when my parents and I watched news coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing, and ten years later, when they called me in the afternoon of September 11 to ask if I was okay. I remember feeling anxious and uncomfortable, unsure of what to say or what to feel. I felt a sense of shame during the Gulf War Super Bowl performance and Oklahoma City bombing news coverage when my parents were crying. I experienced it as showing weakness. But I also felt ashamed that I did not know how to properly act American in those moments. It seemed evident to me that love of country meant I needed to perform a certain way that was in keeping with my parents' deep sadness and poignant patriotism.

I felt another form of shame in the immediate aftermath of the events of 9/11. As a university undergraduate student in my sophomore year, I had not yet developed a finely attuned political disposition and political identity. I attended town hall meetings, residence meetings, community rallies and protests, and other

civic gatherings to denounce attacks on Muslims and other ethnic minorities in the United States and to call out the hypernationalistic rhetoric spiking around “America First” discourse in the public sphere. I remember a professor grabbing the microphone at a campus town hall meeting to shout that 9/11 was not real violence. He told the audience that the real violence was the naturalized acts of violence – the daily dehumanization and brutalization of poverty, racism, and oppression in America that preceded 9/11.

This encounter with patriotism was bookended by both shame and guilt. I was ashamed to realize this was a lived truth and reality in America—my country—and also ashamed that I neither knew this nor had been able to reach in my own thought what I found to be a profound and startling insight from this impassioned professor. Ahmed (2004) calls our attention to these feelings as she explains that “shame becomes not only a mode of recognition of injustices committed against others, but also a form of nation building” (p. 102). This professor helped me develop an understanding of our nation that is built upon violence and a history that shames me. At the other end of this, as a high school teacher seeking to enlighten my own students as I felt enlightened by the professor, I would learn that using my pedagogy to recognize past and present injustices in America, committed against Americans and others, could easily be seen by my students as performing guilt. To act American, I would learn as a high school social studies teacher, means never having to say you are guilty.

A Patriotic Teacher

As a high school social studies teacher, I found that disavowals of guilt are often never far away from the potential for shame. To illustrate this, I share an event that occurred one day in an eleventh grade U.S. history course at my first high school teaching position. I had been presenting examples from American popular culture in the era of Jim Crow that articulated racial hierarchies in childhood, using examples from blackface minstrelsy, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Raggedy Ann dolls, and the Walt Disney film *Song of the South*. I was attempting to explain how the making of whiteness and blackness was related to citizenship and popular culture in America. After leading a class discussion with my students on their impressions of racial stereotypes in scenes from *Song of the South* that we viewed in class, one student, whom I will call Lucas, asked me: “Helmsing, why do you hate America so much?”

I am forever re-creating in my mind Lucas’ question, his posture in the chair, his halfgrin, the baggy camouflage pants he always wore tucked into his black boots. I pulled out a passive-aggressive move I often used when on the defensive, asking Lucas what he meant and if he could explain his question because I did not understand it. He said that it seemed “all you want to do is tell us America is bad.” Lucas added, “I don’t think you believe in America, Helmsing.” I did not have the courage to admit to Lucas that on most days, the feelings I have for America, while not hateful, range from irritation and disgust to guilt, anxiety, and paranoia. This is no less true in 2018 than it was in 2004, perhaps even more so now.

These feelings, however adversarial they might have appeared to Lucas, came to me through my philosophy of teaching. I’d read enough critical pedagogy in my teacher preparation program to feel an affinity for teaching for social change and social improvement, and to want to open new vistas of possibilities for

my students. I felt a duty to recast how my students thought about America. I was trying to locate in my pedagogy a spirit of dissent that Bercovitch (1993) finds throughout the history of American cultural and intellectual thought, a dissensus that serves “to incite the imagination, to unleash the energies of reform, to encourage diversity and accommodate change” (p. 355).

Johnston (2007) defines patriotism abstractly, as affects that “routinely point beyond the immediately political to something else...the nature of things, the way of the world, or the foundations of life” (p. 22). In this way, patriotism often operates invisibly in social studies education as a socializing machine harnessing feelings, emotion, and knowledge to visions of a possible life expressed through images, narratives, and actions. When I think about the patriotism that animates social studies education, I see Lucas asking me why I hate America. For Lucas, patriotism is not negotiable, its practices and effects are not situational, and guilt over the actions of one’s nation is weak and unacceptable. Being American means loving America, “for patriotism’s self-love is allied with affective exceptionalism,” regardless of any discrepancies or deficiencies in America’s standing, its actions, or its image (Johnston, 2007, p. 23).

Another story from this period in my high school teaching career illustrates these uneasy feelings in performative acts of patriotism. In 2007, the Indiana General Assembly and then-state governor Mitch Daniels passed new laws regulating patriotic expressions in Indiana’s public schools. These regulations required schools to display the American flag in every classroom, provide a daily moment of silence, and promote the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance each morning. I was adamant that I could not be forced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. My face was hot and flushed with embarrassment when I chose to remain seated when the Pledge of Allegiance was delivered over the intercom system. My students turned around and watched me sit, each day, all year. When a student asked me why I chose not to stand and recite the pledge, I explained my perspective to the class: I maintained that reciting the pledge should be a personal choice that one is moved to do on their own accord and not through forced regulations. At that moment, the context of my politicized choice made visible through my personal action turned into something pedagogical. The patriotism of pedagogy continued to perplex me throughout my time teaching high school students, and, as I later discovered, when I entered the university classroom as an instructor of social studies education methods courses for teachers.

A Patriotic Professor

While living two time zones away from Indiana, Indiana politics entered the university classroom where I taught a methods course in secondary social studies education for teacher candidates. It was November 2016. Then Vice President-elect and former Indiana governor Mike Pence attended an evening performance of the musical *Hamilton* on Broadway in New York City. At certain points in the show the cast was forced to stop performing because the audience would not stop booing Mr. Pence (Saperstein, 2016). According to news reports of the event, cast members thanked Mr. Pence for attending the performance, with cast member Brandon Victor Dixon addressing Mr. Pence directly:

We are the diverse America who are alarmed and anxious that your new administration will not protect us, our planet, our children, our parents, or defend us and uphold our inalienable rights. We hope this show has inspired you to uphold our American values, and work on behalf of ALL of us (Saperstein, 2016).

The following day when my class next met, a heated debate erupted about the appropriateness of the *Hamilton* performers addressing Mr. Pence at the conclusion of the performance, and beseeching him to unite Americans through diversity and compassion and reject the ideologies of divisiveness associated with the burgeoning Trump administration's worldview.

Some of my students felt the action of the musical's cast was a shock tactic, meant to incite an audience they assumed was largely composed of liberals and left-leaning theater patrons. One student argued that both the cast members of *Hamilton* and the music itself (and, presumably, its passionate fans) overlooked the aggrieved "deplorables" who had been ignored, belittled, and marginalized by liberal elites, who were perfectly symbolized by New York City theatergoers.

A group of my students pushed back on this assessment. For them, the darker side of patriotism, allowed to grow with the rise of Trump and his politics, illuminated how racism, intolerance, and bigotry must be called out in every instance, in all spaces, including (and especially) a performance of *Hamilton* attended by the vice president-elect. Confining shame and guilt to abstract racists or xenophobes would not do in this political moment, they felt.

I wondered how to intervene, or even if I should. What should I say? What could I say? The recognition that I should feel something and say something gave way to worrisome indecision. I was not prepared to face a patriotism inflected by new forms of political ideology inaugurated with Trump. How was I to teach patriotism in this moment? How was I to advocate for particular ways to draw upon shared identities as national subjects to act American? The beautiful sentiment about a diverse nation, a better version that American could aspire to be, was, in that moment Mr. Dixon addressed Mr. Pence, a robust patriotic act, that took shame and pride and combined them to an effective invitation to think deeply about how America can be interpreted in a better, more progressive future.

A shared identity for national subjects in America felt somewhat impossible then and still feels somewhat impossible, given the fractious and fractured feelings of belonging and compassion in this first half of Donald Trump's presidential term. The feelings and emotions of nativism, nationalism, White supremacy, xenophobia, and defensiveness coalesce in an ideology often termed "Trumpism" (Connolly, 2018). The national version of patriotism associated with and promoted by Trumpism calls for a belief in "America First" in order to "Make America Great Again," an ideological space in which it is patriotic to call the media the enemy of the people and carriers of fake news, and that uses ugliness, aggression, and denial in the face of any and all critiques and skepticism of Trumpism and the patriotism it performs (or perverts). In opposition to the patriotic feelings produced by Trumpism, many are calling for new forms of patriotic feelings that "would defend our commitment to pluralism while also stressing ideas shared across all of our differences" (Dionne, Ornstein, & Mann, 2017, p. 13).

Concluding Thoughts

In this essay, I have considered my sense of myself as a patriotic person, attempting to think through how I as an educator encounter patriotism. In an introduction to an anthology of writing offering “new stories and art” about being American, Viet Thanh Nguyen (2018) claims “the contest for our American identity isn’t strictly a political affair. It is also a matter of storytelling” (p. xvii). The stories I tell in this essay perhaps present me as shamefaced about what I feel when I encounter patriotic feelings or when I feel attached to “America.” Yet, I find that balancing a politics of pride with a politics of shame provides a hopeful route through patriotic feelings. It is an understanding that now fully informs my teaching and may be informative for others.

Through this balancing of a love-hate relationship to the nation, pride and shame rapidly circulate in ways we may not be able to apprehend in a given moment. At this year’s annual Washington, D.C. Pride Festival, I felt pride for being part of a nation that allowed a free assembly of persons to gather and celebrate a growing acceptance of sexual diversity and love, won through decades of activist organizing and legal, social, and political fighting for recognition and belonging. I was proud to see the Black female mayor of Washington, D.C. march in the Pride parade, along with teachers and students from various schools in the D.C. public school system. I saw people waving both rainbow flags and the national flag of the United States. Later in the afternoon, attending a Washington Nationals baseball game, I was proud to take off my baseball cap and wave it along with other members of the crowd to celebrate U.S. soldiers who had recently returned from active deployment overseas and were admitted as free guests to the baseball game. Simultaneously, I received a notification alert on my phone and then read news updates about unfolding developments related to child migrant detention facilities in Texas, a tweet from President Trump attacking and denigrating Canada, and comments from a Virginia political candidate, Corey Stewart, calling immigrants to the United States “animals.” I felt pangs of grief, anger, sadness, guilt, and resignation, all facets of a shame about America failing to live up to the ideals of openness, acceptance, and tolerance I saw on display at the Pride parade.

The circulation of pride and shame will always play out in those moments when we see, feel, and perform patriotism. They are crucial contingencies through which our understandings of, and commitments to, the nation can be enriched and expanded to include better conversations with friends, relatives, students, teachers, strangers. This can lead to what Railton (2017) describes as a patriotism invested with hope as it acknowledges the dark realities of how the nation has fallen short of whatever ideas, ideals, and ambitions it sets forth for its people. Patriotism is, finally, strengthened through the admission of shame, as it calls us to imagine alternatives to dark and difficult moments in our nation’s past and present, moments we cannot escape or ignore in our teaching, our collective memory and cultural narratives, and in our daily performances of being American.

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Patriotism? No Thanks!

Madhu Suri Prakash

Patriotic fever reigned supreme in my son's fifth grade classroom in the public elementary school he had attended since kindergarten. It was in a middle-sized university town in the United States.

Framed photos of each student flouting the flag with patriotic pride announced his teacher's curriculum and pedagogy. Mrs. ABZ's message, at least as experienced by my son and me, was "Do or die!" You either subscribe to her patriotic philosophy of education, or you die as a legitimate and valued member of the class.

The school principal accepted that this was unpalatable, undemocratic, inappropriate, unjust and mis-educative – to say the least. But she lacked the power to control it. She thus offered the "best" third option: moving my son to the second elementary school she administered, a few blocks away.

"Unjust!" my confident son protested in moral outrage. "Why should I leave my school? I get good grades. The principal should require Mrs. ABZ to move instead."

Unwilling to be frightened into silence, my son and I collaborated on a required homework project, drawing upon Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1996) and Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980). In response, ABZ screamed without restraint, viciously attacking our unpatriotic assignment.

The next morning my son awoke, psychologically beaten down and broken – unrecognizable. Always enthused about his elementary school, but now still lying in bed, he tearfully announced: "I don't want to go to school." Like refugees, we carried our belongings to the alternative elementary school under the principal's jurisdiction. Shame for succumbing to patriotic bullying sat sickeningly in our bellies.

Children were subjected to the microcosm of ABZ's patriotic fervor for the next decade. It opened the door of our understanding to the macrocosm of patriotism across the world—waging war, violence, death and destruction on "the otherness of the other."

This episode was only one instance of the dislocations that have framed my life. I have lived in three nation-states – USA, Mexico, and India—despite my deep desire to stay rooted in familiar, communal soil.

My son's story compelled me to remember his ancestors' fears and flight from the patriotism creating Pakistan and India in 1947. Before my birth, my people—Sikhs and Punjabis—were brutally wrenched from their lands and their communities as part of the modern promise of building free nation-states.

Like millions of others, I was systematically educated to be ignorant of the convoluted plots and machinations that manufactured India, Pakistan and other modern nation-states.

For a long time, having become a citizen of a democratic nation-state, I assumed that I had escaped the abject wretchedness of being a refugee. Today, I am suffering the consequences of playing this con game of ignorance under the cover of patriotism.

From New Delhi, India—my original home—I sought to flee from all modes of environmental and social violence: the “price of progress”; the price the “underdeveloped” were forced to pay at the end of World War II, when colonialism got a new lease on life in the newly manufactured “independent nation-states”; the price paid by common women and men who were seldom allowed to affirm their real preferences.

From Cuernavaca, Mexico—an alternative home I sought—I fled the violence of a country where it is no longer possible to draw a line between the world of organized crime and the nation-state’s institutional world.

Patriotism, for me?

When I am offered today the gift of belonging to a democratic nation-state, under the condition of praying the patriotic pledge of allegiance, I am forced to take a step back and reflect on what it means.

The modern nation-state and modern education were simultaneously conceived with and for patriotism. John Amos Comenius is rightly considered the father of modern education. The Czechs see him as a symbol of the Czech nation. His idea to teach everybody everything cannot be separated from his patriotism. He was 56 years old when the Westphalia treaties, creating the modern nation-state, were signed. He struggled for many years, patriotically, to give the Czechs an independent nation-state. The best tool to achieve it: modern education, compulsory learning.

The idea of democracy was born in Greece and took its modern form in the United States. Both were societies with slaves; racist and misogynous. The democratic nation-state, the political form of capitalism, is a patriarchal design modeled on racist and sexist patriotism. This political design was imposed, never spontaneously born among peoples.

Patriotism is inseparable from military establishments waging wars ceaselessly across the globe. Patriotic narratives inculcated from womb to tomb remain central to creating and sustaining all kinds of divisions separating “us” from “them.” Instead of that violent path, I have been looking for and finding alternatives of authentic self-governance that escape the farce of modern democracies. People by the millions, transmogrified into disposable human beings by globalized capital, are growing alternatives organically.

As Gustavo Esteva and I discuss in *Grassroots Postmodernism* (2014), and as numerous other authors in *Yes!* magazine and other places argue, many of these alternatives begin with food, with the separation of corporatized nation-states from our bellies/mouths/intestinal tracts. The Food Sovereignty movement—organized by Via Campesina, the biggest peasant grassroots collective in the world—and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) all across the earth inspire millions of eaters like me and you every single day—or, more accurately, several times a day. Eaters are moved to join forces with their community farmers to celebrate the pleasures of eating healthful, tasteful, and justice- and eco-centered foods. This ensures that nation-states and their corporate backers have less power to sicken eaters—us—with pesticides, herbicides, GMOs and other toxins that destroy soils, air, water and the entire web of life.

Such acts of affection and care are revolutionary, down to earth. They are a celebration of people's power. They are initiatives of common people over nation-state and corporate tyrannies. They are entwined with seeking alternatives to mainstream, modern education by creating their own pathways to learning-teaching in freedom. They are grounded in common sense: common women and men rooting autonomy, self-governance and transparent self-determination on the local, human scale.

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