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Elizabeth Anderson interviewed by John White

ELIZABETH ANDERSON AND JOHN WHITE

The distinguished US philosopher Elizabeth Anderson, who teaches at the University of Michigan, answers questions put to her by John White about educational aspects of her work in moral and political philosophy. She begins by describing her indebtedness to Dewey in his views on developing students' capacities for intelligent enquiry and as citizens in a democracy. She elaborates on this in her emphasis on children learning fraternally together with others of diverse class, racial and ethnic backgrounds. She also discusses the control of education, looking at the role of the state and other political authorities in education, the charter school movement and home schooling. Well-known for her views on democratic equality (as distinct from equality of fortune) and on an adequacy criterion of fairness, she shows how these ideas apply to education for a democratic society. This takes her into critical discussions of equality of educational opportunity, education as a positional good, and the rich variety of educational aims fitting a democracy of equals. Anderson has also written about the errors of theistic religion as well as two award-winning recent books on the imperative of social integration and on the authoritarian powers of employers. Developing these thoughts in an educational direction, she writes here about religious and moral education, problems with assimilationist and multicultural approaches to schooling, and preparation for work as an educational aim.

John White: You hold a professorship in the name of John Dewey, who also taught at the University of Michigan. There has recently been a growing interest in the UK in Dewey's educational philosophy, not before time.[1] How do you see your own work on philosophical aspects of education in relation to Dewey's?

Elizabeth Anderson: Dewey's philosophy of education stresses two ideas. First, education should develop students' capacities for intelligent inquiry, not just for learning what is already known. Second, education should develop students' capacities as citizens in a democracy. These two ideas are intimately linked in Dewey's philosophy and practice. I stress his practice and

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not only his philosophical writing, because, as a pragmatist, Dewey held that the key test of any idea is found in putting it into practice and seeing whether it enables us to solve or at least make progress on the problems we face.

Regarding the first objective, Dewey ran a successful campaign to free American higher education from control by the churches, which stressed preaching over teaching, and remake it on a model that combined broad education in the liberal arts with the German style research university. Liberal arts education plays a critical role in the outstanding creativity of American higher education. From a US perspective, European students specialise far too early. As Dewey demonstrated through his extraordinarily broad range, every subject connects to others: the arts and humanities inform the natural and social sciences, and vice versa. Premature specialisation impairs the cross-fertilisation that enables inquirers to imagine novel possibilities.

Dewey is better known for his famous University of Chicago Laboratory School, which still operates. Dewey was not a good school administrator, and his original ambitions for child-centred inquiry were excessive. Yet suitably modified, his vision continues to inspire. About 20 years ago I considered a job offer from the University of Chicago, during which I visited the Lab School. Teachers there testified that many of Dewey's ideas were still being implemented successfully in the elementary grades, although parental anxiety over competitive college admissions had led the school to adopt a more traditional curriculum for the later grades.

That is a shame, as teenagers have, if anything, a stronger knowledge base for conducting inquiry than young children. My daughter was lucky to win the lottery for Ann Arbor's Community High School, which runs some of its classes on Dewey's model. Her 9th grade science class spent weeks on the Huron River, measuring biodiversity and pollution, while learning about ecology, hydrology and related subjects. Her American history class spent weeks on an archaeological dig of the oldest residence in Ann Arbor. For the first class assignment, students were given a topographical map of the property and had to figure out where the original owners would have dug their well, and placed their latrine. Then they dug where they thought the latrine would have been, because that's where people left their trash, which is what archaeologists study. As my daughter discovered, education comes alive with hands-on inquiry of this sort, and develops skills far beyond what can be acquired only from studying digested summaries of what others already know.

Regarding the second objective, Dewey was clear that education for democracy requires educating students from different walks of life *together*, so they can learn to work together to construct solutions to the problems they share. That is the essence of democracy. Dewey did not write much about race, although he was an early member of the NAACP.[2] His focus was on integration of schools by socioeconomic class. He successfully argued that public schools should include all classes of student, rather than separating the working classes and upper classes in separate schools. This was the foundation of the comprehensive public high schools that still prevail in the US, although Dewey's integrationist ideal has been undermined by within-school tracking, class segregation of neighbourhoods, and charterisation.[3]

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My book, *The Imperative of Integration*, reconstructs Dewey's integrationist vision of education for democracy for the 21st century (Anderson, 2010). In that work, I regard schools as one site of democratic education, along with workplaces and other institutions of civil society. For me, as for Dewey, democracy is a mode of collective inquiry for discovering solutions to common problems, as I have argued in 'The Epistemology of Democracy' (Anderson, 2006).

JW: John Dewey famously described philosophy as 'the general theory of education'. Do you agree with him on this?

EA: This is a highly illuminating perspective to take on philosophy. Keep in mind that for Dewey, education is about intelligent inquiry, not simply transmission of what is already known. His perspective thus places epistemology at the centre of philosophy, where epistemology is understood not as inquiry into what knowledge is, but rather inquiry into how to get it, at the most general level. The results of such inquiry are incorporated in the general theory of education. With Dewey, I think such inquiry needs to be conducted in close collaboration with the social sciences, and in view of the practical problems we are trying to solve. Pragmatist epistemology thus encompasses moral, political and social inquiry. Pragmatist metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science likewise draw our attention to the general materials and techniques needed for successful inquiry.

JW: In 'The Ethical Limitations of the Market' (Anderson, 1990), you write that 'one of the main purposes of education at [elementary and secondary] level is to prepare children for responsible citizenship, exercised in a spirit of fraternity with others of diverse class, racial, and ethnic backgrounds' (p. 200). Would you like to elaborate on this? Do you have views on what kind of school curriculum activities are suitable for helping to realise this aim?

EA: I develop this idea at greater length in *The Imperative of Integration* (Anderson, 2010) and related works on affirmative action in education ('Racial Integration as a Compelling Interest': Anderson, 2004a; 'Integration, Affirmative Action, and Strict Scrutiny': Anderson, 2002). *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court case that ruled racial segregation of schools to be unconstitutional, inspired tremendous experimentation in the public schools in the 1960s and 70s, when the courts were vigorously enforcing it. The resulting integration of Southern schools was dramatic and yielded positive educational results for children of all races, as I document in my book. It's not just that quantitative measures of educational achievement improved. Students also learned to cooperate together, and white racial prejudice declined.

Successful integration involved pedagogical innovation. Because race tracks class in the US, much of what had to be learned was how to educate students together when they come to school with unequal background knowledge and skills. The kinds of knowledge and skills that middle class white children bring to school tend to be privileged, esteemed, and

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presupposed by similarly middle class white teachers. Yet black children, including poor black children, come to school with skills and knowledge that white middle class students often lack. These differences can be constructively combined for joint learning, rather than pathologised in ways that reproduce race and class hierarchies. One key is to develop lesson plans around integrated team projects that draw upon the full range of diverse skills held by diverse students. Team success thereby requires group recognition of the reciprocal contributions of all team members. These techniques are equally applicable at the college level. At University of Michigan, project-centred approaches to introductory science courses, which draw upon diverse skills, have reduced or even eliminated race, class and gender gaps in achievement, while also offering more sophisticated training much closer to how cutting-edge scientific research is done.

Education in athletics and the arts—especially music, drama, dance and filmmaking—also offers rich opportunities for the development of the non-cognitive social skills of teamwork and mutual respect, and cultivation of ingroup identities and sympathies that cross group boundaries in integrated schools. One advantage of sports and the arts is that racial and class stereotypes about who is 'good' in these endeavours are much less salient, or at least don't track group privilege, and thus often offer excellent opportunities for students from disadvantaged groups to assume leadership positions, from which others may learn.

I would add that young students should also study philosophy. In the US, and I believe also the UK, philosophy is introduced to students far too late. Young children are natural philosophers, eager to engage big topics such as free will and determinism, scepticism and moral problems. Step into any school classroom, even in elementary grades, and it is easy to pose philosophical questions that will get the students excitedly debating them, generating most of the classic positions on those questions along the way. Since few students will have prior background in philosophy, this is a subject where social group inequalities are unlikely to be salient, where students can also learn to constructively engage differences of opinion.

All of this goes against the grain, because dominant models of education, which stress individual mastery of the types of knowledge and skills that can be measured on standardised tests, define achievement narrowly. Anxiety about test scores and competition for seats at selective colleges drive parents to demand segregation of students into separate classrooms by narrow measures of academic achievement (which track class and race), and distinct curricula for different classes of student. These practices reproduce class and race hierarchy, and disable students—including, most importantly, privileged students—from learning how to cooperate as equals with diverse others. Thus, they lose the most vital education of all, for democratic citizenship. Notwithstanding powerful evidence from schools that reject tracking that doing so improves the education of poor students and students of colour at no academic cost to white middle class students, privileged parents demand schools that reproduce hierarchy and undermine democracy.

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JW: In 'The Ethical Limitations of the Market' you also write in the same critique of a voucher system in education: 'Since the content of ideals of elementary and secondary education is wrapped up in political ideals of democracy, fraternity, and citizenship, there is a strong argument for determining the shape of education through political institutions, which provide a public forum for the discussion and evaluation of reasoned ideals' (Anderson, 1990, p. 200). In the UK the national state determines the shape of education in state schools (but not in Academies), via a National Curriculum. Could this be in line with your suggestion? Or would you agree with Mill in *On Liberty* (1962[1859], p. 239) that 'a general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another'?

EA: It is important to distinguish the general democratic preference for public education (a preference only, not a state monopoly) from what level of government should operate it. The United States is a very large country, with a long tradition of federalism that recognises state and local governments as largely sovereign in educational matters. Most Americans wouldn't trust the national government with the authority to design a national curriculum. There is too much disagreement on these matters. The national government exercises influence through its funding and its antidiscrimination requirements, but largely defers to the states with respect to curriculum content. Such dispersion of state authority has advantages and disadvantages. Contrary to Mill's worry, the US model shows how a public educational system can generate substantial diversity across and even within school districts in curricula and pedagogy. My daughter's alternative high school is a case in point; there are many others.

Decentralisation also enables significant educational experimentation from which others have learned—federalism's 'laboratories of democracy'. This arrangement has generated some of the best public education systems in the world. Massachusetts, with its stress on education going back to colonial times, has a public education system that rivals Finland's. Unfortunately, such dispersion of authority also generates some bad educational systems, which serve disadvantaged students poorly, and which reproduce the prejudices, ignorance and social hierarchies of the people who run them.

From a Deweyan perspective, these defects in US education reflect the failure of the state to live up to the demands of democracy, understood as a mode of life in which citizens from all backgrounds cooperate as equals in solving or coping with the problems they face together. This is a vicious circle: undemocratic schools reproduce an undemocratic society, which reproduces its inequalities in the schools. *Brown v. Board of Education* forged important paths out of this circle.

Conservative backlash dismantled many of these gains, starting in the 1980s, powered partly by the enduring racism of American society, and partly by the plutocratic ideology of the 'free market', which has long enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with white supremacy. Market ideology resonates not only with a conception of education as like any consumer good open to choice based on idiosyncratic preferences, but with authoritarian conceptions of parental control over children—for it is the parent's tastes,

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not the children's, that largely determine what education the children will get in the market. Such authoritarian ideas also underlie the home schooling movement, which almost always follows a Protestant evangelical model of indoctrination that aims to ensure that children are exposed neither to ideas that challenge their parents' beliefs, nor children who are not fellow-believers. From Dewey's perspective, and from a democratic perspective, this barely counts as education, which consists not in the transmission of a subset of ideas already believed, but in empowering diverse students to think for themselves, and inquire together.

In defence of home-schooling, advocates point to students' test scores. But test scores don't measure most of the things that matter for citizenship: interpersonal skills of constructive engagement with people who *don't* share one's beliefs, who have different social identities, cultural and religious backgrounds, and perspectives, with the creative potential to construct collective solutions to shared problems that are not already envisioned by the previous generation.

It is difficult enough, with class- and race-segregated neighbourhoods, to create public schools that expose children to the real diversity of their country. Wherever choice is introduced outside of explicit integrative policies, parents tend to exercise it in ways that reduce children's exposure to diversity. Parental ignorance, fear and distrust of people different from themselves is thereby transmitted to the next generation.

In the US, this has not primarily worked through vouchers for private schools, which are unpopular. Nor are Catholic schools, which comprise most of the private schools in the US, much to worry about. Unlike Protestant Christian academies, which have often been the refuge of white supremacists, US Catholic schools often serve diverse urban populations, are not class-exclusionary, and even teach students of different faiths. Rather, the chief danger to democratic education in the US lies in the charter school movement, whereby nominally public schools obtain public funding with no accountability to local government, and often no accountability to any unit of government. While some charter schools have served their students better than their fully public counterparts, others perform far worse. Charter schools in Michigan, which operate with no significant public oversight, and are frequently managed by for-profit companies, are often little more than scam operations that channel tax revenues to private investors, while delivering negligible education to children. Some provide no instructional materials to teachers, who must develop the entire curriculum themselves, even if they have no prior teaching experience. In poor cities such as Detroit, for-profit companies have often purchased the only school building within walking distance, and thereby obtained a neighbourhood monopoly on education because the parents lack transportation to more distant schools.

It is possible to design a school system that is accountable to the public and encourages integration, while also offering some school choice. That would meet Mill's worry about homogeneity while also serving democracy. Limited and carefully regulated non-profit charter schools could even be part of the mix. But the current free-for-all for public funding of functionally

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private schools without public oversight, especially when the profit motive, sectarian interests, and xenophobic and racist parental preferences shape the offerings, has been bad for education and bad for democracy.

JW: Politicians in the UK and elsewhere often claim that their educational policies are egalitarian because they provide ‘equality of opportunity’ for students to make the best of themselves. Do you agree?

EA: This is nonsense, even when judged in its own terms. In both the US and the UK, curricula, pedagogy and resources and educational outcomes are sharply stratified by class. In the US, students disadvantaged along lines of race, class and disability suffer pervasive discrimination and segregation, particularly through harsh disciplinary policies that deprive them of educational opportunities. Even if these policies were not applied in a discriminatory manner, they are still unjust in being tailored to the interests and habits of the privileged (as I argue in ‘Race, Culture, and Educational Opportunity’: Anderson, 2012).

Moreover, equality of opportunity is a defective standard of justice for educational contexts, where the question is how to allocate opportunities to *develop* talents and motivations not already given. Typically, the standard imagines that each child possesses some innate potential talent and motivation, with those of equal innate potential entitled to equal educational investment. But this supposes the justice of a ‘natural aristocracy’ to which egalitarians have no reason to defer. It also wrongly objects to parents investing more in the education of their children because they value education highly. This forces people to limit their pursuit of a socially valuable conception of the good to the tastes of the median voter. (I spell out these objections and more in ‘Rethinking Equality of Opportunity’: Anderson (2004b)).

Most importantly, the idea of equality of opportunity focuses too much on the value of education for the people who have it, and not enough on the value of education to citizens in a democratic society. How should education be designed to promote a society of equals, in which people from different walks of life can articulate their diverse concerns in ways that get uptake from policymakers? A notionally ‘meritocratic’ elite overwhelmingly drawn from privileged sectors of society is an elite largely ignorant of, indifferent to, and unaccountable to the less advantaged. This remains true even if it arose from ‘equality of opportunity’. The key to a democratic society is that those occupying positions of responsibility and power—positions that generally require high degrees of education—are themselves diverse, and have been educated together, so that they are equipped to work together as equals. (See my ‘Fair Opportunity in Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective’: Anderson (2007b); and *The Imperative of Integration* (2010)).

JW: Could you briefly explain why, in your celebrated article ‘What is the Point of Equality?’ you favour ‘democratic equality’ over ‘equality of fortune’? (Anderson, 1999). Should we conceive education for citizenship as aiming at the former?

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EA: Equality is an ideal of social relations. Democratic equality captures the idea that a society of equals must take a democratic form. By contrast, equality of fortune advances a mathematical or cosmic conception of equality, which focuses on how much I have compared to how much you have, independently of how we are to relate to each other, and hence of what we need to be able to relate to each other as equals. Moreover, its conception of equality is so thin that the exceptions—justifications of inequality based on desert and individual responsibility—threaten to swallow the rule. Harsh and stinting conceptions of desert and individual responsibility have always been the refuge of defenders of unjust and oppressive social hierarchies. There are no fair ways to clean up these notions so they can justly play the immense structural roles they play in equality of fortune.

It's not that considerations of desert and personal responsibility have no place in a just society. Any modern society will deploy a plurality of such notions in diverse, local contexts that don't much affect the basic structure of opportunities. My objection is rather that to make considerations of desert and personal responsibility fundamental is to lose sight of the structural—that is, relational—features of society that are the core subject of justice, as Rawls always rightly insisted.

In the game of musical chairs that characterises our winner-takes-all economy, equality of fortune advocates are focused on whether who fails to get a chair is due to bad luck rather than bad choices. If the losers fail to get a chair because they are less hard-working, attentive or prudent than the winners, then it's all ok! Whereas relational egalitarians view these considerations as a secondary distraction from the principal issues: who is writing the rules of the game to be winner-takes-all? What kinds of social relations are we constituting among ourselves when we live by such rules? Are they compatible with a society of equals, or do they effectively underwrite the marginalisation, stigmatisation and subordination of those deemed by the majority to be less virtuous? Relational egalitarians insist rather that the rules be written so that all have access to sufficient goods to be able to sustain relations of equality to each other in a democratic society.

Education is one of those vital goods. On a relational conception, we look not only to the quantity of education each citizen gets, but to the content and social context of education, to judge whether it supports a society of equals. Equality of opportunity focuses on quantities and not content or social context. For relational egalitarians, education must enable citizens to work together as equals. In our non-ideal inegalitarian societies, group inequality is reproduced by spatial and role segregation. To create a society of equals, diverse citizens need to be educated together, where they can learn directly from others how life is different for them, and how to cooperate with diverse others on terms of equality.

JW: In 'Fair Opportunity in Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective' (2007b), why do you applaud a shift 'from an "equality" to an "adequacy" standard of fair educational opportunity'?

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EA: There is a tendency among those who adopt a quantitative equality of education standard to view education as a positional good, in which more education for some amounts to an injury inflicted on others, by giving them an advantage in competition for desirable positions. This leads to arguments in favour of levelling-down educational opportunities, and interfering with the freedom of those who value education highly from pursuing their conceptions of the good. Yet education is a very great intrinsic good for many. In addition, a well-designed educational system will, in a just system for selecting workers for positions of responsibility and power, ensure that the better education of some will redound to the benefit of everyone else, in their capacities as consumers and citizens.

The way to meet the positional good argument is not to level down educational opportunities, but to recognise that, in societies stratified by salient social identities such as race, class and gender, those who occupy positions of responsibility must themselves be diverse along those identity lines *and* socially integrated, if they are to be able to make their better educations redound to the benefit of all others. This entails that we move beyond simplistic models of meritocracy, which imagine that merit can be ranked on a single dimension of educational attainment and that individuals are best selected for desirable positions in rank order on that basis. Rather, democratically responsive and competent organisations must be internally diverse, not only along lines of identity but in talents, personal backgrounds, cognitive styles, and the like. Formal education is but one dimension of merit, and even that overlooks high degrees of internal diversity in the content of education.

An adequacy standard for just educational opportunities is demanding. For what counts as adequate is: enough to relate to others as an equal in society. That sets a high bar. In the short- and medium-term, this would yield a no less ambitious standard for levelling-up education for the least advantaged than an equality standard, but would oppose levelling-down. In addition, while differences in family preferences for education can permissibly yield different educational investments in children, public support should follow preferences, not locally available resources. People in disadvantaged communities vote for far higher school tax burdens on themselves than people in privileged communities, indicating very strong preferences for education. If public revenues for schools tracked voter preferences as measured by the willingness of people to tax themselves, the poor would enjoy more richly resourced schools than the middle class. Those preferences should be honoured with much greater public support.

JW: Also in 'Fair Opportunity In Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective' (2007b), you write as part of your argument in favour of a sufficientarian account of education that 'A just K–12 educational system must prepare students from all sectors of society, and especially those disadvantaged along any dimensions, with sufficient skills to be able to succeed in higher education and thereby join the elite'.

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What priority should the aim you mention have compared with other purposes of school education?

EA: In some conservative circles in the US today, the chief or perhaps only purpose of schooling is job training. Granted, education won't do students much good if they graduate without skills demanded by employers. But this sets a low bar for educational standards. Some conservatives suggest that there is a trade-off between education in the humanities and in job skills. The claim is false even if employability were the only point of education. In today's economy, it is irrational to train students narrowly for specific skills that are liable to be eliminated by technological change, international trade, and other dynamics that constantly destroy old jobs and create new ones. More than ever, people need general, flexible, higher-order and non-cognitive skills that can be deployed in a wide range of jobs: the ability to communicate effectively to diverse work teams; to tap into the needs and concerns of customers and clients; to think creatively with others about how to solve problems that are not already well-defined; to motivate people to serve others well and to take responsibility for mistakes; and so forth.

Democratic education in the liberal arts—understood in the broadest sense to include not only so-called academic subjects, but the arts and athletics—in integrated settings with diverse others—encompasses training in such skills. The supposed trade-off between a broader humanistic education and job skills is illusory.

So what is really going on in the current conservative attack on humanities education? Most educators in the humanities are liberal. Conservatives fear that they are the leading edge of a culture war indoctrinating their children against conservative ideas. Limiting the goals of public education to job training is a way to limit exposure of students to ideas their parents find threatening.

At this point, we must confront some delicate issues in the liberal democratic theory of education. All advanced liberal democracies are multicultural in fact, in that they contain diverse groups committed to different conceptions of the good. Rawls rightly observed that any society that respects freedom of thought and association will be pluralistic in this sense. Moreover, salient divisions of social identity are due not only to people exercising freedom of thought and association, but to the histories of slavery and imperialism, which have fostered racism and inequality.

A democratic society cannot deal responsibly with the problems generated by these histories without honestly educating citizens about them. This requires a frank acknowledgment of uncomfortable truths. Citizens also need to understand that many of their fellow citizens think differently than they do, and that effective citizenship requires cultivating the ability to cooperate across such differences. Democratic education also requires that citizens both learn to think for themselves and to think together, so that they can develop better ideas for how to live together in peace and cooperation. Cooperation among diverse citizens cannot succeed without cultivating intergroup understanding and sympathy. Development of better ideas includes appreciation of citizens' individual and collective agency, the

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contingency of the current arrangements and ideas about how they are justified, and methods of empirical inquiry, including in the natural sciences.

To the extent that students' confidence in their own beliefs is predicated on ignorance of their historical contingency and the existence of disagreement, on bigoted stereotypes about other groups, mistaken ideas about history and science, and so forth, the results of democratic education may well be to inspire some critical self-reflection and doubt about their own conceptions of the good. Some parents may therefore find such education threatening. Hence, the state must be clear about why such education is necessary. Its point is not to attack students' conceptions of the good or to put them down, but to make democracy possible.

This project requires that students be educated to think for themselves. Hence it is not the place of public school teachers to tell students what conclusions they should draw about their conceptions of the good from the ideas presented in class. It is up to the students to figure out what conclusions to draw about their religion once they learn that the scientific case for evolutionary theory, say, is overwhelming. The public justification for exposing students to challenging ideas can never be to debunk their conceptions of the good. Neutrality demands this. But it cannot demand that students are deprived of information and skills needed for democracy, just because students may use such knowledge to criticise what their parents have taught them.

JW: Your article 'If God Is Dead, Is Everything Permitted?' is a powerful demolition of theism (Anderson, 2007a). In the light of this, is there any place for religious education in public schools?

EA: Social equality demands that liberal states be neutral among citizens of different religions. With respect to public schooling, this means that the state must not impose any religious doctrine on children. That includes atheism. So the state may not assume atheism as the justification for barring religious education in public schools.

Neutrality can justify barring religious education from public schools. Public schooling limited to secular subjects does not amount to an atheistic education. The public schools in such a state take no stand on any religious doctrine, including atheism. It is up to each person to determine how or whether to reconcile the methods and findings of reason and empirical inquiry that are taught in a secular curriculum with their religious commitments.

Of course, religion is an object of secular inquiry in numerous disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology and literature. The neutrality bar on religious education is a bar only on education that presupposes the truth of any religious doctrines. Any responsible secular education should teach children about the important roles that different religions play in history, politics, and so forth. Effective democratic engagement with fellow citizens of diverse religious faiths also requires that children learn something about the diverse faiths in their midst. One can be taught about different faiths without pronouncing on whether what they believe is true.

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One might argue that neutrality could equally well be secured in a public school system that sets aside particular times in the school day for each child to receive instruction in the religion of their choice. Some liberal democratic states with a history of only a very few religions with longstanding ties to the state—Germany, perhaps—might manage this way. Such arrangements are inconceivable in the US, with thousands of religions and new ones invented all the time. Moreover, the US Constitution prohibits establishment of religion. This includes excess entanglement of church and state. Few American churches would entrust public teachers to instruct children in their religion. Any American church that did trust its public teachers in this way would rightly be suspected of attempting to use state power to impose its views on members of minority religions. Even in places like Germany, it seems inevitable that such arrangements would discriminate against minority religions.

JW: You deny in that article that morality can be based on religious authority. Do you see moral education, then, as at root a rational enterprise? Or is it an emotional one?

EA: With Dewey, I reject the reason/emotion dichotomy. Emotions are indispensable to our cognitive functioning. Reason can't do without them. Antonio Damasio, in *Descartes' Error* (1994), documents how patients with brain injuries that impair their emotional responses also suffer from impairments in their practical reasoning. Even when we are reasoning purely theoretically, we rely on emotions to signal to us what information inputs need our attention: that is the function of surprise, which signals novelty or unexpected inputs.

In morality, emotions such as sympathy, remorse, indignation and shame also play important roles in reasoning. Such emotions are not merely responses to, much less constituted by, moral conclusions already drawn from prior reasoning. They attune us to normatively relevant phenomena in our environments. Nor can we always spell out all the considerations that make us feel certain ways. Peter Railton, in 'The Affective Dog and its Rational Tale', (Railton, 2014) argues that a well-functioning emotional system is indispensable to attuning us to diverse morally relevant considerations that are too complex for our explicit reasoning system. Hence, what our 'gut' tells us is often more reliable than our most careful explicit reasoning.

Emotions need training just as other perceptual capacities do, so that we become capable of appropriately responding to normatively relevant facts. Some emotional education may involve engagement with normative theory. This is not much different from doctors learning to diagnose certain diseases from subtle defects in a patient's gait, from studying how different diseases affect the body.

Yet theory or explicit reasoning alone does not get us very far. Learning what is going on requires getting in proper social relations with others. Doctors need to establish relations of trust and rapport with patients to elicit the information they need to make a diagnosis. Similarly, the ability to draw

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appropriate moral conclusions depends on living in relations of respect and sympathy with others.

JW: Some would say that another main purpose of school education—as well as preparing children to become good citizens—is to equip them for a life of personal well-being. Do you agree? If so, how would you characterise personal well-being?

EA: I don't think it's the place of public schools to adopt a comprehensive conception of personal well-being, around which to design a curriculum. They may properly concern themselves with specific departments of well-being, such as employability and health, and expose them to a wide range of ideas about well-being, particularly through the arts and humanities. This may furnish students with materials for fashioning their own conception of the good. But it is up to them to determine what that will be.

JW: The title of your award-winning 2010 book on the multiple disadvantages suffered by African Americans in the USA is *The Imperative of Integration.* Bearing education particularly in mind, why is integration the imperative rather than assimilation or multiculturalism?

EA: I define integration as cooperation on terms of equality among people across diverse social groups. The ideal of assimilation purports to offer subordinated groups equality on condition that they adopt the norms of dominant groups, as if the dominant group's norms need no revision. This ideal is confused, disingenuous and self-defeating, since among the norms of the dominant is treating subordinates as inferior. A central theme of *The Imperative of Integration* is that *dominant* groups need to change—their ignorance, prejudices and oppressive habits need dismantling—and that integration supplies necessary means for that to happen. Integration involves the collective reconstruction of democratic norms for respectful and cooperative intergroup interaction, which is impossible without the full and equal participation of subordinated groups in that reconstruction.

Multiculturalism advances a communal ideal of separate, distinct, self-governing communities, each keeping mostly to themselves, at arms-length relations with other groups. There is room in liberal democracies for small groups like this, such as the Amish and Hasidic Jews. In societies where such groups comprise the bulk of the population, the prospects for intergroup equality, peace, cooperation, trust, and effective democratic governance decline. Lebanon, Northern Ireland, India, Israel and Belgium illustrate the range of difficulties one encounters in democracies organised around separate communal identities.

Canada often describes itself as a multicultural state. But I think that is a misnomer. It is simply a pluralistic democracy, like the US. Except for the Canadian First Nations, which, for historical and legal (not multiculturalist) reasons, have a measure of sovereignty comparable to American Indian tribes, the various cultural groups in Canada do not have self-governing rights or distinct group representation in the national government, and do

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not keep to themselves. While Canada recognises two official languages, its public schools promote bilingualism, and it expects immigrants to learn at least one of them. Canada, like the US, has thriving cosmopolitan cities composed of members of multiple ethnic and religious backgrounds, who regularly interact and thereby create new cultural practices. Where ethnic, religious and linguistic pluralism is a fact of life, democratic states rely on the integrative creativity unleashed in cosmopolitan cities to construct norms of cooperation that encompass members of diverse groups.

Canada sometimes calls itself multicultural because it sees itself as more open to accommodations—exceptions to otherwise generally applicable laws—than the US. This is not evidently true. Religious groups in the US routinely obtain accommodations, even if not as a matter of constitutional right. Immigrants in the US sometimes receive linguistic accommodations as a matter of constitutional right.

Much confusion arises from a failure to distinguish integrative from segregative accommodations. Accommodations that enable the participation of diverse individuals in the major institutions of society, such as ballots in an immigrant's native language, are different from accommodations designed to enable group segregation, such as exemptions for the Amish from truancy laws.

France is confused on this matter, with respect to its laws against girls wearing the hijab in public schools. It misrepresents wearing the hijab as a defiant act of self-segregation—a meaning it does not impute to Jewish boys wearing a kippah, or Christians wearing a cross. Yet the girls in question are seeking an education in the public schools. They are thereby seeking integration into mainstream French institutions. Would it really be better for them to be forced into separate Muslim schools, because they regard it as a duty wear a hijab? At University of Michigan, I see young women wearing the hijab in most of my classes. (Southeast Michigan includes the largest concentration of immigrants from the Middle East in North America, along with many Muslims from South Asia.) Their ambitions to become doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and even philosophers—that is, their ambitions to participate fully in mainstream American life—are vastly more important from a democratic perspective than their wardrobes.

JW: How far should an integrated education system go beyond black-white integration? I am thinking partly—but only partly—about a country like the UK, with its many religious schools, its private schools and elite state schools, and its deep divisions over relations between immigrant and non-immigrant communities.

EA: In *The Imperative of Integration*, I argue that group segregation is a primary cause of group inequality. Regardless of the identities of the group in question, the self-segregation of dominant or privileged groups is a key driver of unjust social hierarchy. Hence, my argument generalises to other groups. The UK should encourage integration of its schools by class, ethnicity and religion.

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JW: In your 2017 book *Private Government*, based on your Tanner Lectures and replies to them, you argue that 'most employers are private governments with sweeping authoritarian power over our lives, on duty and off'. Do you see this as having implications for how we should conceive preparation for work as an aim of education?

EA: A major reason why Dewey's vision of class-integrated public schools has not been fully realised is the pervasiveness of tracking students by 'ability' into different courses of study, which in practice means channelling poor and working-class students into vocational tracks. There is nothing wrong with teaching manual skills, such as automotive repair, with an eye toward the future employability of students. What is wrong is depriving such students of educational opportunities for democratic citizenship, which involves education in literature, history and the arts. All students need to learn to think and speak for themselves, to learn how to effectively present themselves and their ideas before others, and to critically evaluate ideas and imagine alternatives. All-too-often, vocational education offers job training along with heavy doses of obedience and drudgery, training students to put up and shut up and suppress their curiosity. In *Private Government*, I argue that workers need a voice in the workplace, not only in matters of state. They need rights to participate in the management of the firm. This entails that democratic education is for the workplace and not only for state and national citizenship. Germany offers proof of concept: workers there already enjoy such rights, and actively seek their share in management. American and British workers deserve no less.

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NOTES

1. See for instance the suite of papers on Dewey in a recent issue of this journal (52.2, 2018).
2. The NAACP is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, founded in 1909.
3. 'Charterisation' is the creation of charter schools. These are similar to academies in England, being publicly financed, but not run by local authorities. Like academies, they have more curricular freedom than local authority schools.

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