

the findings for different measures are relatively consistent. In addition, the findings also show a clearly identifiable Nordic grouping. However, the authors then follow and adapt Esping-Anderson in categorizing other welfare, and educational systems, as Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, 'core Europe' (a particularly questionable category) and Southern Europe. This model only works if findings that inconveniently do not fit the model are spirited away. Given the authors' role in leading a major new research programme on the knowledge society, this conceptualization of welfare regimes needs some serious challenging.

While these are important limitations, they should not in any way be seen as undermining the value of an extraordinarily important study. A less important cause for complaint lies in the publisher's failure to tackle the many misprints that littered the original hardback, as well as the occasional missing reference. *Education, equality and social cohesion* is one of the most important educational studies in the last decade, and anyone – policy makers particularly – interested in lifelong learning should be made to read it before being allowed out of their office. It demonstrates clearly that how education is distributed, and the values that guide distributional patterns, are vital to the outcomes of any education system.

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**The common school and the comprehensive ideal: a defence by Richard Pring with complementary essays**, edited by Mark Halstead and Graham Haydon, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2008, 339 pp., £19.99 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-4051-3738-1

This outstanding collection of essays is published in memory of Terry McLaughlin who was Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, until his sudden and untimely death at the age of 56. As his successor, Paul Standish, says in the preface, issues relating to the common school were a significant feature of his work over many years and this book is a fitting tribute to his long-lasting contribution to the debate.

The contributors are some of the most distinguished people working in philosophy of education today, and a review of this kind cannot do justice to the richness and diversity of the topics addressed. After a wide-ranging discussion by Richard Pring, exploring the nature of and rationale for the common school, the editors assist the reader by grouping the chapters into five parts.

Part I, 'Defending and questioning the comprehensive ideal', contains a useful introductory essay by Graham Haydon who reminds us that it is far from self-evident what exactly it is to which one is committed when supporting either the notion of a common school or the comprehensive ideal. Haydon skilfully weaves in the views of the various contributors to such questions, and the respects in which most see the notion of a common school as a response to pluralism. The plurality of values, on which so many of the contributors rely are, according to Haydon, those relating to community, justice, equality, respect, freedom and non-discrimination. This section of the book contains essays by Michael Fielding, on the necessity of radical state education, Robin Barrow on the need for some important distinctions and Harry Brighouse on justice in education.

Barrow is persuasive on the need to provide children with 'the idea of experiencing difference as such... rather than introducing all children to all varieties of person, value and culture' (60). He sees it as fallacious to conclude that a common schooling entails a common curriculum

and suggests that there are no *a priori* moral arguments against the idea of providing students possessing particular talents and enthusiasms, with different educational diets in the latter stages of compulsory schooling.

While having no objection to the comprehensive ideal as such, Brighthouse takes it to be of secondary importance to that of providing every child with an equally good education – an education which, he believes, should aim to promote personal autonomy, the knowledge and skills required for effective participation in economic and political life, and the ability to flourish as adults. He is at pains not to place undue emphasis on equality *per se* as opposed to the necessity of benefiting the least advantaged (74), and he suggests several mechanisms by which proposed educational aims might be realized in accordance with the distributive principle of equality.

In Part 2, 'Common schools and multi-cultural societies', Walter Feinberg explores the task of the common school in relation to cultural identity. Culture, he argues, is not a 'thing' that we 'own', and it is vital that in the all-important process of shaping children's identity 'we do not treat them just as an instance of cultural, class, gendered, or national formations'. The unique role of the common school is, he believes, no longer one of laying a national identity with the intention of creating a single imagined community. It should instead strive to open up 'avenues of communication across different communities' (105–6).

The following three essays each, in their different ways, address a number of deeply problematic questions surrounding multicultural education in liberal democracies. Hanan Alexander is sceptical of the view that children should be subjected to a system of schooling designed to facilitate autonomy-promotion on the grounds that some parents may well have serious reservations, if not fears, relating to a comprehensive liberal view of the world being imposed on their children. While I found Alexander's contribution highly thought-provoking, I admit not to sharing his scepticism in this regard.

Meira Levinson reminds us how the values associated with equality, toleration and mutual respect are appealed to in defences of both common schooling and multicultural education, while seeking to challenge the mutually enforcing relationship between the two. Not only may common schools exacerbate existing tensions and prejudices, especially where teachers and students in diverse common schools 'become complacent about their inclusivity' (130). While acknowledging the difficulties in determining what a 'common school' or 'multicultural education' might entail, she is inclined to the view that the latter is instrumental to the former rather than the other way round.

The section concludes with a judicious appraisal by Dianne Gereluk of the arguments surrounding symbolic clothing in schools.

Part 3 is concerned with 'Common schools and religion' and begins with a scholarly, if unconvincing, attempt by David Carr to square the circle of providing universal, albeit non-confessional, religious education in the interests of religious literacy within the context of liberal agnosticism. Although Kevin Williams is rather more sympathetic towards the French prohibition of symbolic clothing than is Gereluk, his essay is firmly located within the French context with its emphasis on *laïcité* or non-confessionalism. I am in no doubt that both he and Carr are right to presume that 'if young people are to acquire an understanding of what religion means to believers, schools will have to provide an encounter with religious belief that is... more substantial than that accommodated within the teaching of *le fait religieux*' – or teaching *about* religion (185). The question is how such understanding is possible short of inculcating belief with the associated dangers of indoctrination. Neither he nor Carr face up to this challenge.

Kenneth Strike, on the other hand, is less concerned with the idea of religious literacy than with the extent to which common schools should engage with religious convictions however

absurd, dogmatic or irrational they may appear. He argues that 'engagement is a better strategy for common schooling than avoidance' (191), by offering students access to both sides of the debate surrounding controversial issues such as creationism and gay rights. Strike adopts the eminently sane position of allowing full discussion of widely held views while refusing to endorse them.

Part IV, 'School choice and the comprehensive ideal' begins with Rob Reich attempting to reconcile the apparent contradictions between the common school and educational choice. Although he is more generous than Levinson in terms of the extent he would sanction parental choice in education, he would not countenance such choice were it to pose a threat to a child's autonomy. For Reich, neither common schooling nor parental choice are of supreme value. What matters, he argues, is that there is considerable scope for parental choice within the common school ideal designed to foster citizenship and personal autonomy. James Tooley mounts a powerful attack on Adam Swift in defence of parental rights to private education and the respects in which such a decision might be compatible with both social justice and equality, while Mary Healy provides an engagingly written account of the ways in which the common school is able to promote civic loyalty.

In the fifth and final part, 'Common schools and inclusion', Lorella Terzi concerns herself with the question of what constitutes a just educational process for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Adopting Amartya Sen's capability approach to educational equality as having to do with equal opportunities to levels of functioning necessary for effective social participation, she addresses some of the difficulties associated with the question of which capabilities are required by egalitarians. Her principled framework for a just distribution of educational resources to such students is firmly located within a Rawlsian framework, and she convincingly demonstrates how considerations of efficiency apply to the distribution of opportunities and resources for effective access to educational functioning and that beyond the threshold of fundamental functioning, 'resources should be devoted in ways that allow the higher achievements of some to benefit the lower achievement of others' (269).

Ruth Cigman asks a very important question in relation to inclusion which many ask with trepidation, and that is whether or not disability labelling *as such* constitutes a 'sound reason', for one so labelled, to feel a diminution of self-respect. She cautions against embracing the universalist tendency to portray special schools as inherently demeaning. What is disrespectful, she insists, is failing to consider a disabled child's right to separate schooling if that is what she prefers. Lack of such provision, 'means failure to accord respect to all, in favour of the spurious notion of inclusion for all' (289).

Kevin McDonagh wonders whether liberalism is capable of providing 'a coherent ethical and educational basis for accommodating and recognizing queer people and queer identities' (291), while Andrew Davis addresses the issue of what he calls 'lookism' and passionately argues that 'anti-lookist education of various kinds could offer an indirect way into some of the key issues underlying traditional forms of discrimination such as racism and sexism' (320).

'In place of a conclusion' is Mark Halstead's contribution to the nature and justification of common schooling. His justification is fourfold: their symbolic recognition of children's equal rights to respect, their contribution to developing commitments to shared values, the common educational experience provided, and the fact that they are efficacious in preparing for life in a multicultural society. Halstead is less concerned with the common school's attempt to confront disadvantage or equal opportunities than he is with their role in preparation for citizenship and the respects in which common schools serve to militate against the desire of some minority groups to ensure that schools transmit a distinct set of cultural or religious values. Ignoring the tensions within liberalism between tolerance of minority practices and the value of autonomy, Halstead is, in my view, overly concerned about the extent

to which common schools should be required to reinforce existing religious and cultural beliefs (333).

Each chapter ends with a rich source of bibliographical references to which the interested reader may turn.

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**Race and education: policy and politics in Britain**, by Sally Tomlinson, Maidenhead, Open University Press and McGraw-Hill Education, 2008, 248 pp., £24.99 (hdbk), ISBN 978-0335-2230-77

This book is a breathtaking tour de force of 'race' and education in Britain. It focuses on the wider political and policy context which shaped the government response to educating the 'new' postcolonial and migrant populations in the UK. It presents a detailed forensic account of the systematic racism experienced by black and Asian peoples in the British education system in the last 50 years – ever since post-war migration brought citizens of Empire to our 'white' shores. The experience of these 'dark strangers' is a lesser-told story in our history of education in Britain, but as the book shows it is one which is firmly rooted in the deeply racist political intent of our times.

This is an authoritative and comprehensive account by a well-established and renowned scholar in the field of sociology of race and education. There is no better person to tell the story than Sally Tomlinson – Emeritus Professor of Education at Goldsmiths College and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. Tomlinson, an impeccable scholar with world class credentials, has been in the front line of the political struggle against racism in our schools for over 50 years, the time span of the book. This book represents her life reflections, and if anyone knows what an education system for a multicultural society should look like in twenty-first century, it is Sally Tomlinson.

The book is less concerned with the pedagogic practice of multicultural education in the classroom, and more focused on the major conflicts and contradictions of successive governments' legislation, policies and practices since the 1960s. In Chapters 1 and 2, Tomlinson shows how the roots of race and educational disadvantage were sown in 1960s and 1970s. Racist immigration policies that encouraged new flows of much needed labour from the colonies were marked by an underlying post imperial fear and a deep resentment of the black presence in British society. With an education system moving toward comprehensivization in a time of increasing economic recession, there were race and class conflicts on the streets and in schools. As chapter 3 and 4 show, the ascendancy of Thatcherism in the 1980s and 1990s marked the new right wing political ideology of the market. It was a time of racial tensions symbolized by the Brixton and Toxteth uprisings and the Satanic Verses. Ironically this racial and religious unrest opened doors for ground breaking reports such as Rampton, Swann and Scarman which highlighted the economic and social consequences of oppressive racism in schools and across society. However by the 1990s race became the 'absent presence' tucked away in a discourse which was now more about failing schools and colour blind policies. It is here that Tomlinson wears her Weberian position on her sleeve and points us toward understanding the importance of race as a class category. Symptomatic inequalities in housing, employment and education for migrants and children of migrants has led to poverty and