

## **The Two Cultures and The Crisis In The Humanities**

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### **Abstract**

The debate over the crisis in the humanities has focused on several disparate problems but failed to illuminate their underlying ground. To understand the crisis we have to understand the genealogy of the university and the origin of the humanities as a distinct set of disciplines. The university has been governed by four distinct models of higher education: the Christian university; the liberal arts college; the research university; and the commercial university. The more recent models have not simply replaced the older models; instead older institutions have been incorporated into more recent institutions and reinterpreted in light of their basic assumptions. "The humanities" first appeared as such within the liberal arts model, and the original aims of humanistic education were grounded in that model's basic assumptions about the nature of truth, language, and tradition. The humanities were thrown into crisis when the liberal arts college was incorporated into the modern research university, and when the humanistic disciplines were detached from the assumptions that supported their original aims, reinterpreted in light of the assumptions about truth, language, and tradition underlying the research university, and recast in the mold of the modern sciences. To begin to respond to the crisis in the humanities we have to both recover and reinvent the idea of the liberal arts.

### **Introduction: The Crisis in the Humanities**

"The Crisis in the Humanities" is not a new topic--more than forty years ago it was the title of a book by J.H. Plumb, a friend of C. P. Snow. I think Snow and Plumb pointed to something profoundly important when they spoke of "a gulf of mutual incomprehension" between the sciences and the humanities. But I think their vision of that gulf was too simple to do justice to the real situation of the humanities today.

Plumb's account of the crisis contains a number of standard charges.

1. Humanists have become too specialized.
2. Work in the humanities has become narrow, trivial, and insular.
3. Humanists write in a technical jargon that is opaque to outsiders.
4. The humanities curriculum has become fragmented and incoherent.
5. Education in the humanities is adrift without any sense of common purpose.
6. The humanities have become increasingly irrelevant in a world dominated by modern science and technology.

I would add two more recent charges to the indictment:

7. The humanities are economically useless.
8. The humanities no longer center on the arts of language. Hence:
  - (a) The quality of academic speech and writing is deplorable; and
  - (b) Humanists are failing to teach students to listen, speak, read, and write.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the crisis in the humanities. In order to understand its nature and origin, we have to understand the genealogy of the contemporary university. It is of course impossible to do justice to this genealogy in a short paper, but it may be illuminating to try to sketch out--if only in a partial and preliminary way--the university's long and complicated lineage.

### **A Genealogy of the University**

In the last few hundred years higher education has been governed by four models: (a) the Christian university, (b) the traditional liberal-arts college, (c) the modern research university, and (d) the commercial university. Each model rests on different basic assumptions about the nature of truth, tradition, language, and education. These assumptions have generated distinct institutions: curricula; pedagogies; disciplinary divisions; the roles of faculty and students; and the vocabularies in which education is understood and justified.

The key point is that the more recent models did not simply replace the old models; the liberal-arts college was not replaced by the research university, just as the research university today is not simply being replaced by the commercial university. Instead the old institutions were

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<sup>1</sup> In 2003 only 31% of American college graduates were proficient readers, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. In other words, more than two-thirds of college graduates in the U.S. are less-than-proficient readers. See Sam Dillon, "Literacy Falls for Graduates from College, Testing Finds," *New York Times*, 16 December, 2005.

incorporated into the new models, and in the process they lost their original meaning and purpose and were reinterpreted in light of the basic assumptions of the new models of education.

Hence most universities today are a strange hybrid. They are organized by four different models of higher education superimposed on one another--the Christian university, the liberal-arts college, the research university, and the commercial university--and these four models rest on different assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the point of education.

Here I will focus on the tension between just two models of higher education: the liberal arts college and the research university.

### **The Humanities and the Liberal Arts College**

The traditional liberal arts model rested on a number of basic assumptions.

One is that scientific knowledge is neither the only form of understanding, nor even the highest form of understanding. In addition to scientific knowledge there is also opinion, know-how, judgment, and wisdom.<sup>2</sup> This implies that scientific truth is not the only form of truth.

Another assumption is that understanding is always historical in the sense that it is always indebted to a tradition. Tradition here means not just a body of knowledge but inherited forms of thought and practice. This heritage both opens up and delimits the space of what we can think. In order to think at the highest levels we have to constantly appropriate the highest achievements of this inheritance. But we also have to appropriate this inheritance if we want to understand the limitations it imposes on our thought, if we want to see what it distorts or obscures, and if we want to refine the very terms in which we think in order to grasp and bring to light what has been beyond the scope of traditional thought.

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<sup>2</sup> Here I am simply alluding to the traditional taxonomy of rational faculties derived from Aristotle's analysis of reason in Book Six of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

A third assumption is that language is not just an instrument of thought but a medium of traditional understanding. Hence to appropriate the tradition in which we find ourselves we have to learn the languages in which we think.

These assumptions underlie the aims of education in the liberal arts model. The cultural aim of a traditional liberal-arts education is to preserve the best of what has been thought and said. The political aim is to train an elite to lead the polity. And the pedagogical aim is to develop the students' capacity for informed opinion, know-how, judgment, knowledge, and wisdom.

These assumptions also underlie the institutions of the traditional liberal-arts college: the curriculum, which consists of a canon of classic books; the pedagogy, which consists of recitations, disputations, and discussions; the role of the faculty, who teach many different disciplines.

These assumptions determined the place of the disciplines in the curriculum, which was centered on the humanities. The word "humanities" as we know comes from the Latin words "*studia humanitatis*," a phrase coined by Cicero to refer to the disciplines known as the liberal arts. Cicero defined the liberal arts as "those arts that are proper to a free citizen," that is, the knowledge necessary to be a member of a free polity, the knowledge that Roman men needed in order to become active and responsible citizens. The Renaissance humanists revived the idea of a liberal arts education centered on the humanities, whose core disciplines were classical languages and literatures, history, philosophy, writing, and public speaking.

The aims of the liberal arts model governed the various approaches to these disciplines. History for example was approached not primarily as an object of scholarship but as a living tradition and as a source of examples that could shed light on the present; when Machiavelli

studied Titus Livy, when the American revolutionaries studied Polybius, it was not to produce objective knowledge, but to understand and realize the possibilities of republican government. Rhetoric was not primarily studied theoretically; it was studied through practical exercises aimed at training future clergymen, lawyers, politicians, and citizens. And philosophy was not primarily a search for new truths; it was seen as a fund of wisdom that students could absorb through exercises of memory and meditation.

What I want to emphasize above all is that the humanities originally had a *political* dimension, an *ethical* dimension, a *vocational* dimension, and a *spiritual* dimension.

When I use the word "*political*" I mean politics in the classical sense--politics as a way of being together, based on principles of equality and nonviolence, in which citizens decide what to do and how to live together through open debate on matters of public concern and collective deliberation aimed at decisions binding on the polity as a whole. An education in the humanities had a political dimension in that it was meant to give students the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in politics, to take part in political deliberation.

When I say that a traditional education in the humanities had an *ethical* dimension I mean that it was meant to impart specific ethos: the ethos of the courtier in Renaissance Italy; the ethos of the gentleman in Britain; the ethos of a democratic citizen in the United States.

Humanistic education also had a *vocational* dimension in that it trained students for their vocation or calling, primarily in the clergy, but also in law and politics.

And humanistic education had a *spiritual* dimension in the sense that it was meant to guide students toward the highest possibilities of human existence.

In short, "the humanities" first originated as a distinct set of disciplines within the liberal arts model of education. The liberal arts model rested on a number of basic assumptions and

aims, and these assumptions and aims gave the humanities their original meaning and purpose. Humanistic study was not primarily scholarly or scientific, but political, ethical, vocational, and spiritual.

### **The Modern Sciences and the Research University**

My basic argument is this: the modern sciences inspired the creation of the research university, and the research university is oriented by different aims and rests on different assumptions about the nature of truth, tradition, language, and education. When the humanities were incorporated into the research university, they were cut off from the aims and assumptions that gave them their original reason for being. The humanities were thrown into crisis when they were detached from the original idea of the liberal arts, incorporated into the research university, and cast in the mold of the modern sciences.

Here we have to make a distinction between science and scientism. For the sake of simplicity we could say that science is a search for universally valid knowledge, while scientism is the belief that modern science is the only genuine form of knowledge. A scientist is a practitioner of science, not a believer in scientism. To be critical of scientism is not in any way to denigrate science.

What are the assumptions that underlie the research model of education?

One thing essential to modern science is a distinct understanding of truth: in modern science the test of truth is certainty. The first rule of Descartes' method is not to accept anything as true unless it is certain. This intrication of truth and certainty is generally taken for granted today, even by the most radical skeptics; modern skeptics tend to deny that genuine truth is attainable precisely because they take for granted that knowledge must be certain in order to be

true. Modern scientists tend to be cautious about claiming to have final and definitive truth precisely because they know most scientific findings are not absolutely certain and so are always open to revision and refinement.

This intrication of truth and certainty reversed the traditional hierarchy of different forms of understanding. The highest understanding was no longer wisdom but quantitative knowledge or knowledge based on clear and distinct evidence. The new scientists and philosophers elevated empirical and quantitative knowledge over all other forms of understanding, and this revaluation supported an outright hostility towards the traditional liberal arts, which in their eyes had no real claim to genuine knowledge. Hume for example wrote:

If we take in our hand any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it concern any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>3</sup>

The hostility of the new scientists to the liberal arts were reciprocated by the hostility of liberal arts colleges towards the new sciences. The modern sciences were first ignored by liberal arts colleges, and then relegated to the margins of the curriculum. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries most scientific research and training took place outside the colleges in scientific societies.<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Franklin never went to college, for example, and yet he was a founder of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences.

The modern sciences also divided the space of knowledge into fields, and these fields were conceived as adjacent to each other but with clearly defined borders. This division made possible

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<sup>3</sup> David Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> I owe this insight to Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) p. 136.

a new level of specialization; the idea was that scientists could excel in one field while knowing little or nothing of other fields of knowledge. The principle of specialization is based on the assumption that researchers can make original contributions to the general pool of established knowledge only if they focus their inquiry on narrowly defined topics: "The sharper and more limited the focus of your labors, the more likely it is that what you produce will be useful to the larger contexts you resolutely ignore."<sup>5</sup>

These assumptions about truth and knowledge went hand in hand with a new understanding of tradition, language, and education.

Tradition is generally regarded in the sciences as at best a set of outmoded achievements, at worst a source of prejudice and error. In *The Two Cultures*, for example, the word "traditional" always has negative connotations.

Language for the sciences is less a medium of traditional understanding than an instrument of thought. To become a precise and reliable instrument of thought traditional language has to be purged of confusions. Hence the project of developing technical terminologies that are clear to specialists but opaque to the general public.

Education consequently had new aims. The cultural aim of education was not primarily to preserve the best that had been thought and said; it was on the one hand to discover and disseminate scientific knowledge, and on the other hand to help students to liberate themselves from self-incurred tutelage and to learn to think on their own. The political aim was not to prepare an elite to lead the polity, but to train scholars and scientists. And the pedagogical aim was not to develop the capacity for different kinds of understanding (opinion, know-how, judgment, knowledge, and wisdom) but to transmit new knowledge and to give students the ability to do independent research.

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley Fish, "Same Old Song," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 11, 2003.



These assumptions support several basic principles. One was that the pursuit of knowledge is good in itself; research needs no justification beyond itself. Another principle is that nothing should be exempt from scientific inquiry; the university should gather and disseminate all human knowledge. A third principle is that truth is best protected and advanced by instituting a space where discussion and inquiry are utterly free. And then there are the principles of *Freilehren*--faculty should be free to teach what they want--and *Freilernen*--students should be free to decide what to study.

These assumptions and principles generated the distinctive institutions of the research university: the division of the faculty into departments (which took place at Harvard in 1825); departmental autonomy (1825); elective courses for undergraduates (1825); the relegation of writing instruction to composition programs (c. 1870); graduate schools in the arts and sciences (1872); the use of doctoral degrees as a teaching credential (after 1872); undergraduate majors (1910); and distribution requirements (1910). More subtly, the research university transformed the traditional roles of faculty and students: the role of the faculty was not primarily to teach but to advance science and scholarship; the role of the students was to spend four years as novice scientists and scholars. The new role of students was set down clearly by Josiah Royce in 1891:

The traditional college had as its chosen office the training of individual minds. the modern University has as its highest business, to which all else is subordinate, the organization and the advance of Learning....In the true University the undergraduate ought to feel himself a novice in an order of learned servants of the ideal--a novice who, if in turn he be found willing and worthy, may be admitted, after his first degree, to the toils and privileges of this order as a graduate or, still later, as a teacher, but who, on the other hand, if, as will most frequently happen, he is not for this calling, will be sent back to the world, enriched by his undergraduate years of intercourse with his fellows, and with elder men, and progressive scholars. The ideal academic life then is not organized expressly for him.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in Harry Lewis, *Excellence Without Soul* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2006) p. 41.

Above all the research university altered the place of the humanities and sciences. The humanities are no longer at the center of the curriculum, but the sciences have not taken their place. Instead the territorial model of knowledge has decentered the curriculum. The disciplines are supposed to lie adjacent to each other like fields on a plain. We recognize that certain fields have common borders, and we recognize that one field can be the object of other fields. But the questions proper to each discipline are supposed to lie in a clearly defined territory.

This territorial model of knowledge has impoverished our understanding of the sciences in two ways.

First, it is simply not true that each discipline is a self-enclosed territory, a field that contains all the discipline's questions. In fact every science relies on ontological assumptions about the nature of its object, and these assumptions exceed the concepts and methods of the science itself. All the sciences rest on an implicit understanding of what science is, for example, and yet the question "What is science?" is not a scientific question but a philosophical question. When scholarship and education in the sciences are confined to self-contained fields, scientists are less able to give intelligent answers to basic questions about their own disciplines. (For example, evolutionary biology rests on a distinction between natural and supernatural causes, but this distinction cannot be established or explained using the concepts or methods of evolutionary biology. It is a philosophical distinction. Biologists have to understand this distinction in order to be able to explain why natural selection is a scientific theory and creationism is not. In other words, evolutionary biologists have to venture into the realm of philosophy in order to explain their discipline to outsiders, and yet the territorial model of knowledge discourages scientists and scholars from venturing beyond their circumscribed territories.)

Second, the sciences are a form of human activity, and as such they are implicated in

ethical, political, and spiritual questions. These questions are supposed to lie outside the sciences, and they are usually excluded from scientific textbooks and courses. But they are part of the sciences. When ethical and political questions are excluded from scholarship and education in the sciences, scientists become less able to think intelligently about these questions and to participate actively in public debate on the political questions in which their work is implicated.

The assumptions of the research model also impoverished our understanding of the humanities as well. In four ways:

First, it has changed the meaning of truth. Scientism largely eclipsed the idea that there are different forms of understanding and therefore different kinds of truth. The modern concept of scientific truth was applied to the humanities. Humanists responded in four ways.

(a) There have been attempts to recast the humanities in the mold of the sciences. Classics for example became largely a branch of philology--one studied Greek and Roman texts not as sources of a living tradition but as one set of objects among others; this approach obliterated the original rationale for the study of classics and generated a plethora of spurious rationales (such as the theory of "mental discipline"). History too was in various ways recast in the mold of the new sciences; there was, for example, a search for laws of history analogous to the laws of nature (this analogy was explicit in Marxism; Engels wrote that "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history").<sup>7</sup> There were also attempts to make philosophy a science in the modern sense, and to reject all previous philosophy as "metaphysical," i.e. unscientific nonsense. And English and Comparative Literature have also been marked by various attempts to make the study of literature scientific;

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994) p. 388.

much of what is called literary "theory" today is an attempt to make the study of literature scientific by reading literary texts in light of concepts or models borrowed from the human sciences.

(b) Humanists have responded to scientism by claiming the humanities are concerned with something other than truth--aesthetic pleasure, political ideology, moral sensibility, etc. The one thing aesthetes, ideologues, and moralists have in common is the belief that the humanities are not essentially concerned with truth.

(c) Other humanists have questioned the sciences' claims to truth, and have advocated various forms of skepticism or relativism.

(d) Finally, others have asked about the nature of truth itself in order to call into question the assumption that scientific knowledge is the only or even the preeminent form of truth. We have to make an important distinction here: there is a difference between denying that truth is attainable and asking about the meaning of truth, just as there is a difference between denying that objective truth is possible and asking about the meaning of objectivity. This distinction has been largely ignored in the so called "science wars," so that thinkers who ask about the nature of truth (what are we searching for when we search for truth?) are thoughtlessly accused of relativism, skepticism, and nihilism.

Second, the research model has altered our understanding of the liberal arts. The word "liberal" originally referred to political freedom--the liberal arts were "those arts that are proper to a free citizen." With the emergence of modern science the word "liberal" came to refer to intellectual freedom--the liberal arts were said to be the arts that freed the mind from self-incurred tutelage. The sense of freedom implicit in the liberal arts ideal is no longer primarily political but intellectual.

Third, this new interpretation of the liberal arts ideal distorted or effaced the political, ethical, vocational, and spiritual dimension of education in the humanities.

Education in a research university does teach *ethics*, but only in a restricted sense; education is still supposed to instill virtues, but they are the virtues of scientists and scholars rather than of citizens. This view has been recently articulated by Stanley Fish: “No doubt, the practices of responsible citizenship and moral behavior should be encouraged in our young adults--but it's not the business of the university to do so, except when the morality in question is the morality that penalizes cheating, plagiarizing, and shoddy teaching, and the desired citizenship is defined not by the demands of democracy, but by the demands of the academy.” Fish bases his argument on the principle that education should be a matter of free inquiry rather than of dogma and indoctrination: “This is so not because these practices are political, but because they are the political tasks that belong properly to other institutions. Universities could engage in moral and civic education only by deciding in advance which of the competing views of morality and citizenship is the right one, and then devoting academic resources and energy to the task of realizing it. But that task would deform (by replacing) the true task of academic work: the search for truth and the dissemination of it through teaching.”<sup>8</sup> What is at stake here is the stark difference between the task of higher education assumed within the research university and the task of education as originally understood in the liberal arts model.

Education in a research university is often said to have a *political* dimension too, but these arguments tend to confuse academic with political virtues; citizens are said to need just the virtues that science and scholarship teach: academic virtues (rationality, objectivity, critical thought) rather than political virtues (public spirit, eloquence, courage, judgment).

Education in a pure research university has a *vocational* dimension only for students who

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<sup>8</sup> Stanley Fish, “Why We Built the Ivory Tower,” *New York Times*, 21 May, 2004.

aspire to be scientists and scholars; undergraduates are taught as though they were all apprentice academics. They are trained as scholars and scientists, rather than as scholar-citizens or scientist-citizens (see the passage by Josiah Royce cited above).

Fourth and last, the principles of the research model make it unnecessary to have any real debate on the deepest questions of education: What is worth studying? What should educated people know? How should it be studied? What is the point of studying a particular field? These questions seem superfluous if we assume that everything is worth studying, that research is an end in itself, and that a coherent curriculum can be achieved by dividing the disciplines into self-enclosed subfields and assigning to each an autonomous specialist. (In my own field, for example, the study of comparative literature is divided into subfields delimited by language, historical period, and genre. A department is supposed to offer a complete education if it can offer instruction in all of these subfields. Each professor can work in his or her subfield without the department having to construct a coherent curriculum for the students, a project that would force professors to debate what students should learn, how it should be approached, and ultimately why it is worthwhile to study literature.)

My thesis, again, is that the humanities are thrown into crisis when they are detached from the liberal arts model of education, reinterpreted in light of the assumptions of the research model, cast in the mold of the modern sciences, and incorporated into the model of the research university. It is this underlying situation that generates and sustains the specific features of the crisis singled out in the standard charges against the humanities.

The division of knowledge into fields, faculty into departments, and fields into sub-fields has pushed humanists toward hyperspecialization.

This hyperspecialization has led to narrow, insular, and trivial scholarship.

This insularity, combined with an instrumental conception of language and with the attempt to model the languages of the humanities on the languages of the sciences, has led humanists to write primarily for other specialists in technical terminologies that are opaque to outsiders. (To be clear: the problem is not technical language itself, which is indispensable for any rigorous theory; the problem is the prejudice that theory is the telos of thought and that theoretical discourse is the telos of language. The task of humanists is not just to construct technical languages but also to explicate and refine the inherited understanding implicit in traditional language.)<sup>9</sup>

The division of knowledge into self-contained fields overseen by autonomous departments, and the division of fields into self-contained subfields overseen by autonomous professors, has led to a loss of common purpose, a fragmented and incoherent curriculum, and a situation in which it is not necessary to engage in serious debate about what is worth learning, how it should be studied, and the basic aims of an education in the humanities.

The principle that fields of knowledge are self-contained--that researchers can understand the questions in one field of knowledge while knowing little or nothing of other fields--has encouraged a systematic blindness to the ways that the sciences are necessarily implicated in political, ethical, and ontological questions.

The ideal of pure scholarship has led humanists to focus on training students as researchers rather than teaching the arts of language (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). Practical instruction in speaking and writing has thus been marginalized into programs in rhetoric and composition, so that students are expected to learn to speak and write through a few specialized

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<sup>9</sup> Here I am indebted to the later work of Martin Heidegger: “[Thinking] calls for a new care for language, not the invention of new terms, as I once thought, but a return to the primordial content of our own language, which is, however, constantly in the process of dying off.” Martin Heidegger, “The Television Interview,” in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism*, ed. Gunter Neske and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon House, 1990) p.87.

courses rather than through four years of regular practice.

This shift in focus away from the language arts has made study in the humanities more economically and vocationally useless. Surveys consistently show that in general employers tend to rate “communications skills” as the most important qualification among job applicants.<sup>10</sup> “Communications skills” used to be the center of humanistic education. The more that humanists avoid teaching writing and speech, the less incentive career-minded students (especially students from working-class backgrounds) have to study the humanities.

What then can we do? How should we respond to the crisis in the humanities?

### **Conclusion**

Let me suggest a few ways to respond to the crisis in the humanities and to bridge the gulf of incomprehension between scientists and humanists.

1. I think the most basic thing that humanists have to do is to retrieve and reinvent the ideal of the liberal arts, the idea that education is not just training in scholarship or science, but that it has an ethical, political, vocational, and spiritual dimension.

(I stress the need to reinvent the liberal arts ideal because we can't simply go back to the traditional liberal arts college. At its worst the liberal arts college is elitist and exclusive; we need institutions that are democratic and open. The traditional liberal arts college tends to give students a broad but superficial understanding of many fields; students need to develop expertise and depth of understanding. The traditional liberal arts model tends to be hostile to new ideas and methods; we need institutions that value innovation as well as the conservation of tradition. The traditional liberal arts college instills a common ethos; we need to find a nondogmatic way to teach ethics. The traditional liberal arts college took for granted a common understanding of

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<sup>10</sup> See for example the annual *Job Outlook* published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.



what students should learn and how it should be taught; today we can't assume we share any common ground.)

2. We need to return writing to the center of the curriculum. Most courses in every subject should require at least some kind of writing. If we want students to become active and responsible citizens, we have to make sure they can participate intelligently in public debate. They will not learn to do this in one or two composition courses. In almost every course students have to write at least one paper.

3. The assignments for these papers should follow two principles.

One is that students should write in plain English; no matter how technical or arcane their topic, they should be able to discuss it in a way that would be intelligible to a general public.

The other principle is that at least some of the assignments for these papers should ask students to respond to the basic questions in which their field is implicated. The questions can be ethical, political, spiritual, or ontological. They can be perennial or contemporary questions. But a premed student should be able to intelligently discuss questions of medical ethics; a student of evolutionary biology should be able to constructively participate in debates around creationism; and any student of the sciences should have thought about the nature of science and the difference between genuine and pseudo-science.

4. Universities should hire writing tutors to help students with their papers. Students need help with their writing, and it is unrealistic to expect professors at research universities to provide that help. The Royal Literary Fund in the U.K. has organized and funded writing tutors at more than 70 universities and colleges since 1999, and so far the program has been a success.<sup>11</sup> We should continue to experiment with programs of this type.

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<sup>11</sup> Hilary Spurling, *A Summary of the Royal Literary Fund's Report on Student Writing in Higher Education*, "Writing Matters." [www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/research.cfm](http://www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/research.cfm). Page 8.

5. Students should be required to have both a major and a minor concentration in their studies.

6. Professors should be encouraged to design and teach in interdisciplinary programs. I am thinking of programs such as Politics, Philosophy, and Economics at Oxford, programs in Physics, Philosophy, and the History of Science, or Great Books courses such as the Structured Liberal Arts program at Stanford or the Integrated Program in Humane Studies at Kenyon. And when I say "encouraged" I mean tangible incentives.

7. Finally, to encourage genuine debate--every professor should be asked to post on his or her faculty web page a short statement explaining the point of their discipline, what they think is worth learning, and how they try to teach it. It's only if we make our differences clear that we can begin to discuss them intelligently.

In short, the humanities are thrown into crisis when they are detached from their original meaning and purpose as liberal arts, and when the research model eclipses the ethical, political, vocational, and spiritual dimensions of education.

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