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is so long outside a club is usually just because the line is so long outside the club. True, some universities have bigger libraries or more state-of-the-art gyms. And maybe the faculty is stronger at some institutions than at others. But there is a strong case to be made that higher education operates on the crudely circular, exchange-value logic of the rope line: the highest-ranked universities attract the most applicants and thus can be the most selective, this selectivity being the chief factor in their high rankings.

But let us set aside for now this most cynical interpretation. We certainly hope that college is more than an elaborate shell game, more than queuing for a credential while "paying for the party."[15] In many fields it is not hard to see that there is much to learn in advance of on-the-job apprenticeships. For example, it hardly seems arbitrary to ask future engineers to work through calculus, matrix theory, and linear algebra in advance of their professional practice. Let us assume for the sake of the argument that, on the whole, contemporary higher education does a good job of imparting the knowledge and skills needed to land a position and perform its characteristic tasks. Would we then say that we are doing a good job at vocational education? The answer is clearly no, and for the same reasons that our proud new sailboat owner is not ready to set sail. Even if the boat were seaworthy, the sailor has no idea where he is going. Our myopic focus on skill sets and resumes puts students in the absurd position of preparing for a chosen line of work before choosing a line of work. The jobbified university begs the fundamental vocational question, what form of work expresses my hopes and engages my talents?[16] In the next section, we consider how the university might support students to live with this question more honestly and reflectively.

THE GREAT VOCATIONAL QUESTION

> Nothing is more tragic than failure to discover one's true business in life, or to find that one has drifted or been forced by circumstance into an uncongenial calling.
> —John Dewey[17]

If what I have said so far is right, then the common refrain that higher education has become narrow and vocationalized is exactly half true. The contemporary university is indeed narrow, but it is only jobbified. We are interested in only a small portion of the complex and expansive project of

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vocational formation. But, we have to start somewhere, one might reply. With this, I heartily agree, and the place to start is with the core vocational task of finding a genuine calling. As it stands now, I suggested, we find ourselves in the absurd business of training and credentialing students for their chosen line of work before they have had the opportunity to choose a line of work. Let me now qualify and defend this admittedly provocative claim.

Obviously, no one denies that career choice must precede training and networking. The assumption is that this is accomplished through selection of a major. But when do students select their majors and under what conditions? A university truly devoted to vocational formation would encourage students to proceed slowly and carefully to head off the tragedy identified by Dewey. We would support students to see major selection as an opportunity to wrestle with the great vocational question: What form of work expresses my talents and values and opens up the world in interesting ways? But of course that is not what we do. Many universities admit students directly into a school, settling the matter before the student even steps foot on campus. But can't an engineering student take class in arts and sciences? Can't an education student take a class in business? Certainly, but as these examples illustrate, an important psychological shift has already occurred. Students think of themselves as an "engineering student," an "education student," and so on. As William Deresiewicz notes,

> Although the notion of breadth is implicit in the very idea of a liberal arts education, the admissions process increasingly selects for kids who have already begun to think of themselves in specialized terms—the junior journalist, the budding astronomer, the language prodigy. We are slouching, even at elite schools, toward a glorified form of vocational training.[18]

Our defenses of early specialization vary. We say that we are simply acceding to parental demands for guaranteed employability after four years of expensive tuition.[19] Or we reason that we must defer to the autonomy of students. To interfere would be paternalistic. Most students seem pretty confident in their plans. Who are we to question their goals?

Rather than being cowed by this rhetorical question, why don't we simply answer it: we are educators. It is our job to pose questions. Indeed, the deferential posture exudes bad faith. Let us examine the ironies, one by one:

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The decision has already been made.

Well, yes, because our admission process forces students—the vast majority of whom possess only the fledgling self-knowledge of a seventeen-year-old—to choose from among options with which they have likely never had any substantive contact.

We must avoid paternalism.

Then why are we deferring to decisions that, as we have already acknowledged, are typically made under the shadow of intense parental pressure?

We should defer to the autonomy of students.

The last two points make it clear that these early decisions are typically heteronomous. "Deferring" here is a weasel word. It conflates two different ideas: deferring to a preexisting, thin, negative version of freedom (for example, you have the right to choose your own classes), and honoring the potential for autonomy by creating conditions that will nurture its growth.

Students are confident in their choices.

Some are and some aren't. Let's consider how a university might nurture the autonomy of each. True, many students initially seem confident in their declared major. However, as they start to learn more about themselves and see what the field is actually like, many begin to doubt their choice. And in cases where parental pressure played a significant role, students often begin to chaff against this heteronomy. Some lucky students find a way to transmute it into autonomy, finding a genuine calling where they were told to find it. For many students, though, tensions between parental expectations and their personal interests and ambitions eventually come to a head. A university that truly valued autonomy would be prepared to support students through these disorienting episodes. Indeed, we would welcome them as the quintessentially teachable moments in autonomy-promoting education. And this makes it clear how we ought to respond to those students who are disinclined to doubt: we must occasion such moments. We have a responsibility to nudge them toward self-examination.

A period of exploration.

Hear, hear! And delaying the selection of a major is a good start. But this will not matter if there is no exploratory ethos. For example, how many universities still value what Oakeshott called "the gift of an interval," and how many instead have fallen in line with what Josef Pieper calls the culture of "total work"?[20] As Walker Percy's Binx Bolling explains, it is common to be "sunk in the everydayness of . . . life"; we need to be awakened to "the possibility of the search."[21] Instead we celebrate certitude, as we saw in the prologue, affixing to

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> those without a major the negative label "undeclared." A university that truly took vocation and autonomy seriously would be organized to provoke the certain and support the searching to wrestle with the question, What kind of work speaks to my interests, is suited to my talents, and is worthy of my efforts? While some faculty and staff are available for such vocational dialogues, it must be acknowledged that higher education today is poorly set up to facilitate vocational discernment.[22]

The point is not merely to expose our confusion, hypocrisy, and wishful thinking. Our bad faith has real consequences. It is as if we were inviting the tragedy described by Dewey in the epigraph.

Vocational choice is not a tick box. The search for meaningful, worthwhile work is among a very small number of core existential tasks. Occupations are, as Maxine Greene puts it, our "diverse ways . . . of gearing into the world."[23] To find one's métier is to organize one's talents in the service of something worthwhile, to tap into the world's complexity and interest, to find a voice in the dialogue of social life. The search for vocation is nothing less than a quest to find a medium in which we can achieve a fluency and freedom. If the word "quest" sounds like adolescent melodrama, so be it. Given its uncertainty and high stakes, the search for a vocation is dramatic. And it is adolescent, wonderfully so, to think that joining the social order might constitute an event rather than a disappearance.[24] The trick is to find the middle path between disenchantment and romanticization. On the disenchanted view, you just have to pick a line of work and get on with it. On the romanticized view, you just need to look inside to see what you were always meant to do. One negates the genuine pathos and romance of the search for a medium; the other distills it into a sickly syrup. Both make short work of this necessarily protracted process by locating inside of us something that is only discovered by moving out into the world.

Consider the garden designer Piet Oudolf, famous for his dense, flowing, meadow-like plantings, layered with grasses and seldom-used perennials chosen not only for their color when flowering but for the structural features of their seed heads. In a documentary about his work, Oudolf searches in vain for the biographical source of his love of plants.[25] Maybe it was his childhood bike rides through the dunes, he muses, eventually rejecting this suggestion. In the end, he settles on this formulation: "It was something I needed and didn't know it." Oudolf at work is a picture of

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fluency. We watch as he thinks and draws in four dimensions, picturing the riotous blooming and sublime decay of each plant in his complex clusters. Imagine Jackson Pollock, painting with plants, and with no chip on his shoulder about the spontaneity of his gestures. Oudolf explicitly rejects the traditional genius narrative, according to which anyone who eventually finds a clear-throated and distinctive voice in a medium must have known all along that they had something to say in that medium. Instead, Oudolf, stresses how the plants seemed to find him, and not particularly early in his life. In his twenties, he worked as a bartender, a waiter, a fishmonger, and a steelworker. He did turn to nursery and landscape work in his late twenties and start his own design firm at the age of thirty-two. But it would be another six years before he bought the farm where he would begin building a nursery to grow and study the plants that would become the medium for his mature work.[26]

Even a story like this—of a somewhat late bloomer who went on to achieve international acclaim for his distinctive aesthetic vision—is likely to downplay the challenge of truly facing up to the great vocational question. If we have tended to trivialize this core existential task, it is probably because we have wished to leap over it. After all, knowing what sort of work might organize your talents in the service of something worth doing requires at least three types of understanding difficult to achieve. First, since we are all prone to parochialism and myopia, we need exposure to something of the range of human projects and prizings. Then, to know which of these projects are worthwhile requires some degree of ethical understanding, some maturing of judgment about what matters and why. Finally, there is that minor consideration, self-knowledge, without some measure of which one cannot know what sorts of work are suited to one's dispositions and talents. This sounds like a very tall order. If only we had a curriculum focused on exposing students to noteworthy attempts to understand what is worth striving for in a human life with the aim of cultivating self-knowledge and practical wisdom. Of course, we already have such a curriculum, and it is called the humanities.

However, we ought to distinguish between the humanities—disciplinary precincts of the modern research university, each characterized by distinct questions, bodies of literature, and modes of inquiry—and the project of humane learning. There are three reasons for not equating them. First, the tradition of humane education long precedes the modern disciplines.

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Second, humane learning can and does occur outside the humanities, for example, in the natural sciences, the arts, and professional fields such as architecture, law, and medicine. Third, the humanities can and do sometimes fail to live up to their potential as vehicles of humane learning.[27]

Let's consider this third point in more detail. It is hard to imagine a humane education that failed to include the study of literature, history, and philosophy; but it is not hard to imagine courses in such subjects failing to inspire students to confront the great vocational question. No historical account or philosophical treatise, political tract or satirical essay, poem or play, symphony or novel has a magical power to inspire students to deepen their knowledge of self, broaden their understanding of nature and culture, or sharpen their intuitions about how they might best gear into the world. As we noted earlier with Laverty, it matters how the humanities are framed and how they are taught.

For many students, first contact with the humanities will come in the form of Gen Ed requirements. And this is a potentially productive frame. General education could be understood as an invitation to self-understanding, a call to develop all of the worthwhile dimensions of ourselves, a reminder that the world is too complicated to be understood from just a single angle. But this message is rarely received. Most students experience Gen Ed as a bureaucratic requirement, a pointless imposition.[28] Students can be forced to drag their bodies to a lecture hall and fill seats, but unless they bring themselves—some genuine interest in understanding who they are, what to make of the world they have found themselves in, and what to strive for—the relational, existential process of humane education cannot get off the ground. If students experience their Gen Ed classes as an inconvenience, as drudgery, or even as a surprisingly pleasant diversion, it doesn't matter whether the course falls in the category of humanities or not.

Of course, instructors can and should try to create their own counter frames. It is an important part of teaching to explain to students that the quality of learning is dependent not only on the quality of the material and how the course is taught, but also on their own stance. Indeed, one could make a whole study of pedagogical beginnings, looking at the means by which teachers interrupt, provoke, and redirect students in an effort to help students assume a genuine learning stance.[29] That said, the university must have its faculty's back. It must do what it can, at the institutional level, to frame college as the project of becoming an educated person, to issue the

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invitation to humane education, and to fend off forces that corrupt that enterprise. Institutional structures and cultures matter.

And here we must make a distinction between the walk and the talk. As we noted in the previous section, the phrase "transformative learning" is more popular than ever, featured liberally on college websites and brochures. But notice how this goes hand in hand with the rise on R1 campuses of online learning and the new centers of teaching and learning with their own more-revealing syntax and proposed division of labor. Professors will provide the "content"; "instructional designers" will build out the online interface to "deliver" that content. The only problem is that there is no such thing as educational "content." You might find the same "content" streaming over both Hulu and Netflix; if you order a book online, the contents of the package will be the same whether it is arrives via UPS or the USPS. In matters of teaching and learning, at least in the transformative tradition, form and content cannot be so easily disentangled. And when pedagogy collapses from transformation to transmission, it does not matter if the information transmitted is the names of philosophical schools, art historical periods, or literary movements. The medium is the message. Humane learning, through the humanities or other subjects, never gets off the ground.

Let's look more closely at this distinction between genuine humane education and mere transmission of humanities content, drawing on humane letters themselves for assistance. Philosopher Michael Oakeshott will help us frame the problem, and novelist J. D. Salinger will help bring the point home. In order to find a calling, we said, one needs exposure to something of the range of human cherishings, ambitions, and projects, exposure to a wider sense of what there is to be hoped for, sought after, and held dear. Humane education is central in this first step in vocational education because it is oriented to precisely this class of axiological questions: What is meaningful to do, worthy to achieve, and admirable to become? How should we live, individually and collectively? What practices have human beings devised for themselves to embody and pursue these goods?

Historically, one shorthand for this process has been to say that we are exposing students to "culture," but this term has been reduced to a kind of semantic Rorschach test. For some, it connotes the supposed elevation and refinement of certain approved forms of cultural production. For others, it connotes what everybody already possesses, what unites us with those in our group and differentiates us from those in others. The term becomes

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mainly diagnostic: Are you a ranker or a leveler? Oakeshott rejects both of these positions as alternate versions of the same, taxidermy theory of culture. If the levelers encase culture in a museum display box and the rankers enclose it in a group identity, both construe culture as something settled, homogeneous, and sealed off. Oakeshott's alternative view of culture as dynamic, open-ended conversational encounter is worth quoting at length:

> Human self-understanding is, then, inseparable from learning to participate in what is called a "culture." It is useful to have a word which stands for the whole of what an associated set of human beings have created for themselves . . . , but we must not be misled by it. A culture is not a doctrine or a set of consistent teachings [but] . . . a continuity of feelings, perceptions, ideas, engagements, attitudes and so forth, pulling in different directions, often critical of one another and contingently related to one another so as to compose . . . what I shall call a conversational encounter. Ours, for example, accommodates not only the lyre of Apollo but also the pipes of Pan, the call of the wild; not only the poet but also the physicist; not only the majestic metropolis of Augustinian theology but also the "greenwood" of Franciscan Christianity. A culture comprises unfinished intellectual and emotional journeyings, expeditions now abandoned but known to us in the tattered maps left behind by the explorers; it is composed of lighthearted adventures, of relationships invented and explored in exploit or in drama, of myths and stories and poems expressing fragments of human self-understanding, of gods worshipped, of responses to the mutability of the world and of encounters with death. And it reaches us, as it reached generations before ours, neither as long-ago terminated specimens of human adventure, nor as an accumulation of human achievements we are called upon to accept, but as a manifold of invitations to look, to listen and to reflect.[30]

Notice first that, despite his donnish, hortatory tone, Oakeshott does hold a version of intercultural pluralism. This is not to deny his chauvinistic tendencies: Oakeshott is clearly impressed by the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian tradition, which he presumptuously refers to as "ours." Nor would it be any great pluralistic achievement were Oakeshott to acknowledge the existence of multiple cultures only to assert that his own group had alone discovered true Culture amid these sundry folkways. To the contrary, though, Oakeshott stresses that every culture is but the contingent creation of some "associated set of human beings."

While this intercultural pluralism is laudable, what distinguishes Oakeshott's view is his intracultural pluralism, his rich evocation of the pluralism

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within each culture. If the singular, indefinite pronoun in the phrase "a culture" helpfully highlights the first form of pluralism, it tends to hide the second. While it can be useful to have such an umbrella term, Oakeshott observes, it misleads us into thinking that we have some singular, uniform thing in our sights—say, "Western culture"—when in truth each culture is itself internally plural, and on multiple levels. A culture, for Oakeshott, is not a uniform doctrine but it is also not a great debate, as if we agreed on what to dispute and how to discuss it. The internal dynamics of cultures are too complicated to plot along one axis. Cultures are, if you will, both heteroglot and polydox, a layering of rival languages, modes of imagining and describing, within each of which we find conflicting positions. This is why Oakeshott's prose is so full of lists. He is constantly on guard lest our abstractions dull our perception of this internal variegation. Do we look to the ancient world or the Christian tradition when thinking about what it means to lead a good life? If we seek *eudaimonia*, then we must wrestle with the further tension between Apollo and Pan. If we seek piety, then we must weigh the merits of Augustine and St. Francis. There are tensions within tensions, and Oakeshott is just getting started. Shall we seek to know the world through the eyes of the poet or those of the physicist? Is the human condition captured best through myths about gods worshipped, dramas about impermanence, lighthearted tales, meditations on death? The point and counterpoint of the cultural conversation occurs in each of our characteristic modes, in our "feelings, perceptions, ideas, engagements, attitudes."[31] Even when Oakeshott seems ready to collect this multilevel multiplicity into one phrase, "a manifold of invitations," he quickly adds another list, noting that some of these invitations are to look, others to listen, and still others to reflect.

In this way, Oakeshott provides a corrective to the leveler's assumption that culture is a shared identity, which tends to erase the tensions and polyvocality found within cultures. Shall we, then, count Oakeshott among the rankers with their "great books"? This is the typical misreading of Oakeshott. No doubt, Oakeshott considered certain works great. Aristotle's *Ethics*, Hobbes *Leviathan*, and Hegel's *Phenomenology* are three that come to mind. But the whole project of canon formation clashes with Oakeshott's views on education, culture, and history. First, canonization presumes that works possess a value independent of the questions and concerns particular readers bring to them. Though Oakeshott was horrified by child-centered

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education and railed against the fashion for relevance, his constructivist epistemology does make him a kind of progressive educator, if an admittedly strange one.[32] Second, Oakeshott would object to the reverential tone that creeps into most discussions of "great books." As we saw in the passage above, Oakeshott describes cultural artefacts not as aesthetic wholes but as "tattered maps," not as "human achievements we are called upon to accept" but as invitations to go further. In another passage, Oakeshott suggests that in every cultural inheritance we find not only "the substantial" but also "the somewhat flimsy," not only "the refined" but also "the commonplace."[33]

Finally, canon formation invites a variety of historical misunderstandings. We find historicism (the great works as representatives of historical periods), whiggishness (the books arrayed on a great historical ladder with us sitting on the top rung), and presentism (the authors seated around a contemporary seminar table). Where the presentist finds "eternal verities," Oakeshott sees "fragments of human self-understanding"; where the historicist finds "terminated specimens," Oakeshott sees "unfinished journeyings"; where the Whig finds a unidirectional march, Oakeshott sees,

> a "contingent flow" of intellectual and emotional adventures, a mixture of old and new where the new is often a backward swerve to pick up what has been temporarily forgotten; a mixture of the emergent and the recessive.[34]

Oakeshott neither wrenches culture out of history like the presentist nor embalms each artifact in a historical period, whether horizontally like the historicist or vertically like the Whig. There is no uncrossable gulf between past and present. We find ourselves inside that contingent flow. What we call the "present" is just our current state of making sense of, and making use of, our past. Some aspects of the past emerge with a freshness and contemporaneity; others recess into dusty neglect.

It is not just that the present swerves backward to rediscover, but also that so-called past artifacts are themselves forward looking, calling to anyone who would listen, "hear me now!" The projects these works describe—to make something beautiful, to discover a hidden truth, to build something great, to feel something fully, to understand something completely, to see something accurately, to respond to something justly, and so on—are incomplete, as are the efforts to record, assess, and understand them. In this way, they are invitations; they call for a response. How do you understand and assess this "experiment in living," this "strategy of being"?[35] Once we

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have been hailed by our fellow explorers, by their "tattered maps," we must wrestle with how to make this project our own and take it further. At the least, we must ask ourselves, on what grounds will we refuse this call to think and feel, perceive and value, conceive and conduct ourselves in its characteristic way? It is in this sense, and only this sense, that culture forms the basis of humane education. Upon joining the conversations within and across cultures, students encounter rival "images of approval and disapproval," polyvocal provocations to weigh what is worthwhile, a manifold of invitations to understand and declare themselves.[36]

Oakeshott, then, is neither a ranker nor a leveler. He imagines us not outside of culture assessing its products, but inside its flow assessing ourselves with its rich, contingent, and conflicting resources. For Oakeshott, culture is neither a homogeneous worldview, nor even a grand debate, but a polyvocal conversation,

> being carried on between a variety of human activities, each speaking with its own voice, or in a language of its own; the activities (for example) represented in moral and practical endeavor, religious faith, philosophical reflection, artistic contemplation and historical or scientific inquiry and explanation.[37]

In a debate, a single discursive logic is unfolded into two poles, as claim and counterclaim. By contrast, conversation is guided not by a single (dia)logic but by an ethos, by virtues that enable participants to pursue with conviviality and endure with grace a continual upsetting of norms. Conversation includes not only rejoinders but also "disjoinders" that entirely reframe the issue at hand. It is like setting the table with two places, putting the napkin on your lap, saying grace, and picking up your fork, only to watch your companion pick up two spoons, turn the table on its side, and start drumming a rhythm.

Among the virtues needed to endure such gestalt shifts, Oakeshott identifies a disposition that integrates seriousness and playfulness:

> Without the seriousness the conversation would lack impetus. But in its participation in the conversation, each voice learns to be playful, learns to understand itself conversationally and to recognize itself as a voice among voices. As with children, who are great conversationalists, the playfulness is serious and the seriousness is only play.[38]

We must not misunderstand Oakeshott's reference to children. Where the conventional view contrasts childlike whimsy and adult gravity, Oakeshott

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sees children as role models precisely because they resist this false dichotomy. For Oakeshott (serious) playfulness is an excellence in the art of conversation. It is the virtue of "conversability," the disposition toward "acknowledgement and accommodation" of other voices.[39]

If the delicate dance of polyvocality is sustained by this special form of humility, it is undermined by a species of pride. "Each voice," Oakeshott writes, "is prone to *superbia*, that is, an exclusive concern with its own utterance, which may result in its identifying the conversation with itself." This vice is especially pernicious because it leads to a situation in which we mistake some form of monologue for a real conversation and don't even realize what we have lost. Consider, for example, the dominant voice in the contemporary scene, advertising. Within this single register, we find what appears to be a quite capacious conversation between rival modes of imagining. One ad extols sport and fitness; another draws on images of family life; and a third features meditative repose. It is not until we check out, as it were, that we come to realize that all the ads were selling the same life, a life of consumption. For the "conversation to be appropriated by one or two voices," Oakeshott suggests, is "insidious" because the "established monopoly" immediately covers its own tracks.[40] The excluded voices are "convicted in advance of irrelevance" and may only "gain entrance by imitating the voices of the monopolists."[41] Though this only affords "a hearing for a counterfeit utterance," it sustains the fiction that the conversation continues.[42]

It is this process of appropriation and counterfeiting that is involved when the humanities and humane education diverge. When it is hard to tell the difference between being on campus and being at a shopping mall, when the curriculum is framed as career training (with some annoying Gen Ed requirements tossed in), when teaching is understood as transmission of information, the humanities speak not in their own humane voices but in a counterfeit register. Culture becomes not the interplay of rival visions of character and conduct, seeking and satisfaction, but just a token in some other currency.

At this point, we can let Salinger pick up the story from Oakeshott, for it is just this sort of counterfeiting that precipitates the crisis at the center of his novella diptych, *Franny and Zooey*. It is the fall of Franny's senior year in college, and she has suddenly returned home in a bad state. As she explains to her older brother Zooey, she had come to suspect the motives of everyone around her at school, to doubt the integrity of the whole endeavor,

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and then to loathe herself for being judgmental. Unsurprisingly, carping at herself for carping at others was no solution, and neither was her attempt to withdraw into her studies. She had come to a conclusion that she simply could not shake:

> I got the idea in my head, and I could *not* get it out—that college was just one more *dopey*, *inane* place in the world dedicated to piling up treasure on earth and everything. I mean treasure is *treas*ure, for heaven's sake. What's the difference whether treasure is money, or property, or even *cul*ture, or even just plain knowledge? It all seemed like *exactly* the same thing to me, if you take off the wrapping—and it still does![43]

Let us be clear: Franny's problem is not an overspecialized and jobbified curriculum. She is a liberal arts student exposed to a rich and well-rounded curriculum. Though we are not told what college she attends, her midcentury, privileged, ivy/seven-sisters milieu is clear. In the opening novella, "Franny," she is at Princeton, visiting her boyfriend, who has been studying Rilke (6); admires Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Shakespeare (13); and can't quite conceal his pride that his Flaubert paper won praise from the professor (13–14).[44] She arrived on a train where everyone "looked very Smith," except for one "Bennington/Sarah Lawrence type" and two "absolutely Vassar types" (9). As for her own education, we learn that she has elected the honors track (17), until recently was a theater major with a good part in the play (27–28), takes classes in political science (147) and French Lit (145), is writing a paper on Restoration comedy (145), and is surrounded by "pedants and conceited little teardowners" who like to make arch comments about Turgenev and Stendhal (17, 15). Franny is being exposed to "the best that has been thought and said," only the colleges seem to have forgotten the crucial beginning of Arnold's famous definition of culture: "Culture is the pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all of the matters that most concern us. . . ."[45] Turgenev is just trivia if you are looking to score points. Poetry might as well be pork bellies, if you are trading in cultural cachet. Culture is not a thing to be possessed but a pursuit of understanding on matters of true concern, a pursuit of our formation as whole persons.

Like the proverbial sophomore, Franny had headed off to college in the hopes of finding others on "the search." She was sorely disappointed:

> I don't think it would have all got me quite so down if just once in a while—just *once* in a while—there was at least some polite little *perfunctory* implication that

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This is a section of doi:10.7551/mitpress/15228.001.0001

Undeclared

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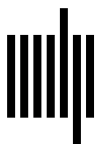
Citation:

Undeclared: A Philosophy of Formative Higher Education
By: Chris Higgins
DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/15228.001.0001
ISBN (electronic): 9780262377607
Publisher: The MIT Press
Published: 2024

The open access edition of this book was made possible by generous funding and support from MIT Press Direct to Open



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The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Bembo Book MT Pro by Westchester Publishing Services.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Higgins, Chris, 1967– author.
Title: Undeclared : a philosophy of formative higher education / Chris Higgins.
Description: Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2023028597 (print) | LCCN 2023028598 (ebook) | ISBN 9780262547499 (paperback) | ISBN 9780262377614 (epub) | ISBN 9780262377607 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Education, Higher—Aims and objectives.
Classification: LCC LB2322.2 .H487 2024 (print) | LCC LB2322.2 (ebook) | DDC 378/.01—dc23/eng/20230814
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023028597
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023028598

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