

knowledge *should* lead to *wisdom*, and that if it *doesn't*, it's just a disgusting waste of time! But there never is! You never even hear any *hints* dropped on a campus that wisdom is *supposed* to be the *goal* of knowledge. . . . In almost four years of college, the only time I can remember ever even hearing the expression “wise man” being used was in my freshman year, in Political Science! And you know how it was used? It was used in reference to some nice old poopy elder statesman who'd made a fortune in the stock market.<sup>46</sup>

Instead of being drawn into an adventure of self-understanding, animated by the multiplicity of images of what matters in a human life, Franny finds but one image reappearing in various guises: acquisition. In the competition to see who has the biggest pile, Franny observes, it doesn't really matter what sort of treasure it is. It may be a pile of money, of insidery knowledge about this or that, or even of great books. Look, there, in the pile, it's a copy of Wordsworth's poems. The owner of this pile must be very cultured and well read! But instead of speaking volumes—for example, I think of his sonnet of 1807 that begins, “The world is too much with us / Late and soon / Getting and spending / We lay waste our powers”—the volume speaks only one word, treasure.<sup>47</sup> Thus, while Franny had the finest humanities education on offer, this was not humane education.

When we meet her, Franny has dropped her theater major, and for the moment left school altogether. She is using this hiatus not to retreat from but to intensify her process of vocational discernment. Franny is undeclared. As I noted in the prologue, it is ironically the undeclared students who often best fit Oakeshott's description of the “declared learner” who craves something more than mere studenting, who welcomes the question at the heart of both ethics and education, What is worth wanting (to have, to do, to become)? And it is this attempt to enrich one's vocabulary of aspiration that is required if one is to seriously engage with the primary task in vocational development. Even while humanists continue to gather their employability statistics, we should take note of the fact that any vocational education worthy of the name begins with humane learning.

#### WORKING WITH INTEGRITY

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized

petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For the “last man” of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: “Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of humanity never before achieved.”

—Max Weber<sup>48</sup>

Let us review the argument so far. In response to the charge of impracticality, the humanities have flip-flopped between two problematic strategies. For much of our history, we have staked our claim on our contribution to nonvocational dimensions of higher education; more recently, we have opted to play the game, touting the roughly equivalent “return on investment” enjoyed by humanities students. It turns out that these seemingly opposed strategies share a key premise, that vocational preparation is nothing more than job training and credentialing. What these twin strategies conceal is that the humanities are indeed central to any decently robust conception of vocational education. To this end, we noted four crucial, but frequently overlooked, humane dimensions of vocation: finding a worthy form of work to which you are suited, becoming aware of the ethical geography in and around your practice, finding in that work sources of your ongoing self-cultivation, and preparing yourself to leave that work if and when the time comes. In the previous section, we explored the first of these dimensions, considering what sort of education is required to support students to confront the great vocational question, “What kind of work expresses my hopes and engages my talents?” What is required, we concluded, are institutions that—far from pretending that this question can or should be answered once and for all by teenage college applicants—take as central to their mission exposure to something of the range of the ends and means that human beings have devised for themselves so that students may explore and expand their understandings of who they are, what projects are worthy of devotion, and what sort of lives are meaningful and admirable. We called such a curriculum “humane,” stressing that it is neither limited to nor guaranteed by the disciplines called the humanities. What matters is sustaining the dynamism and pluralism of the conversation that is culture. When the moral imagination shrinks to “getting and spending,” even the humanities become inhumane. And when we beg the great vocational question, when we fail to help students expand their ethical imagination and find their medium, vocational education becomes a sham, or worse. Pick a

lane and lay on the gas, says the jobified university. But there are far worse things than gaps in your resume. I fear we may be speeding students toward the everyday tragedy described by Dewey, an alienated life in which one never discovers the conditions of their full fluency and agency.

This, however, is not the only crucial, neglected dimension of humane vocational education. Imagine a group of students who, whether by luck or by means of the sort of humane, soul-searching educational process we have described, find lines of work they find congenial, interesting, meaningful, important. Imagine, further, that the university helps these students become well-versed and well-credentialed in their chosen fields. Would these graduates be poised for successful careers? Could they thank their university for delivering on the promise of vocational education? The answer is no and for a very important reason. If we arrest vocational education at this point we have produced only *technicists*, not true engineers, or nurses, or pharmacists, or teachers, or what have you. By a “technicist,” I mean someone who mistakes the technical dimensions of their practice for the whole of the work. No one denies that we want practitioners who know how to solve the standard problems in their fields, practitioners skilled at finding and employing efficient means to given ends. Surely, though, such instrumental reasoning constitutes only one aspect of our working lives. To equate professional practice with this sort of tunnel vision is a recipe for disaster. A full enactment of vocation requires that one be able to think about ends themselves.

This may sound familiar, as if I were issuing just one more call to do a better job incorporating “professional ethics” in the college curriculum. However, there is an important difference between what I have in mind and the standard, instrumental-moral approach to professional ethics. Rather than challenge the assumption that professional practices are merely technical, this standard model simply supplies a set of external moral boundaries within which these instrumental, amoral activities may operate. Thus, we find the proliferation of codes of conduct, describing the lines that professionals, on moral grounds, should not cross. And, of course, there are such lines, and it is very bad when people cross them. But it is not enough to produce skilled technicians who are also decent human beings.<sup>49</sup> Such decent technicians, while knowing what to do in an instrumental sense and knowing what not to do in a moral sense, would still be clueless about the substantive ethics of their practice, about the purpose and value of what they are

doing. I realize how this might sound. Admittedly, philosophers have a bad habit of prescribing that everyone ought to become a philosopher, an argument that we would certainly not accept from stockbrokers, speech therapists, or software engineers. To this charge, I reply that it depends what you mean by being a philosopher. I am not suggesting that every lawyer and dentist needs to know Kant and Hegel, any more than every philosopher needs to know habeas law or how to perform root canals. However, it is essential that all practitioners learn how to perceive and reflect on the ideals that animate their practices. I see three main arguments for this claim. The first is an argument from self-cultivation; the second (which has two variants) I will call the argument from integrity; the third is an argument from public responsibility.

Here I will offer only a brief statement of the first argument since the entire next section concerns the relationship between vocation and self-cultivation. The basic idea is that in order to grow in and through one's work, one must maintain contact with the goods of one's practice; and in order to stay in touch with those goods, one must have some understanding of what they are. Mere technicians, even those with conscience, who have never reflected on the deeper aims animating their practice, will have trouble making that work into a vehicle for their own ongoing growth. Sooner or later, they will stagnate.

Let us turn, then, to the argument from integrity. First, let us recall that the word "integrity" has both a broader and a narrower meaning, as does its complementary term "corruption." Broadly speaking, integrity and corruption refer to the presence or absence of wholeness, coherence, and authenticity. Consider these examples: if you overcook the pie, the berries will lose their integrity. The band has maintained its integrity despite its fame and changes in personnel. This computer code has become corrupted. This man has no integrity: he just says what he thinks others want to hear. Despite the fire, the building maintained its structural integrity. This is the overarching concept, but it is one particular, moral application of this general idea that has come to dominate usage of the terms "integrity" and "corruption." When we speak of "a corrupt CEO" or "the rare politician with integrity," we are asking about the coherence of a person's words and deeds. To be a person of integrity is to have your actions reflect your stated ideals. The opposite is a hypocrite, if not an outright liar, cheater, embezzler, and so on. It goes without saying that this species of integrity is vitally

important: bad actors who hide behind the veil of professionalism and abuse the power of their position can wreak immense damage. Nonetheless, in focusing so exclusively on this species of individual moral corruption, the standard model of professional ethics turns a blind eye to the way in which whole practices drift and degrade until they are no longer what we think they are. An ethical calling requires us to understand and defend the integrity of practices themselves.

What forces threaten to corrupt vocations, and what forms of integrity work are needed in response? As I mentioned, I see two main variants here, associated with the pair of thinkers whose related interventions in the early 1980s helped usher in a new chapter in ethics and social theory. The publication of Alasdair MacIntyre's pathbreaking *After Virtue* was followed just two years later by Michael Walzer's important and underrated *Spheres of Justice*, twin challenges to what Michael Sandel has described as "the procedural republic and the unencumbered self."<sup>50</sup> This was a key moment in a larger renaissance in ethical theory, a modern rehabilitation of aretaic ethics, foregrounding notions of character, excellence, and flourishing.<sup>51</sup> It was also a turning point in social and political theory, the launch of the so-called liberalism-communitarianism debate.<sup>52</sup> While neither MacIntyre nor Walzer identified as communitarians, they did challenge key assumptions of the reigning version of liberal political theory, such as its atomistic philosophical anthropology and its knee-jerk contrast between tradition and reason. Because they sought to rehabilitate concepts of practice, community, and tradition, and to recover thicker notions of justice and the good, they were sometimes seen as advocating a return to oppressive ethical conformity and consensus. This is an almost perfect misreading: their key contribution was indeed to remind us that the good is multifarious. In different ways, each sought to challenge the false choice between a universalism of thin principles and a relativism of value preferences, outlining a version of substantive ethical pluralism.

Such axiological pluralism has deep significance for vocation and vocational education. Practices are not simply different strategies for securing some overarching good. The multiplicity of practices reflects the diversity of goods and indeed of rival comprehensive conceptions framing and ordering such diverse goods. Nor are these larger frameworks, as we saw in the prior section, themselves monolithic or fixed. Every tradition is itself composed of disagreements over, and an evolving sense of, what is valuable

to have, excellent to achieve, wondrous to behold, worthwhile to participate in, and admirable to become. The key point is that, for MacIntyre and Walzer, such goods only become visible in particular contexts. Thus, MacIntyre speaks of the “goods internal to practices”; and Michael Walzer refers to “spheres of justice,” diverse “moral and material worlds” where we find not only distinct goods but rival logics of distribution.<sup>53</sup> When such practices are corrupted or the boundaries between spheres dissolve, we experience a deep, structural form of axiological corruption. An analogy from biology might be helpful. We are currently witnessing a rapid rise in the species extinction rate and a drastic loss in biological diversity. Similarly, we can and do experience a loss in diversity in the ethical realm. Species of valuation—distinctive ways of prizing, of showing care, of finding importance—disappear from the world just as have the passenger pigeon, the Western black rhinoceros, and the Pyrenean ibex. One difference is that, unlike biological extinction, the decline in axiological diversity often goes undetected. Certainly, some ethical worlds die a clear death, but many take on zombie forms. The spirit departs but the rituals and the language associated with the given axiological sphere or practice live on.<sup>54</sup> The practice is gradually corrupted until it loses its integrity, but by then ersatz forms have come to function in their place and all appears well. It is as if a group of hippos had been disguised to appear as Western black rhinos, fooling the black rhino census.

What kind of corruption do I have in mind, and just what are these axiological imposters? Without overstating the differences in their accounts, MacIntyre and Walzer each emphasize different threats to ethical pluralism. MacIntyre helps us perceive a key internal threat to practices, which I will call “bureaucratization,” namely the tendency of practices to be swallowed up by the institutional machinery built to sustain them. Walzer’s main worry involves inter-spherical relations, and specifically the tendency of one sphere to become subordinated to another such that its goods are no longer valued for their own sake but only as means for securing the goods of the dominant sphere. Let’s follow David Blacker in calling this second process “spherical capture.”<sup>55</sup>

First, let us consider “bureaucratization,” the process by which institutions, built for the very purpose of protecting and advancing practices, nonetheless begin to subvert them. The basic distinction between practices and institutions is intuitive enough. Journalism is a practice;

the newspaper is an institution. Doctoring and nursing are practices; the hospital and the insurance company are institutions. Painting, sculpting, curation, and preservation are practices; the museum is an institution. In distinguishing the two, MacIntyre is not at all suggesting that practices would be better off without institutions. He takes pains to point out that indeed “no practice would survive any length of time unsupported by institutions.”<sup>56</sup> And MacIntyre further admits that it can sometimes be difficult, even in healthy practice-institution relationships, to find a clear boundary line between the two. After all, practices require community, a sense of their own history, and ways of welcoming initiates: three aspects of practical life in which institutions play a crucial role. Thus, practices and institutions can knit into “a single causal order.”<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, there remains an important difference between the two, namely that practices deal with internal goods and institutions with external goods. A good is anything found worthy to have, do, behold, or become. Each genuine practice has a distinctive ethos, and is organized around a distinctive set of goods. These goods are called “internal” because it is only through apprenticeship and participation that practitioners can learn to appreciate them. External goods such as money and power are generic, requiring no special cultivation of perception, judgment, or character. The other key difference is that internal goods are cooperative while external goods are competitive.<sup>58</sup>

Consider the example of chess. Now there is certainly nothing insidious about chess clubs. To the contrary, the practice is better off for there being a place where players can find an opponent, not to mention a nice quiet hall with tables, sets, and clocks. The club hosts classes, grandmaster visits, tournaments, and each year members gather to discuss the World Chess Championship finals, move by move. The practice of chess flourishes because of, not despite, the activities of the chess club. But of course, all of this costs money, and so dues must be collected, members recruited, ledgers kept, officers elected, disputes settled, and so on. In this example, in which institutional structures are relatively simple and closely modeled on the practice, it is easy to imagine the relationship as a symbiotic one. With a little imagination, though, we can picture a scenario in which this symbiosis breaks down. If MacIntyre were to submit an indie about chess to Sundance, this might be the logline:

Lately, the President of the Westside Chess Club has cared much less about the Latvian Gambit and much more about beating the Eastside Club. Now all of the Westsiders seem obsessed with external goods (membership numbers, financial reserves, seeding for the annual all-city championship), having lost track of the internal goods that drew them in the first place (the beauty of great games; the unique forms of intensity, resourcefulness, and analytic prowess it brings out in the players).<sup>59</sup> We close on an early summer evening: the officers are at the club arguing about Robert's Rules of Order, not even noticing that they are alone. Cut to: the city park, with its run-down chess tables. As the sun sets on the Westside Club, the core players have gathered to get back in touch with the game itself.<sup>60</sup>

It is relatively easy to script a happy ending in this case. While chess clubs are nice and useful, the game is clearly the thing, and all you really need is a set and a partner. If the cart gets in front of the horse, we can just cut tack. In many fields, though, the lines between practice and institution have grown deeply tangled. Consider the relationship of the practices of doctoring and nursing to the institutions of the hospital and insurance company. Again, the claim is not that healing practices need no institutional support, only that such support can devolve into domination, leading to a corruption of the practice, as external goods are mistaken for internal goods. Rather than view hospitals as that set of structures which best support the practices of doctoring and nursing, the fear is that doctors and nurses may start to see themselves as hospital employees. Consider this interview with a family doctor from Camden, New Jersey, who helped form a family medicine group that would insist on such radical innovations as taking time to talk with patients:

In our system we have an asymmetry in price. So we pay a whole lot of money if you cut, scan, and hospitalize patients. If they have procedures, if they go through machines, we pay an enormous amount of money for those things. If you talk to a patient, you actually lose money in many instances. So when a cardiologist walks in the room and talks to your family member, that's actually a loss leader. That doctor is losing money every moment they stay in a room with your family member. The way they make money is by getting you out of that room back into the scanner that they're leasing in the back of the office. That's not their fault. That's the fault of how we've structured the incentives in the system.<sup>61</sup>

The word "bureaucratization" suggests long lines and a deluge of paperwork. As this example shows, though, the process I am describing is no



minor annoyance. It is a deep and insidious form of corruption. The problem is not individual moral corruption, such as double billing by hospital administrators, but axiological corruption of the practice itself. We have come to mistake medicine for cutting and scanning! What makes it insidious is that the word “health” will continue to be used throughout this process by which, as Michael Sandel puts it, “market values crowd out non-market values.”<sup>62</sup> If you know you have lost your compass, then at least you know what you are up against. This deeper form of corruption amounts to a more radical form of moral disorientation. In this example, though we are living through the decay of the practices that help us stay in touch with the meaning of health, the word “health” remains, like the reading on a broken compass. In health, education, and a wide range of modern professions, we may be lost without even knowing it. Or, to adapt Weber’s famous imagery, while practices should wear their institutions like a light cloak, the concern with external goods often becomes a steel-hard shell.<sup>63</sup>

Let us turn now from MacIntyre’s account to Walzer’s, shifting our focus from this breakdown of boundaries within the “single causal order” of a practice-institution pair to the erosion of boundaries between spheres. Like MacIntyre, Walzer’s aim is to counter bloodless talk of generic goods and rights with thick descriptions of the ethical worlds that serve as home to our distinctive modes of prizing, assessing, and distributing. Whereas MacIntyre drills down to the level of practices, of which there are hundreds (imagining, for example, a compendium from A to Z, here are just some of the candidates in the Ba–Bo range, as it were: Baking, Banjo Playing, Beekeeping, Bicycle Repair, Bocce Ball, Botany), Walzer enumerates eleven core social goods: (1) membership (in a political community), (2) security and welfare, (3) money and commodities, (4) (professional) office, (5) working conditions (not being stuck with more than one’s share of dangerous, grueling, or dirty work), (6) free time, (7) education, (8) kinship and love, (9) divine grace, (10) recognition, and (11) political power. As Walzer shows, in seeking to understand and secure these goods we have drawn on and developed diverse traditions of ethical thinking. Each has become home to a “distinctive social and moral logic.”<sup>64</sup> Walzer does not see these axiological spheres as fully autonomous. He readily admits that “what happens in one distributive sphere affects what happens in the others.”<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, Walzer insists, even the vague standard of “relative autonomy” proves its worth as a “critical principle,” the force of which we feel every time this standard is “violated, the goods usurped, the

spheres invaded, by powerful men and women.”<sup>66</sup> In every sphere, we will find unequal distribution of the good in question. As problematic as these “simple” inequalities can be, when the relative autonomy of spheres is eroded and goods are made “convertible,” such monopolies aggregate into full “tyranny.” Walzer’s core thesis is that the search for one-dimensional justice is self-defeating; we must pursue “complex equality” through the liberal “art of separation.”<sup>67</sup>

Compared with MacIntyre’s overstuffed ethical emporium, we might well find Walzer’s shelves somewhat bare, wanting a bit more plural in his pluralism. Indeed, whereas vocational and other practices are the very engine driving the diversification of goods in MacIntyre, Walzer lumps all vocations together under the concept of office.<sup>68</sup> And we might take issue with other exclusions and categorizations. For example, we might fault Walzer for making no place for friendship or for goods of aesthetic experience and expression.<sup>69</sup> We might also feel that the abstractness and breadth of some of Walzer’s spheres work against his own aim of rerooting democratic politics in a theory of goods understood in their rich, evolving multifariousness. After all, it is Walzer himself who points out that even basic “physical necessities” are the bearers of rich and varied social meanings: “Bread is the staff of life, the body of Christ, the symbol of the Sabbath, the means of hospitality, and so on.”<sup>70</sup> This is even more true, Walzer adds, when we move from necessities to “opportunities, powers, reputations, and so on.”<sup>71</sup> Social theory tends to abstract goods “from every particular meaning,” a process by which, Walzer says, they are “for all practical purposes, rendered meaningless.”<sup>72</sup> Why then does Walzer hide such an important good as *health* in the abstract category of “security and welfare”? Similarly, while building and dwelling are among the most basic and phenomenologically rich human activities, it is hard to locate in Walzer’s spheres the need for a *home* in the built environment.<sup>73</sup> Criticism along these lines appeared immediately, for example in the review by Ronald Dworkin, who accused Walzer of being “bewitched by the music of his own Platonic spheres,” complaining that Walzer’s typology is “fixed, preordained,” assuming “only a limited number of spheres of justice.”<sup>74</sup> To this, Walzer retorted that such essentialism was “contrary to the method and intention of [his] book.”<sup>75</sup> Mapping the spheres is empirical and interpretive work, he explained, and our understanding of how to draw the boundaries around distinctive social goods “will change over time.”<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, any alert reader of Walzer must be struck by the provisional, programmatic quality of the work. What matters is the concept of an axiological sphere—and the accounts of domination, tyranny, ethical pluralism, and complex equality based on this concept—not the exact roster of eleven spheres. Walzer's sketches of these spheres are clearly provisional and themselves point toward an expansion of the list. For example, in the chapter on education, Walzer finds not one but three distinct goods each with its own distributive logic (according to free exchange, desert, or need): (1) because of its close connection to membership, basic schooling should be subject to universal, collective provision according to need; (2) because of its close connection to office, specialized schooling should be distributed on the basis of desert; and we find yet a third axiology in (3) general (higher) education which is motivated by the ideal of attaining a "reasonable and humane conduct of life."<sup>77</sup> Or consider the discussion of free time. This seemingly unitary good immediately refracts into different spectra under Walzer's lens. "Holidays and vacations are two different ways of distributing free time," he concludes; "each has its own logic—or, more exactly, vacations have a single logic, while every holiday has a particular sub-logic, which we can read out of history and rituals."<sup>78</sup> Or, again, "Sabbath rest is more egalitarian than the vacation because it can't be purchased: it is one more thing that money can't buy."<sup>79</sup> Certainly, there is a centripetal force at work in *Spheres*. Walzer corrals the manifold of goods into eleven spheres, each of which is found to emphasize, combine, or inflect one of his three basic distributive principles.<sup>80</sup> But again and again, Walzer's muse pulls him outward, and it is this centrifugal tendency that makes the book a classic. What interests Walzer is the historical, cultural, and phenomenological variegation in our collective construction of the worthwhile. The discussion of money and markets is concretized in the rise of the department store. To then test the limits of commodification, we look with Malinowski at the gift logic at work in the Trobriand Islands, only to refract this further by investigating the gift in the Napoleonic Code. Walzer loves to zoom in and learn from the details: from Stalinist praising to Athenian shaming; from the sharing of grueling work on a kibbutz to the phenomenology of rest; from the concept of the date (as a form of courtship) to the history of the titles "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Miss," and "Ms." Den Hartogh is probably right in his assessment that the architecture of Walzer's theory is unstable, but his conclusion is also on point: "Walzer's true genius . . . [lies] in his mastery of the phenomenology of the moral life."<sup>81</sup>

Thus, while it remains an open question just how we should map social goods into distinct spheres, Walzer's basic model remains quite useful. Like MacIntyre, Walzer's aim is to unearth the multiplicity of moral sources and to remind us of the fragility of this pluralism. We must be on guard against convertibility and spherical capture. The integrity of the spheres must be defended. For example, one of Walzer's extended examples involves the town of Pullman, Illinois. In 1880, George Pullman, the specialized railroad car magnate, created a planned community just south of Chicago, centered around a new set of factories and populated by his employees. The town included "private homes, row houses, and tenements for some seven to eight thousand people, shops and offices (in an elaborate arcade), schools, stables, playgrounds, a market, a hotel, a library, a theater, even a church," all owned by Pullman.<sup>82</sup> As Walzer explains, though Pullman did not engage in the typical company-town abuses—rent gauging, scrip and inflated prices, and so on—there was something deeply troubling about the whole setup. In Pullman, Illinois, the boundaries between the spheres of membership, security, money, and political power were dissolved. Indeed, the logic of convertibility extended even to education and religion, as colorfully captured by one resident: "We are born in a Pullman house. We are fed from a Pullman shop, taught in a Pullman school, catechized in the Pullman church and when we die we shall be buried in a Pullman cemetery and go to a Pullman hell."<sup>83</sup> Most troubling for Walzer is the conflation of the logics of ownership and governance. That Pullman's employees retained their US citizenship was beside the point: by creating a 4,000-acre fiefdom around his factories, Walzer observes, Pullman turned his employees into "guest workers, and that is not a status compatible with democratic politics."<sup>84</sup> This is a fairly obvious case of tyranny. Let us consider another, more subtle, case of spherical capture.

What I have in mind is the relation of sports and politics (in light of the preceding discussion, I will take the liberty of hypothesizing that sports has become home to distinct notions of excellence, virtue, and worth and thus constitutes its own sphere). As Walzer would predict, there is no question of entirely disentangling the two spheres. Indeed, in many sports, the highest honor is to represent one's country in international competition. The Olympics is about nationalism as much as it is about athleticism. If Olympic sports are entwined with global politics, all sports run up against politics in the more general sense of negotiating the distribution, limitation,

and organization of power in a community. The recent election for the presidency of the US Women's Soccer Federation is a case in point. Former star goalkeeper Hope Solo, having recently been cut from the team, ran for the presidency on a platform of combating corruption and fighting for equal pay for female athletes. In a case like this, it can be hard to separate the sport itself from the politics of the sporting community and indeed from national political questions, such as our continued failure to address gender discrimination. The reverse is also true, that sports can bleed into politics. Sports is a sphere with wide participation, first- and secondhand, and its vocabularies of praise and blame have wide currency in the culture at large. As the US presidential election was heating up in the fall of 2012, so did Mitt Romney's use of sports metaphors. Likening President Barack Obama to a coach with a losing record, Romney declared that "It's time to get a new coach. It's time for America to see a winning season again."<sup>85</sup> Politicians are said to *swing for the fences*, campaigns to need a *ground game*; debaters to deliver the *knockout punch*.

As we said, the boundaries between spheres are never impermeable. Nonetheless, as Walzer predicts, once the boundaries dissolve past a certain point, palpable corruption ensues. It is one thing to reach for the occasional sports metaphor as we all do, for example "drop the ball" or "three strikes," and another to begin to conceive of political processes as if they were sporting events. Thus, talk of "dark horses" and candidates running "neck and neck" are not just colorful and convenient metaphors but symptoms of a deeper conflation of sports and politics. We perceive politics as a game; elections as a horse race. Coverage of elections constantly veers away from the ideas espoused by candidates to the points scored or lost in so espousing them. Don't get me wrong, there is something genuinely, beautifully good about come-from-behind victories. Thank goodness we have sports to refresh our moral imaginations with examples of a certain kind of raw courage, heart, pluck, and perseverance. If you missed Michael Chang's defeat of Ivan Lendl in the 1989 French Open, drop what you are doing and watch the match now. But the goods of politics are distinct. Presumably, they involve struggling together, across our differences, with the question of how we ought to live together, finding in our very disagreements a continuing commitment to take collective, reflective responsibility for our shared fate. Of course, we will continue to pay lip service to "the importance of debate," "pressing social issues," and so on. However, as the spherical integrity of politics continues to weaken, political goods

will dissipate until they are nothing but paper-thin tickets to some other sort of prize.

And we can run the analysis in reverse. The example that comes to mind is a recent ugly incident in men's freestyle wrestling. It was November 2017, during the quarterfinals of the Under 23 World Championships in Poland, when the Iranian wrestling federation's policy of forbidding their wrestlers to wrestle against Israeli opponents finally came into effect. Iran's outstanding 86 KG freestyle wrestler, Alireza Karimi-Machiani, was in the quarterfinals, facing a tough Russian opponent. In the other quarter on the same side of the bracket was an Israeli wrestler paired with a US opponent. The quarters run simultaneously, and so, even as the Iranian coaches were coaching Karimi, they were watching the other mat to see whether the Israeli wrestler would be advancing. When it became clear that he would, Karimi's coaches, in order to avoid having him wrestle against or forfeit to the Israeli in the semifinals, told Karimi to throw the match. Regardless of what you think about Iran's nonrecognition of Israel, or Israel's treatment of Palestinians, all of those who know the beauty of the sport of freestyle wrestling felt the intense wrongness of what happened in the next twenty seconds. With just over a minute left, the wrestlers went out of bounds. Karimi was leading 3–2, controlling the match. The Russian seemed to have no answer for Karimi's head-hands defense. As they headed back to the center, Karimi looked over at his coaches. At the restart, Karimi relaxed his stance, allowing the Russian in on a double leg without sprawling. Falling to the mat, Karimi then gave up five easy, consecutive leg-laces to lose 14–3, by technical superiority, with forty-five seconds still on the clock. Afterward, Karimi looked defeated. Even the Russian wrestler looked more confused than celebratory. It is not only that Karimi's hard work had been sacrificed to geopolitics: the whole 86 KG bracket had been invalidated. For twenty seconds we got a good look at an ethical zombie. It still looked like wrestling, but the practice had been perverted. The heart gone.

In this way, MacIntyre and Walzer draw our attention to forms of deep, structural, axiological corruption. As I mentioned earlier, this is not to minimize the damage done by individual moral corruption. The double-billing doctor, the plagiarizing professor, the confidentiality-betraying therapist: these are deeply troubling actions. At the same time, such transgressions ultimately reinforce the norms they violate. Such miscreants may cover their tracks for a time, but when their actions finally come to light, it reaffirms the

values of fairness, honesty, and trust. However, it is one thing to be betrayed by individual bad actors, and another when a community of practice suffers widespread moral disorientation. What makes bureaucratization and spherical capture so dangerous is that they distort rather than eliminate the goods in question. It is, as we noted, like having a broken compass. We are never more lost than when we don't know we have lost our way.

For this reason, we must insist that true vocation entails the kinds of integrity work described by MacIntyre and Walzer. Given the threat of bureaucratization, practitioners must work to ensure that internal goods are not mistaken for external goods. Given the threat of spherical capture, practitioners must work to ensure that the goods definitive of their sphere are not made into a sub-currency of another sphere. And this brings us to the conclusion of the second argument, the argument from integrity. In order to recognize counterfeits and stand up for the goods under assault, one must understand the ethical terrain in question. A full enactment of vocation requires a degree of ethical acuity, responsiveness, and reflectiveness. Thus, any vocational education worthy of the name must help practitioners learn how to ask and keep open the question, How do the aims of my local practice, as institutionalized and socially positioned, relate to the genuine goods of my practice? In light of the dangers of bureaucratization, I must ask, Am I a chess player or a ward heeler? Am I a doctor, or a cutter and scanner? Given the dangers of spherical capture, I must ask, Am I politician or a jockey? Are we a wrestling team or a branch of the state department? Such questions arise in every practice: Is this a museum or a tourist attraction? Is this a university or corporate R&D? Am I a lawyer or a biller of hours, a journalist or an entertainer, a farmer or petrochemist, a teacher or a warden, a psychotherapist or a psychopharmacologist? A practitioner who has never given much thought to the *telos* of his or her practice, to that for the sake of which we engage in the work, will find it difficult to detect these deeper forms of corruption.

We turn now to a third argument for the claim that vocational education must cultivate reflectiveness about the nature, aims, and social importance of one's work. Earlier I called this the argument from public responsibility, and it is really just the flip side of Walzer's warning about domination and spherical capture. If the argument from integrity suggests that vocation demands that one ask whether one's local practice has drifted away from its animating ideals, the argument from public responsibility suggests that

one must also ask how one's practice fits into the broader pursuit of flourishing lives and just communities. In other words, ethical practice requires that one be aware that the goods one seeks in one's practice are not the only goods. In Walzerian spirit, we ought to avoid the logic of convertibility, even when we work within the dominant sphere. And even when the boundaries between spheres remain intact, there is the question of how we commensurate and prioritize rival goods in our pursuit of the common good. Our awareness of other social goods thus inflects how we think about our own practice and provides constraints on our work.

It may be misleading, however, to speak of this consideration in terms of constraint. After all, we want our work to be—we want ourselves to be—part of something larger. To have a vocation is to have a place to stand in public life, a place from which to seek the recognition of others. Since this suggests that we can and do join existing public dialogues through our work, it is important to add that our occupations constitute, to adopt Harry Boyte's phrase, "public work" not because all occupations are governmental or even because all professions contribute to the common good, but even more elementally because in occupying our social roles we are together "making public," working to make the polity not just an administrative apparatus but a space where the good in its several aspects may be sought, cherished, articulated, debated.<sup>86</sup> When we introduce students to professions as if they were isolated practices, we not only leave them unprepared to negotiate tensions between the aims of their practice and other social goods, but we condemn them to that sad fate of a purely private existence.

In the jobbified university, vocational preparation tends toward technicism. The problem is not that there are no skills to teach, no information to pass on. The problem is myopia. The narrow focus on how to get the job and handle its characteristic tasks leaves two cornerstones of vocational formation in the blurry background: the ethical sources on which the integrity of each practice depends and the social context within which the work assumes its public importance. True vocational education fosters ethical and social awareness, cultivating the ability to defend the value and integrity of the goods animating one's practice and to articulate how these goods relate to those of other spheres. Having established this second corrective to the reductive view of vocational education, we return to the question of the contribution of humane learning to vocational enactment. Here, though, no elaborate, new argument is required. For it was the point of the previous



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# Undeclared

## A Philosophy of Formative Higher Education

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