

JOB PROSPECTS: VOCATIONAL FORMATION  
AS HUMANE LEARNING

Happy Hunger Games! And may the odds be *ever* in your favor.  
—Effie Trinket

LIFE IN PANEM

Another year, another round of austerity measures for the humanities. While some institutions have boldly cut whole departments, eliminating disciplines as old as the university itself, most have adopted the trusty strategy of slow starvation punctuated by the annual hunger games in which departments send forth tributes to defend their “value propositions” and battle for resources. The games are rigged of course. To survive, you must choose from among the available WMDs (weapons of metric dominance): grant dollars, enrollment levels, employment stats for your graduates, and so on. The discursive battles that ensue are so familiar that we know the lines by heart.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: A budget task force meeting

ADMINISTRATOR: “As you can see, times have changed and we are facing increasing fiscal pressures. In this new climate, it is more important than ever that each unit pull its own weight. That is why we are developing these new program evaluation metrics and have asked you to gather data on how your alumni are faring in the job market.”

HUMANITIES PROFESSOR: “But don’t you see how these metrics are biased toward technical and pre-professional programs! You are prioritizing vocational aims and devaluing liberal education. Isn’t college more than job preparation?!”

ADMINISTRATOR: “Yes, of course, but if we can’t demonstrate return on investment, students will take their tuition dollars elsewhere, and we will be having this debate down the street at the coffee shop since we will all be out of a job.”

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# Undeclared

## A Philosophy of Formative Higher Education

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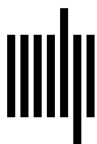
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