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Chapter 1

**THE HUMANITIES IN CRISIS:
WHAT WENT WRONG AND HOW TO RESTORE THEIR
CENTRALITY IN OUR DAILY LIVES**

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Dedicated to Stephen E. Levinson
Whose Love of Science Shaped His Appreciation of the Humanities

ABSTRACT

Over the past 50 years student enrollments in the liberal arts at colleges and universities has plummeted. Our current crisis in the humanities received considerable attention in 2013 with the publication of several influential reports including—“Mapping the Future”, “The Heart of the Matter”, and “What Does Bowdoin Teach?”—as well as one major conference—“A New Deal for the Humanities”—devoted to the importance of public institutions of higher education in sustaining the liberal arts. However, except for the Bowdoin report, no attempt has been made to address the root cause of the malaise, which is the eradication of academic excellence founded in the Western canon by the imposition of “social justice”.

This paper defines the humanities. It examines the subject from a historical perspective. It demonstrates how the curriculum, presently saturated in politics and almost devoid of academic content, lies at the root of the problem. Revitalization of the humanities means understanding our history and the innovations that nurture greatness. The liberal arts must work in partnership with the social sciences, business, and the engineering and mathematical sciences to provide students with an education grounded in academic excellence and founded upon an appreciation of Western civilization.

Keywords: The Humanities

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THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED BY COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE HUMANITIES AND THE SCIENCES

The “crisis” of the humanities in the United States was headline news for much of 2013. In late April of that year, Harvard held a conference “The Humanities and the Future of the University” focused on what might be done to revive student interest in majoring in the humanities (Ireland, 2013). The conference was followed in June by the publication of a lengthy report “The Teaching of the Arts and Humanities at Harvard College: Mapping the Future”. The study was the outcome of an intensive 18-month investigation by more than 40 faculty in the arts and humanities at Harvard who sought to find ways to reinvigorate flagging student interest in the liberal arts while strengthening its curriculum (“Mapping the Future”, 2013; “Addressing a Decline in Humanities Enrollment”, 2013). The report is an attempt to consider what might be done to reengage undergraduates in the humanities, which historically have been the cultural foundation of Harvard’s elite education.

What is the gist of the study? The argument is essentially that enrollments in the humanities have declined over the course of the past 50 years, and, therefore, major efforts are needed to reinvigorate these disciplines to ensure their continued relevance and, more to the point, bolster their enrollments.

The numbers tell the narrative. Undergraduate degrees received in the humanities from four-year colleges and universities throughout the country dropped by half from 14% in 1966 to 7% in 2010. In the case of Harvard, 36% of students majored in the humanities in 1954 as compared with only 20% in 2012. Even more disturbing, because of its importance as an indicator, is that over the past 10 years the numbers of students expressing a desire to major in the humanities at Harvard has declined by one-third (Levitz & Belkin, 2013).

The decrease in the numbers of students majoring in the humanities is particularly significant for Harvard and most elite colleges in America—as opposed to engineering and technical colleges—because these schools have historically defined their educational credentials, if not their excellence, by and through their faculty in the humanities and the associated course offerings. Consider, for example, Stanford University. Approximately 45% of the faculty teaching undergraduates there are concentrated in the humanities. Nevertheless, only 15% of Stanford students major in liberal arts. Indeed, not a single humanities department at Stanford ranks in the top five in terms of undergraduate enrollments (Lewin, 2013).

Nor is the Stanford case really any exception. As Andrew Delbanco, a professor in the English Department at Columbia University, noted, “Both inside the humanities and outside, people feel that the intellectual firepower in the universities is in the sciences, that the important issues that people of all sorts care about, like inequality and climate change, are being addressed not in the English departments” (Lewin, 2013). Or as English professor Louis Menand at Harvard put it, “How many people do you know who’ve read a book by an English professor in the past year? But everybody’s reading science books” (Lewin, 2013).

This concern bleeds through “Mapping the Future”. But what are the solutions proposed? They call for generalization over specialization; they advocate critical thinking; they emphasize interdisciplinary studies; they stress the importance of the present in shaping and influencing interpretations of the archives, and they reject the Western canon of “Great

Books” in favor of teaching any and all works “we think are great” (“In Brief: Mapping the Future”, 2013).

Less than two weeks after Harvard released “Mapping the Future”, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences issued its own report “The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences for a Vibrant, Competitive, and Secure Nation” prepared by the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences. The study makes the case that “the humanities and social sciences are the heart of the matter, the keeper of the republic—a source of national memory and civic vigor, cultural understanding and communication, individual fulfillment and the ideals we hold in common” (“The Heart of the Matter”, 2013, p. 9). “The humanities”, the report continues, “remind us where we have been and help us envision where we are going” (“The Heart of the Matter”, 2013, p. 9).

In response to a bipartisan request from both houses of Congress regarding how our nation will “maintain national excellence in humanities and social scientific scholarship and education” (“The Heart of the Matter”, 2013, p. 6), the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences was formed. Its report, “The Heart of the Matter”, identifies what it deems as the principal mandate, namely, educating Americans “in the knowledge, skills, and understanding they will need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy” while fostering “a society that is innovative, competitive, and strong...” (“The Heart of the Matter”, 2013, p. 6). To accomplish that, the report emphasizes the importance of ensuring that Americans are developing the capability for leadership and success “in an interconnected world”. “The Heart of the Matter” insists that “these goals cannot be achieved by science alone” and emphasizes “the connections between the humanities and social sciences, and the physical and biological sciences” (“The Heart of the Matter”, 2013, p. 6).

If Harvard’s “Mapping the Future” appears disconnected from the real-world challenges, “The Heart of the Matter” is not. It understands that humanistic education cannot and by implication must not be detached from the social sciences and that by inference both must find a way to interact meaningfully with the scientific community if these disciplines are to have relevance and if we are to prosper as a people and a nation.

“The Heart of the Matter” sets forth a multi-pronged program to implement recommended changes not only for the K-12 education but also for a spectrum of educational institutions focused on higher learning. Of course, the devil is in the details. One of the challenges with mandates culled from committee reports that are assembled for governmental and political purposes is that individuals have differing opinions as to what exactly are the challenges and how to best overcome them. Thus, in commenting on “The Heart of the Matter”, *The New York Times* Op-Ed columnist David Brooks was careful to distance himself from the recommended proposals, even though he acknowledged that he was a contributing member (Brooks, 2013).

While more upbeat and pragmatic in its assessment and prescriptions for remedies than Harvard’s study, nevertheless, “The Heart of the Matter” might be regarded as an addendum to the influential 2007 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) educational and policy report “Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future”. The premise driving this STEM study is simple: “Without high-quality, knowledge-intensive jobs and the innovative enterprises that lead to discovery and new technology, our economy will suffer and our people will face a lower standard of living” (“Rising Above the Gathering Storm”, 2007, p. 1).

“Rising Above the Gathering Storm” was undertaken by the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century: An Agenda for American Science and Technology. It was initiated on behalf of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. The report was at the behest of bipartisan members of both houses of Congress (“Rising Above the Gathering Storm”, 2007, ix-xii).

Four actions are recommended to ensure continued prosperity for the 21st century. First, the report calls for improvements in STEM education throughout K-12 by enhancing the number, quality, and training of science teachers with the goal of “*10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds*” (“Rising Above the Gathering Storm”, 2007, pp. 4-7, 112-135). Second, it advocates a renewed emphasis on research, thereby “*Sowing the Seeds*” for our continued innovation and economic success (pp. 4, 7-8 136-161). Third, it encourages initiatives in higher education in the United States that ensure America continues to be “*the most attractive setting in which to study and perform research*” (p. 9) for scientists and engineers in order to attract and retain the “*Best and Brightest*” (pp. 4, 9-10, 162-181). Fourth, it nurtures economic policy that creates “*Incentives for Innovation*” (pp. 4, 11-12, 182-203).

Failure to implement these measures would, as the Committee noted, have dire consequences: “We can expect to lose our privileged position. For the first time in generations, the nation’s children could face poorer prospects than their parents and grandparents did” (“Rising Above the Gathering Storm”, 2007, p. 13). Indeed, in the aftermath of 9/11 and the 2008 economic meltdown, this warning is proving to be harsh reality, rather than dire prophesy.

The implications of the title “Rising Above the Gathering Storm” should be clear. It is borrowed from Winston Churchill’s *The Gathering Storm*—the first of six volumes he wrote about the historical role of Britain during the Second World War. If, as Raymond Callahan suggests, Churchill can be credited with having led his nation to “its last, terribly costly, imperial victory” (Callahan, 2006), a similar concern weighs in the balance of “Rising Above the Gathering Storm”: Will America have the scientific and technological edge to ensure her continued success in the 21st century? The report suggests that unless we aggressively focus on bolstering our STEM disciplines, our fate will resemble the diminished position of Britain after World War II: its colonial empire waning, its global reach circumscribed, and its economic and military might enfeebled.

From this perspective, “The Heart of the Matter” or even “Mapping the Future” might be seen as a footnote to the larger enterprise of ensuring America’s continued economic, scientific, engineering, and bio-medical dominance for the 21st century.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Harvard College were not alone in expressing concerns about the fate of the humanities. In September of 2013, the University of Illinois sponsored a conference: “A New Deal for the Humanities: Liberal Arts and the Future of Public Higher Education”. Its focus was on the historic and cultural importance of public land-grant universities and their academic contribution to the humanities (Hutner & Mohamed, 2013).

The conference and its participants made an impassioned plea for ensuring the continued goal of providing opportunities for aspirational students interested in studying the humanities at land-grant universities. Nevertheless, no one at the conference attempted to address how these beleaguered departments associated with the humanities at public colleges and universities will be economically supported as state and local funding for these institutions decline.

Indeed, national educational allocations at the state and local level in 2011 were only 40.2% of the 1980 expenditure. This led Thomas G. Mortenson, in an article written for the American Council on Education, to extrapolate based on current trends that “the national average state investment in higher education will reach zero in fiscal 2059” (Mortenson, 2012).

The harsh economic reality facing students today has prompted Peter Cohan, writing for *Forbes Magazine*, to recommend entirely eliminating the humanities from colleges and universities. More than half of all graduates under the age of 25 in 2011, he points out, were either without jobs or searching for better opportunities and a disproportionate number of them majored in the humanities. Meanwhile, student loan debts currently exceed one trillion dollars (Cohan, 2012).

Indeed, “Mapping the Future” acknowledged the growing numbers of students “voting with their feet” to pursue degrees in disciplines outside the humanities presumably with the hope of better job prospects (“Mapping the Future”, 2013, pp. 7-9, 30, 43). Nevertheless, no one attending “A New Deal for the Humanities” Conference directly addressed this phenomenon. Nor did the conference acknowledge the elephant in the room, namely, that since the 1980s the humanities curriculum at colleges and universities has been all but stripped of academic content because of the imposition of identity politics derived from the assumed mandate for “social justice”. These developments, for all intents and purposes, have banished meaningful intellectual engagement on campuses (Bloom, 1987; Kernan, 1997; Mansfield, 2013).

We’ll address this last issue in greater detail later when we examine the curriculum at Bowdoin College based on Peter Wood and Michael Toscano’s report “What Does Bowdoin Teach?: How a Contemporary Liberal Arts College Shapes Students” (Wood & Toscano, 2013).

But for now readers should understand that by the late 1990s, the “culture wars” had essentially eradicated academic excellence from the humanities and with it 500 years of Western civilization. In its place was a “progressive” political agenda founded on righteous grievances pertaining to class, race, and gender that dominated academic values, which in turn influenced the teachers hired, the courses taught, and the ideas conveyed in the classroom (Sheets, 2010).

The outcome was an unending focus on identity politics conjoined with social justice to ensure not only remedial economic opportunity for the disadvantaged but also a commitment to multicultural diversity at the expense of academic excellence. Not surprisingly, the outcome produced a cultural bias against the Western canon, which was perceived as a hegemonic expression of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) male elite that perpetuated social inequities against women and aggrieved minorities. The politicization of college and university campuses ultimately ensured that students no longer struggled to think critically and dispassionately about intellectual ideas since identity politics and social justice trumped academic impartiality (Sheets, 2010; Sheets, 2012).

Having enumerated some of the issues surrounding the so-called “crisis of the humanities” that was played out publically in the summer and fall of 2013, let’s step back. Let’s begin at what should rightfully be called the beginning. First, let’s define the humanities. Second, let’s look at how the humanities are historically “read” and interpreted today. Third, let’s examine how the curriculum at Bowdoin College reveals the weaknesses inherent in undergraduate studies in the liberal arts and how this contributes to our students’

failure to think critically, as well as to succeed in our competitive global marketplace today. Fourth, let's recommend changes in undergraduate liberal arts education in the hope that we can provide students with a humanistic education while enabling them to develop the skills necessary to succeed. Then, and only then, we can begin to "reengineer" the processes back down to K-12 and even pre-school to ensure that our students possess the educational background in both the STEM and the humanistic disciplines.

DEVELOPING A DEFINITION OF THE HUMANITIES THAT ENCOMPASSES THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

What should serve as our definition of the humanities? Let's borrow from the Humanities Council of Washington D.C., which is concerned with developing a functional working definition of the humanities that relates to how ordinary Americans, rather than academics, encounter the humanities in their lives.

The Humanities are the disciplines that help us understand and define cultures, and human experience, including history, anthropology, literature, art history, ethics, philosophy and jurisprudence. ("Defining the Humanities—A Work in Progress", 2001/2009, p. 2)

The Humanities Council then elaborates, borrowing a definition from the Georgia Humanities Council.

The humanities are stories passed from generation to generation to transmit culture. These stories are also known as our history, literature, laws, ethics, religion, philosophy, anthropology etc. ("Defining the Humanities", 2001/9, p. 5)

Perhaps the simplest way of describing our experience with the humanities, suggests the Humanities Council of Washington D.C., is that they "are the human face of culture" ("Defining the Humanities", 2001/9, p. 5). The Illinois Humanities Council takes this perspective a step further to suggest that the humanities serve as the binding glue of civilization without which we would have trouble understanding ourselves, as well as our connection to our communities and our world, both with respect to time and place.

The disciplines of the humanities help us make connections. They connect small questions to large questions, our neighborhoods to the world, and our time to other times and places. ("Defining the Humanities", 2001/9, p. 6)

For the purposes of addressing the current crisis, let's stipulate that our working definition of the humanities be designated as "the disciplines that help us understand and define cultures, and human experience..." ("Defining the Humanities", 2001/9, p. 2). Let's interpret this broadly to include both the humanities (Notes: 1) and the social sciences (Notes: 2) since the latter is concerned with "the study of human society and of individual relationships in and to society" (The Free Dictionary.com by Farlex, n.d.) without becoming

too closely associated with the rigorous and theoretical mathematics that generally define the STEM disciplines.

Thus, our working definition encompasses the perspective of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which in its study “The Heart of the Matter” grouped the humanities and social sciences together in contrast to the STEM disciplines.

HISTORY OF THE HUMANITIES IN THE WEST

By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, most scholars had shifted away from a positivistic framework that considered Western cultural history simply as a lockstep series of advancements from ancient to contemporary times progressing along a continuum stretching from antiquity to the Middle Ages on to the early modern and subsequently the modern era followed by today’s postmodern discontents. The most ambitious effort in recent years to reimagine and recontextualize the humanities is Rens Bod’s *A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (2013), which sidelines the social sciences so as to highlight what he believes are the natural ties between the sciences and the humanities. His perspective is global with the West but one of several players in the cosmopolitan mix and not always the lead instigator of our cultural advancement.

Bod’s narrative eschews a detailed, fact-based analysis that concentrates on highly specialized disciplines such as the classics or literature or history. Instead, he emphasizes global patterns based upon methodological principles (Bod, 2013, p. 5). His intent borders on hubris, namely, to provide “the first overarching history of the humanities in the English language” (Bod, 2013, p. 1).

Bod’s study represents an outgrowth of several conferences on the humanities that he has spearheaded. The first covered the early modern period and the second examined cultural developments up to the modern age. Papers presented at the initial conferences ultimately formed the basis for volume one, *The Making of the Humanities: Early Modern Europe*, and volume two, *The Making of the Humanities: From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines* (Eds. Bod, Maat, Weststeijn, 2010 & 2012). A third conference, “The Making of the Modern Humanities”, occurred in 2012. Its proceedings will be published late in 2014 and available at the fourth conference, which is scheduled in October that same year. The theme of the 2014 conference on the humanities will be “connecting disciplines”. It is anticipated that those proceedings will be published and available in 2016.

In *A New History of the Humanities*, Bod presents his interpretation of the subject and its trajectory. His analysis replaces historical deductions and conclusions derived from bona fide historical evidence with “*the quest for patterns in humanistic material on the basis of methodical principles*” (Bod, 2013, p. 7). This approach transcends regional identities and academic disciplines. Bod’s goal is to “*investigate the expressions of the human mind*”, which he believes to be the driving force of the humanities (Bod, 2013, p. 1). In analyzing these developments he looks for “*metapatterns*”, those overarching shifts in behavior that, he suggests, redefine the human experience (Bod, 2013, p. 6).

Given Bod’s search for unifying “principles and patterns” distilled through the spectrum of metapatterns, it is little wonder that 19th century German historians engaged in realism and

factual analysis—most notably Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)—become the villains in his revisionist narrative. Ranke is abhorred for insisting that scholars demonstrate in their writings “how it really was—“*wie es eigentlich gewesen*”—(Bod, 2013, p. 251), that is, a past founded on realism and based on careful reconstruction of fact-based history. Similarly Dilthey is marginalized for emphasizing that the humanities—*Geisteswissenschaften*—should consign itself to “understanding”—*verstehen*—while the sciences—*Naturwissenschaften*—should concentrate on “explaining”—*erklären* (Bod, 2013, pp. 7, 251-258).

Bod’s methodological heroes are 20th century neo-Marxist French historians from the Annales School with their celebration of sweeping narratives and their aversion to gritty historical realism. Above all, he identifies with the publications of Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), which are global in import, panoramic in scope, and suffused with variable time that anticipates “world-systems theory” at the expense of nation states.

Thus in Braudel’s sweeping three volume work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, geological time is glacial. Social and economic developments unfold at a relatively faster pace, although the time horizon may be centuries (long durée), rather than millennia. Event-driven history, by comparison, unfolds quickly with a mass of details, depicting people from all walks of life. Braudel’s study eschews great leaders and nationalistic histories “from above” in favor of narratives about ordinary people “from below” living their daily lives. These quotidian events appear noisily unreliable because they’re unfolding in the messy moment of relatively recent circumstances, rather than the deeper, more constant patterns embedded in the social and economic firmament (Braudel, 1949/2000).

In Bod’s historical analysis, metapatterns hold sway. His approach borrows from the pioneering work of American historian Hayden White, whose celebrated *Metahistory* (1973) dispenses with fact-based details. Instead, historiographical schools of thought are represented by means of literary metaphor. Thus, Rankean historians present their narratives by means of synecdoche while Burckhardtian scholars, who follow the cultural lead of their spiritual mentor Jacob Burckhardt, suffuse their historical narratives with irony (Bod, 2013, pp. 6-7, 251-264, 311-312).

Against the backdrop of patterns, metapatterns, and methodological murk provided by Bod based not upon facts but upon nebulous constellations devoid of substantive evidence, there is the issue of the sciences and their relationship to the humanities. He makes the contentious case that the sciences and the humanities have more that binds them than divides them. But on whom does Bod rely on as a scientific expert? None other than the scientific renegade Thomas Kuhn.

Kuhn’s most important book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962/2012), seeks to lay waste to what he regards as the positivistic outlook of the history of science with its seemingly unending string of advancements. Instead, Kuhn inserts 20th century humanistic angst and postmodern anomie into his historical analysis with the goal of undermining the perception of science as a positivistic enterprise. This is achieved by artificially disrupting its linear progress and its seemingly unbroken chain of scientific advancements with seismic “paradigm shifts” that disrupt continuity and halt scientific progress. Kuhn suggests that these shifts produce contradictory accounts of scientific reality in which one era may bear no relation to the next. Under his analysis objective truth falls by the wayside. The scientific

disciplines now begin to resemble their humanistic brethren, mired in relativistic angst and seemingly devoid of cultural advancement.

But does this accurately describe developments in the sciences today? It does not. Rather, this is the narrative that the humanists would like to foist upon the scientific disciplines. The implicit assumption driving the argument is that if the humanities appear no longer capable of advancement, then, too, the sciences must fail.

Bod's *A New History of the Humanities* is extraordinarily ambitious. The geographic scope of this study is vast including the West—Europe and the U.S.—and East—China—with excursions into India and Islamic civilizations along with a cursory look at Africa. The time span is gargantuan, extending from 8th century B.C. into the 21st century.

The very magnitude of *A New History of the Humanities* undermines the enterprise. Historical substance is jettisoned in favor of sweeping trends. The analysis is burdened by the use of European periodization—antiquity, medieval, early modern, and modern—to chart the developments of global civilization. The distinctions between West and East resist the author's simplistic reduction into mere principles and patterns without the substance of factual historical details. But had Bod resorted to facts, events, and noteworthy leaders, his narrative would have faltered under the sheer tonnage of contradictory evidence. Indeed, even in the absence of a fact-based narrative, *A New History of the Humanities* buckles under its unbearable Herculean load.

Nor are these the only challenges. One of Bod's central arguments is the indelible link between the sciences and the humanities. However, he fails to assess comprehensively, rather than anecdotally, how advances in the humanities influenced cultural innovations and how these contributions may have been adopted by other disciplines and utilized by the sciences for technological developments.

Bod's prime example of a humanistic innovation that proved valuable for science and technology was Panini's invention of rule-based grammar for Sanskrit. Panini's pioneering innovation was to understand that although the grammar was finite it could be utilized for an "infinite number of linguistic utterances (sentences)" (Bod, 2013, p. 14). Rule-based grammar is used as a predictive model for morphology, as well as syntax and semantics. Not only has it been useful with respect to Sanskrit, the approach was subsequently adopted and successfully applied in Western languages and today informs the basis for modern linguistics, as well as computer language.

But even this example proves problematic. Panini's path-breaking contribution raises the question of why an innovation pioneered 400 years before Christ that is still being used in linguistics and scientific disciplines today failed to lead India on the path to industrialization and modernization. For an innovation to become culturally significant, it is not enough that it works. It must have a transformative impact on the resident society that then translates to scientific and/or technological success of that country relative to other world powers. That's the gold standard of measurement.

The answer as to why Panini's path-breaking achievement never served as a stimulus to modernize India comes not from Rens Bod but from Jonathan Parry in his study of the Brahmanical tradition in Banaras, India (Parry, 1985). Parry demonstrates that in India mass literacy did not ensure modernization because of the prominence of caste and of the indispensable role given to Brahmin priests in interpreting scripture for Hindu believers.

By contrast in Western Europe, Christians sought a personal relationship with their God. This encouraged the development of the printing press to satisfy demand for bibles that in

turn spurred the development of a market for readers interested in both religious and secular books. Mass literacy in Europe ultimately destabilized religious authority and princely power, but not in India. These cultural and social changes led to important changes in how Europeans lived their daily lives and created the preconditions favorable to industrialization (Parry, 1985).

The example of Panini's rule-based grammar and its contributions for both the humanities (linguistics) and the sciences (computer programming) serves as an anecdotal means by which Bod seeks to demonstrate "that there is only a gradual differentiation between the humanities and the sciences, and that there is a continuum in the nature of the patterns and their possible 'exceptions'". He then adds, "The history of the humanities appears to be the missing link in the history of science" (Bod, 2013, p. 7).

Bod rightfully wants us to understand that the human story is not fully understood unless we position it with respect to our natural world. But he undermines his argument when he suggests that because Galileo (1564-1642), Kepler (1571-1630), and Newton (1642-1727) were "engaged in philology" and immersed in "the study of the natural world", this suggests that they were straddling the scientific and humanistic cultures and, by implication, that the sciences and the humanities were never really that far apart (Bod, 2013, p. 1).

Contrary to Bod's assertions, by the time that Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* was published (1687), the distinction between sciences and the humanities was becoming nearly insurmountable to the layperson. *Principia*, as Mordechai Feingold points out, necessitated acquiring "a new language of mathematics" that even scientists such as Huygens and Leibniz struggled to interpret (Feingold, 2004, p. 66-67).

Nevertheless, thanks to Voltaire's fascination with *Principia* and his commitment to writing and speaking about Newtonian discoveries with great wit and verve, he helped to familiarize the public on the Continent, both men and significant numbers of interested women, with the importance of Newton's ideas. Newton had become so renowned by the time of his death that he had the public acclaim befitting a modern celebrity. For as Voltaire noted, Newton "lived honoured by his compatriots and was buried like a king..." (Feingold, 2004, p. 98).

Despite the public's fascination with Newton and his discoveries, he was the last major scientist whose ideas the lay public might, with considerable effort, attempt to understand. In this respect Newton represents both the end of an era when the sciences and the humanities might conjoin and the beginning of a new age in which increasingly the sciences and the humanities existed under separate magisteria, particularly given the challenging mathematics essential to comprehending the post-Newtonian world.

By the time the phenomenon was publically acknowledged by C. P. Snow in his Reid lecture "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution" on May 7, 1959 at the Senate House at Cambridge University, the divide had been widening for centuries. Snow's central point was that "the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups" (Snow, 1959/1990, p. 169), by which he meant the scientists and the humanists. From his perspective the former had, for all intents and purposes, already won this battle: "If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist" (Snow, 1959/1990, p. 171).

F. R. Leavis, a literary critic at Cambridge, responded in his Richmond lecture with "a vicious *ad hominem* attack" against Snow (Critchley, 2001, p. 51). The public controversy highlighted the differences of the two cultures and across the waters even literary critic Lionel

Trilling at Columbia University weighed in on the fray in his “Science, Literature & Culture: A Comment on the Leavis-Snow Controversy” published in *Commentary* (Trilling, 1962). But the question shouldn’t be why Leavis and Snow disagreed, but why did Leavis respond with such vitriol? The answer is supplied by Patricia Waugh in her book review of Guy Ortolano’s *The Two Cultures Controversy: Science, Literature and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain*, which was published in 2009.

For 30 years, Leavis had pursued a mission to justify the establishment and growth of the ‘English school’ or the discipline of English Literary Studies as *the* vital centre of university education, the *only* centre which might hold together the fragmenting specialisms of an increasingly technological era”. (Waugh, 2009)

To this end Leavis envisioned the “English School” as having the ability to bestow “a centre of consciousness ... for our civilization” (Waugh, 2009, citing F. R. Leavis, *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow*, London, 1962, p. 30).

What Leavis understood—what motivated his ill-tempered response—was that literary studies, which he imagined to be the center of human consciousness, was losing relevance while science, technology, and the material world increasingly took center stage. That is why the attack on C. P. Snow was so vicious and so irrational. Spirituality—the moral righteousness embodied in the very firmament of English Literary Studies—was forced to give way to scientific reason with, at least for Leavis, devastating consequences.

In *A New History of the Humanities*, Bod seeks to conceptualize the humanities so that they resemble their scientific counterparts. No wonder he attempts to minimize the difference between the two cultures. As a computational linguist by training and a historian by inclination, he straddles the divide between the two and tries to reinvent the narrative of the humanities to resemble that of the natural sciences or, failing that, of the social sciences. It’s an interesting approach. His historiographical summaries on early modern and modern European history can be useful learning tools.

But where this book falls short is as a history of the humanities. Methodology and patterns are far more effective when they are embedded in the gritty realism of historical events. Far better to refer to Jacques Barzun’s *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present* (Barzun, 2000) if we’re searching for a penetrating account of Western cultural life for the past 500 years.

HOW THE HUMANITIES ARE TAUGHT TODAY: BOWDOIN COLLEGE AS AN EXAMPLE

In order to address how to revive the humanities, it is important to examine how they are failing in our colleges and universities today. The report by Peter Wood and Michael Toscano “What Does Bowdoin Teach?” provides a superb case study of how one highly selective college undermined its educational excellence by introducing a deeply flawed liberal arts curriculum in the 1970s. Nor is Bowdoin an exception since its course offerings are representative of the decay of standards of excellence in the humanities throughout academe. As William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, notes in its “Foreword”, “Bowdoin

illustrates the intellectual and moral deficit of the American academy” while noting that “the report is perhaps the most deep and specific to date on how progressive ideology has altered the character of American higher education” (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 9).

In his preface to “What Does Bowdoin Teach?”, Wood suggests his report is intended to serve as “an ethnography of an academic culture, its worldview, customs, and values” (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 13) by examining how standards were undermined by counter-cultural perspectives of the late 1960s that fundamentally compromised standards of excellence and how these circumstances persist today.

For Bowdoin College, he suggests, the first fateful step in shifting the curriculum away from academic excellence and toward identity politics and social justice began in 1969 with the establishment of Afro-American studies and the decision by Bowdoin’s Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee to specify that a black director be hired and that academic positions be established for black faculty who would facilitate the development of the program (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 17).

It wasn’t long before Bowdoin also established “gay and lesbian studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies, and environmental studies” (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 17). These all fell under the heading of identity politics with the exception of environmental studies, which potentially straddled both a political agenda and a bona fide academic discipline. By 2013 the report estimates 18% of all courses in the curriculum currently at Bowdoin were associated with these studies programs, which, for all intents and purposes, falls under the rubric of identity politics (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 18).

But the influence of identity politics and the values it engenders, the study suggests, extends much further when we begin to assess the degree to which this has seeped into traditional academic courses and continues to reflect the progressive worldview of most faculty today (Wood & Toscano, pp. 17-19). Furthermore, if we consider the influences of multicultural clubs identified in the study as the “Africa Alliance, the Africa American Society, the Asian Students Association, Anokha (South Asian students association), the Bowdoin Haitian Alliance, the Circolo Italiano, the International Club, the Korean American Student Association, the Latino American Student Organization, and the Native American Students Association” (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 18), we begin to comprehend the reach of identity politics today at Bowdoin. Indeed, of all the clubs on campus only four were academic in scope, focusing, respectively, on physics, robotics, debating, and conversational German (Wood & Toscano, 2013, p. 18).

Thus, we begin to gain an inkling of the penetration of identity politics not only into the curriculum and student organizations but also into the very essence of the college. “What Does Bowdoin Teach?” makes the case that the college changed fundamentally in 1970 when then President Howell abolished almost all requirements leaving students essentially free to determine their own courses of study. This meant that survey courses, intermediate level courses, and senior advanced capstone courses were effectively eliminated from the liberal arts. Students would no longer take the broad spectrum of classes that would develop their proficiency in the humanities and Western civilization, laying the foundation for a broader understanding of world cultures. Instead, they begin almost immediately focusing on original research, typically concentrating in areas of interest to the faculty while neglecting a more comprehensive understanding of their discipline (Wood & Toscano, pp. 33, 60, 65-70, 73).

The Harvard equivalent occurred when it replaced their Great Books program in the late 1970s with their Core Curriculum. “The Core”, as Menand noted, “was not about learning for

its own sake. It was about learning how to learn” (Menand, 2010, p. 51). That is, Harvard determined that its students need not understand the historical foundations of the sciences, social sciences, and humanistic disciplines. Rather, they would examine methodological approaches to interpreting knowledge with the predilection that “knowing” how to approach a subject was substantially more important than mastering the content of any given subject, the very approach taken by Rens Bod in his book *A New History of the Humanities*.

Today at Bowdoin, the “First-Year Seminars” remain one of the few requirements. Yet even these course offerings are saturated in identity politics and political correctness and, for the most part, exclude a substantive grounding in the historical and cultural foundations of Western civilization. While there are courses presumably rich in academic content—“Understanding Theater and Dance”, “Great Issues in Science”, “Hawthorne”, “Exercises in Political Theory”, and “The Korean War”, to name a few—other selections abound with progressive bias—“Fictions of Freedom”, “Racism”, “Modern Western Prostitutes”, “Sexual Life of Colonialism”, “Beyond Pocahontas: Native American Stereotypes”, “Queer Gardens”, and “Fan Fictions and Cult Classics” among these (Wood & Toscano, pp. 18-19).

The deficits of Bowdoin’s curriculum are so significant that the report concludes that while it is possible to have “a broad understanding” of the pertinent subject matter in the natural sciences and in government, by comparison most disciplines in the humanities and social sciences “offer either a kaleidoscopic collection of courses or a path to a peculiarly partisan construction of their subjects” (Wood & Toscano, p. 370).

Even more damaging, “What Does Bowdoin Teach?” concludes that if a student sought a comprehensive understanding of the humanities and social sciences, namely, “to study great works of literature; key epochs in history; the abiding achievements and faultlines of civilizations; the central ideas in philosophy, politics, and economics; and the foundational concepts of science and mathematics” (Wood & Toscano, p. 370), it would be nearly impossible given the deficits in the curriculum and the lack of information available. For that student “would have to stumble onto a good advisor or possess considerable foreknowledge of both these subjects and the Bowdoin curriculum to chart such a path” (Wood & Toscano, p. 370).

In assessing the implications of “What Does Bowdoin Teach?”, Harvey Mansfield, a neo-Straussian conservative who teaches government at Harvard, considers the deficits of this highly selective college as characteristic of most “elite” colleges and universities today. Why? Because in his view academe is almost entirely liberal, and “today’s liberals do not use liberalism to achieve excellence, but abandon excellence to achieve liberalism” (Mansfield, 2013, Notes: 3). In Mansfield’s estimation academic excellence—a focus on the Great Books, an immersion in a range of survey courses that would provide the foundations of a humanistic education familiar with approaches in the social sciences—has all but been eliminated from the curriculum at Bowdoin and most colleges and universities, elite or otherwise (Mansfield, 2013, Notes: 4).

What the student acquires at Bowdoin is a state of “knowingness”, which is essentially confidence absent substance since this “knowingness” possesses little in the way of true knowledge as “the curriculum itself is directed toward the extra-curricular, toward the not particularly well-intentioned and certainly foolish hopes for a not very attractive utopia, as the study concludes, that is without wisdom and without culture” (Mansfield, 2013).

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO COUNTERACT THE EROSION OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN ACADEME?

Recently there's been a spate of publications analyzing what's gone wrong with academe, some of which have been highlighted by Stanley Fish (2010). For our purposes, we will look at just a few to give readers a sampling.

David Horowitz, who has been a staunch advocate over the years for true academic freedom—namely, exposing students to a spectrum of intellectual and political points of view that have been missing from the academy since the late 1980s—advocates a “Bill of Rights” to protect and ensure that students are exposed to differing intellectual ideas and perspectives (Horowitz, 2010). Nevertheless, it's hard to imagine that this “legalistic” approach might allow for greater intellectual and cultural points of view given that, as the Bowdoin report acknowledges, that there are so few independent and conservative academics on the faculty to ensure a range of intellectual, social, and political perspectives in the curriculum, in the academic readings assigned, in what is actually taught and discussed in the classroom, as well as the ideas expressed by faculty and students on campus (Wood & Toscano, 2013, pp. 13-40).

Indeed, if educational excellence, as Mansfield suggests (2013), has been jettisoned for the cause of liberalism, it's difficult to believe that intellectual “diversity” can succeed in ensuring a return to academic excellence grounded in the Western experience, embedded in the curriculum, assiduously taught in the classroom, and embraced wholeheartedly on campus. The multicultural and relativistic perspectives sanctioned by diversity promote sanctimoniously disingenuous virtue that is untethered to reality and adverse to exalted standards of excellence” (Sheets, 2007; Sheets, 2008).

Recent studies by Mark C. Taylor, as well as Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus call for an end of tenure (Taylor, 2010; Hacker & Dreifus, 2010), a reduction of bloated non-academic administrations (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010), an emphasis upon interdisciplinary research (Taylor, 2010), and a movement away from faculty focusing almost exclusively on their narrow areas of specialization to the detriment of courses that offer students a broad grounding in the disciplines (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010).

Hacker and Dreifus offer a fascinating case study on the future of higher education in the humanities as classes become increasingly automated. By way of example, the authors examine a “computer-based course” that is universally required of all undergraduates at Florida Gulf Coast University—“Humanities 2510: Understanding Visual and Performing Arts” (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010, p. 194).

“Humanities 2510” may be seen as the new template for courses offered in our increasingly virtual colleges and universities. Students don't go to a classroom. Instead, they read assignments online from their computer in their room. They take tests online and submit essays online. Communication is conducted via e-mail. Grading is based on multiple-choices tests augmented by “critical analysis essays” (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010, p. 198). Efforts are made to ensure that papers aren't plagiarized by means of online databank searches, although it's difficult to believe that these efforts are truly effective, particularly given the range of essays—both customized and “off-the-shelf”—available for purchase or “scraping” on the Internet and the lack of “live” interactions between individuals grading the essays and students submitting them.

Three faculty members typically oversee the delivery of assignments. The total course enrollment consists of approximately 1,400 students. “Preceptors” grade the essay papers and answer questions posed by students via e-mail. They may live far away, work multiple jobs, and have little formal training other than an undergraduate degree. Their supervisor, presumably also not a university employee, also works remotely. If students ever meet with a resident faculty member overseeing the course, it’s generally because of complaints about grades or issues with deadlines (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010, pp. 196-201).

For many of us, however, this approach to learning presents the technocratic nightmare of a “Brave New World” in which student education is delivered, “taught”, and potentially graded by machine-based learning programs with little or no human interaction. It isn’t hard to envision the next phase of implementation of “Humanities 2510”. The entire course will be a computer algorithm that answers e-mails, grades multiple choice exams, as well as student essays, all of which will be done faster, less expensively, and presumably more reliably than with human preceptors. Whether meaningful education can be achieved by means of this remote and highly automated approach remains to be seen. Nevertheless, this method of teaching is likely to become commonplace in the near future.

Finally, let’s consider Louis Menand’s *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (2010). Menand, as we noted earlier, teaches at Harvard. He is knowledgeable and writes well. His premises are driven by a need to understand, as well as implicitly to defend the troubled academy. Nevertheless, his analysis provides a starting point for “deconstructing” what has gone wrong since the 1960s and the historical antecedents influencing today’s distressed colleges and universities.

What, for instance, are we to make of Harvard’s decision in the 1970s (Menand, 2010, pp. 29, 50-51) to jettison its Great Books program? Why did Harvard’s Core Curriculum replace evidentiary understanding with nebulous “methods of inquiry” to illuminate the humanities? (Menand, 2010, p. 29). How do these “methods of inquiry” provide students with a foundational grounding in Western civilization in order that they understand substantively that our culture emanated from Judeo-Christian beliefs and how these beliefs paved the way for the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and, ultimately, the West’s technological, social, and cultural dominance throughout most of the world from the 18th century until at least the end of the 20th century?

Columbia University still requires its students to take two year-long courses—“Masterpieces of European Literature and Philosophy” and “Civilization in the West”—in order to provide them with an understanding of Western civilization. By contrast, when Harvard made the decision in the 1970s to jettison the Great Books in favor of “methods of inquiry”, Rosofsky, then serving as Dean of the Humanities, reputedly decreed “the Harvard faculty would not shed blood over books” by which he meant, according to Menand, “that there would be no attempt to impose a canon” (Menand, 2010, p. 51, citing Keller’s *Getting to the Core*).

As late as 2004 when the Harvard faculty was given the option of shifting away from the Core Curriculum to distributional requirements, the proposal was roundly rejected (Menand, 2010, p. 52). No wonder Harvard’s current report “Mapping the Future” skirts away from substantive recommendations since that would necessitate laying waste to the 1960s countercultural progressive agenda, something that academics today remain loath to do.

Menand acknowledges that the changes experienced in the humanities from 1970 through 1990 were “the intellectual and institutional equivalent of a revolution” (Menand, 2010, p.

91). The Western cultural standards were marginalized in favor of identity politics and remedial social justice, which laid waste to academic standards (Sheets, 2010). Nevertheless, Menand contends this “paradigm shift” has not severely compromised the humanities (Menand, 2010, pp. 91-92) even though, as the Harvard study “Mapping the Future” demonstrated, students increasingly choose the social sciences or business, anything but the humanities (“Mapping the Future”, p. 7).

Menand implicitly denies the devastating impact of the loss of a canon, the academic implosion caused by the imposition of neo-Marxist literary “Theory”, and the associated death of the author at the expense of a careful “close read” of literature (Patai & Corral, 2005, pp. 1-18, Notes: 5). He indicates that the changes came from within the academy while failing to acknowledge the enormous damage they had on the intellectual foundation of the humanities. Nor, of course, would he ever acknowledge Mansfield’s formentioned maxim that “today’s liberals do not use liberalism to achieve excellence, but abandon excellence to achieve liberalism” (Mansfield, 2013). The academy in the 21st century, Menand suggests, is about “interdisciplinarity and anxiety”, but, of course, he refuses to trace the causes for this angst back to the source, namely, the demise of the Western canon in the 1960s (Menand, 2010, pp. 93-135).

What should be the aim of our educational institutions of higher learning today? Ideally, the greatest contributions of the humanities should stand side-by-side with the contributions of the sciences in our “knowledge pantheon”, that virtual reimagining of the Alexandria Library. But to achieve this, the last 50 years of cultural wreckage must be swept away. Students need to understand the cultural foundations of the humanities. This means tracing the developments back to antiquity through the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and on through modernity to our contemporary discontents, so that they are intellectually capable and prepared to pass judgment against postmodernism, identity politics, political correctness, and social justice.

The Holy Grail remains the pursuit of truth and beauty. Knowledge is the key to the magical kingdom and wisdom its ultimate reward. These virtues fortify us not only through the course of our lives but also in perpetuity. Borrowing metaphorically from Lovejoy’s exploration of “The Great Chain of Being” (1936), the wisdom we accumulate through the ages advances the frontier of human consciousness and, in so doing, grants us the possibility of immortality.

REIMAGINING THE HUMANITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A FIVE STEP PLAN FOR CULTURAL REDEMPTION

Scope: A degree in the humanities should no longer be defined by discipline. Students would be broadly educated in the humanities and social sciences. Ideally this would give them the intellectual foundations not only to understand Western civilization and world cultures but also to develop analytic skills and numerical savvy that would make them sought after by businesses. Students would have both major and minor areas of emphasis. As in the scientific disciplines, courses in the humanities would begin with broadly defined survey

courses, followed by advanced upper-level courses, and, finally, capstone courses directed toward research initiatives.

By the time students graduate they would be knowledgeable of European and American history. They would have studied Western development and culture from antiquity and extending through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment. They would be familiar with the American Revolution and the French Revolution and historical events from the 18th century through the 20th century and into our post-9/11 world.

Training: The educational training of faculty and students would require an understanding of the classics, of philosophy, and of economics and economic history. Students would gain competency with statistics and statistical modeling as it pertains to both scientific and business applications, which creates a formal mathematical approach to structures beset by uncertainty. Undergraduate education would expose them to politics and sociology, as well as the fine arts. They would also develop competency in a foreign language, in addition to a familiarity with global cultures.

Students should be expected to have taken a course in the history of science from antiquity through modernity with a particular emphasis on the impact of science and mathematics and their contributions toward the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. They would study the transformation of science during the late 19th century and early 20th century, as well as how science and technology impacted military strategy, music, art, and industry. Students would be exposed to the scientific benefits and moral dilemmas associated with the development of the Manhattan Project, information theory, the computer, and our current understanding of neuroscience. They would then consider how these developments transformed our perceptions of modern identity and our relationship to and interaction with thinking machines.

As the social science disciplines become increasingly mathematized, the humanities must also be receptive to developing connections with the scientific and business communities. Humanities majors would no longer be decadent outsiders who always appear to be having a temper tantrum with the establishment while assuming that society bears the cost for any damage they inflict. Rather, students with humanities degrees would possess valuable skills that are communicative in nature—reading, writing, presentation, as well as an ability to perform sophisticated statistical and demographic modeling of social behavior—essential to living and working in the world. In other words, a humanities degree would offer a broad spectrum of educational training that would give students expertise in critical thinking about a range of subjects including the liberal arts, the social sciences, business, and the STEM disciplines. What exactly would that achieve? A humanities education would no longer place students outside the pale of business but potentially at its very core. A liberal arts education would confer a value-added component to every business and social interaction.

HOW WOULD THIS BE ACCOMPLISHED?

1. The consolidation of humanistic and social science disciplines—what we generally refer to as departments in academe—would merge into four areas of emphasis. They would include the following: 1. Classics and philosophy, history and politics, as well

as some humanistic psychology; 2. English, comparative literature, linguistics and rhetoric, anthropology, and languages; 3. Business, economics, sociology, and statistics; 4. The performing arts— theater, dance, music, art, and architecture. All other disciplines not specified would be selectively merged into one of the appropriate four areas of emphasis, assuming the subject matter would merit inclusion.

2. Identity politics, social justice, and their associated social clubs would be eliminated. Interdisciplinary “studies” programs would be shuttered. Only courses in those areas that have academic merit would be accepted into the appropriate academic disciplines.
3. Core requirements in the humanities would include four year-long courses. The first two would be introductory. The latter two would be upper level, building on previous courses to give students a sophisticated grounding in their respective disciplines while developing their facility in writing and research projects. The subjects covered in these courses would include: 1. Western civilization; 2. Masterpieces of European-American literature and philosophy; 3. Economic, business, and statistical modeling with the appropriate historical foundations; 4. Senior thesis or senior project, which would be the culmination of four years of concentrated emphasis in a given field. Ideally, these core requirements would develop reading, comprehension, writing, presentation, critical thinking, as well as computer and numerical competency. The final research projects would reflect a broad-based humanistic education that would optimize student opportunities for success.
4. Job and Career Placement Centers would be revitalized on campuses. They would work actively with students upon admittance to the humanities programs to direct and guide them in their studies, as well as to help them in identifying internships, awards, and job prospects that would have career potential. These centers would foster networking opportunities for students with faculty, alumnae, corporate sponsors, as well as local, state, and federal organizations and agencies.
5. Administrative Outcome: Tenure would disappear. Unions would be eliminated. Administrative staff would be substantially reduced to reflect the shrinkage in academic disciplines. Contractual agreements would be awarded to faculty based on a sustained commitment to teaching and academic excellence. Faculty would be expected to assist students in developing their academic goals and their pursuit of opportunities in the “real” world. Faculty contracts would be awarded and renewed based on substantive contributions to furthering excellence and identifying opportunities for students. Research would focus on canonical contributions in keeping with the Great Books tradition. Thus, academic scholarship would sustain and build upon the most important ideas and achievements of all time.

CONCLUSION:

HOW TO RESTORE THE HUMANITIES TO OUR LIVES?

We begin by making sure that our students have a substantive grounding in Western civilization. They must have the capability to evaluate and to pass judgment upon societal

successes and failures. The criterion would be excellence rather than social justice. Thus, studies would be about evaluating success and failure rather than passing judgment on a litany of hegemonic or colonial excesses. Students would understand why the West was the first to industrialize, why the East lagged behind, and why this mattered.

This is not to say that China didn't introduce technical innovations including, for instance, the compass, gunpowder, and printing. As Stephen Levinson, who has taught "Scientific Discovery and the Reinvention of Identity" over the years in the Campus Honors Program at the University of Illinois suggests (Levinson, Notes: 6), these technological advancements were not scientific discoveries. Tools were developed, techniques and methods were employed, but Judeo-Christian beliefs paved the way for Newton and the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, as well as 20th century theories about the universe, notably Quantum Theory and the General Theory of Relativity. Taken together these revolutions and pioneering theories helped to set the stage for the invention of computers, information theory, the Internet, and an appreciation for the specter of the "New, New Thing" (Lewis, 1999). These were uniquely Western inventions, although the future offers no guarantee that our civilization will be the scientific innovator in years to come.

Understanding the 21st century necessitates acknowledging that the sciences, rather than the humanities, won the culture wars. Perhaps in tacit acknowledgment of this development, by the late 1960s faculty and students in the humanities had abandoned the Western canon and scholarly excellence in favor of political activism. For the liberal arts to once again have a place at the culture table, faculty and students must understand our Western heritage and its contributions spanning antiquity to modernity while acknowledging the contributions of other civilizations and peoples.

It is not enough to understand metapatterns and trends based on methodological principles. We must immerse our minds in the gritty substance of factual analysis, causation, and, yes, success and failure, those painful assessments of where we stand while resurrecting the contributions of great leaders and historic events. This necessitates a fresh look at the contributions of Leopold von Ranke and Wilhelm Dilthey while treating the scholarship of Braudel and his disciple Bod as highly suspect. Let's be clear: Contemporary scholarship, including that of Braudel and Bod, is subversive. It lays waste to the most important contributions of Western civilization: its great ideas, great leaders, great literature, and, yes, great history.

We need to hit the "reset button" and erase 50 years of cultural destruction. Let's empower our students with concrete knowledge, as well as methodological approaches that "reboot" the entire cultural enterprise to ensure genuine critical thinking rather than political correctness and pseudo virtue that masquerades as scholarly inquiry today (Sheets, 2012; Sheets, 2013; Shaughnessy, 2013).

This is how we will reinvigorate the humanities. We will insist that higher education is demanding and comprehensive. Students will gain facility in the methods and approaches of the social sciences and business. The renewed emphasis on educational excellence will ultimately ensure that the humanities are again seated at the culture table with the engineering and mathematical sciences. This quest for enlightenment will be motivated by more than self-interest and self-preservation as students in the liberal arts, social sciences, business, and scientific community come to understand that the humanities offer a gateway to the magisterial kingdom of wisdom *and* a terrestrial pathway to navigate successfully in our globalized community.

NOTES

1. The humanities would include but not be limited to literature, languages, linguistics, philology, philosophy, rhetoric, the visual, as well as the performing arts, in addition to history, anthropology, cultural studies, and law.
2. The social sciences would include but not be limited to sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. The disciplines of history, anthropology, and cultural studies sometimes straddle the humanities and the social sciences.
3. Mansfield's ideas closely parallel those of Allan Bloom in his jeremiad *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, which chronicled the demise of Western culture and academic excellence.
4. Mansfield's assessments echo the sentiments of Alvin Kernan's *What's Happened to the Humanities* (1997), Roger Kimball's, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (1990), and Philip Rieff's, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority* (2006).
5. See the edited collection by Daphne Patai and Will H. Corral, *Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent*, particularly the introduction, pp. 1-18.
6. Levinson's course in the Campus Honors Program at the University of Illinois (<http://honors.illinois.edu/?q=spring12>), serves as the foundation for his upcoming book on the role Western cultural values played in promoting scientific discovery and path-breaking innovation from antiquity to today.

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