Education and Equality

DANIELLE ALLEN

The Tanner Lectures on Human Values

Delivered at

Stanford University
October 8, 2014

DANIELLE ALLEN is director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics and professor of government at Harvard. When she gave the Tanner Lectures at Stanford, she was UPS Foundation Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. She is a political theorist who has published broadly in democratic theory, political sociology, and the history of political thought. Widely known for her work on justice and citizenship in both ancient Athens and modern America, Allen is the author of *The World of Prometheus: The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens* (2000), *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown vs. the Board of Education* (2004), *Why Plato Wrote* (2010), and *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (2014). She is the coeditor of the award-winning *Education, Justice, and Democracy* (2013, with Rob Reich) *and From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age* (2015, with Jennifer Light). She is chair of the Mellon Foundation Board and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

LECTURE I.
TWO CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION

THE PROBLEM

We are currently awash in torrents of public conversation about education. As of early September 2014, Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, had 42,400 tweets to her name. For the period between September 2013 and September 2014, the *New York Times* archive generated 178,000 "articles on education." And education is among Americans' top ten political concerns out of a list of some thirty-five issues.[1] There is so much talk about education that one cannot help but think that perhaps the most sensible thing to do would be to just get on with it: to quit conversing and get back to teaching. In other words, we—and these lectures—are perhaps part of some kind of problem, not a solution.

Aside from their sheer volume, the other notable feature of our countless public conversations about education is how many of them have to do with equality. In 2009, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and the Reverend Al Sharpton famously joined up for a public tour to advocate educational reform. They identified problems in education as the civil rights issue of our time. Similarly, our many public conversations about income inequality inevitably turn to the topic of education. Thus Thomas Piketty in his recent book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, writes:

> Historical experience suggests that the principal mechanism for convergence [of incomes] at the international as well as the domestic level is the diffusion of knowledge. In other words, the poor catch up with the rich to the extent that they achieve the same level of technological know-how, skill, and education.[2]

He is not the first to make this point. The influential economists Claudia Goldin and Larry Katz also do so, for instance, in their book *The Race between Education and Technology*.[3]

Here too, I must count myself as part of this problem—or, if it not a "problem" then at least the phenomenon of a durable societal obsession with "education" and "equality."[4] For nearly five years now, I have been going around giving lectures under the title "Education and Equality." I have not, however, been plowing a single furrow. My arguments have

constantly shifted. My experience has been the pursuit of a highly elusive object of analysis; an adequate framework for thinking about the relationship between education and equality has felt always just beyond reach.

Over the course of my constant worrying on this topic, I have made normative arguments that ideal educational institutions in a democratic society ought to lift the educational level of the entire population as high as possible while also making it possible for those with special gifts to achieve the highest heights of intellectual and creative excellence and simultaneously ensuring that the pathways to those highest heights can be entered into by anyone from any social position. Imagine a western mesa, but one that has jutting out of it peaks like the Rockies with trailheads for the ascent of each peak marked plainly and boldly.[5]

I have also made policy arguments. For instance, I make the case that the achievement of such an ideal requires reforming our approaches to zoning and municipal policy;[6] committing public funding to early childhood education, community colleges, and public universities;[7] distributing admission tickets to elite colleges and universities by means of geographic lotteries over a certain basic threshold of achievement;[8] constructing tuition and aid policies based on transparency about what any given institution actually spends on educating a student;[9] and broadly disseminating the competencies, aptitudes, and skills necessary to convert social relationships that are currently costly—namely, those that bridge boundaries of social difference—into relationships that bring mutual benefit.[10]

Yet, for all the pages and PowerPoint slides, I do not feel that I have been able to come to a resting point in my account of the relationship between education and equality. With these lectures and your help, I am hoping to put this insistent intellectual problem to bed at last.

Why exactly is it so hard to think about education and equality in relation to each other? There is, of course, the fact that equality is simply a difficult concept to talk about. Students often think that to say two things are "equal" is to say that they are "the same." But, of course, "equal" and "same" are not synonyms. To be "the same" is to be "identical." But to be "equal" is to have an equivalent degree of some specific quality or attribute compared to someone else. To talk about equality, one must always begin by asking "equal to whom and in what respect?"

Importantly, the effective use of a concept of equality in a sociopolitical context requires pinpointing whether one means human equality, political equality, social equality, or economic equality. Or, perhaps, in place of the last, one will replace an idea of "economic equality" with an ideal

of economic justice, or fairness, or opportunity. Furthermore, there are relations among each of these types of equality. I think clarifying those relationships is among the most important tasks of political philosophy, particularly in our present moment. Yet when we invoke the concept of equality in our conversations about education, for the most part we do not bother to define what we actually mean by it, or to identify which aspect of human experience we wish to pick out for analysis.[11]

Beyond the simple fact that we often leave the idea of equality unspecified in our conversations about educational policy, another issue, too, stirs up my vague unease with how we commonly invoke the concept in these discussions. The quotation from Piketty's *Capital* that I read just a moment ago is revealing. Let me read a bit of it again: "In other words, the poor catch up with the rich to the extent that they achieve the same level of technological know-how, skill, and education."[12]

Note that here the problem that education is used to solve is poverty or, at least, unequal income and/or wealth distributions. This tracks our most common way of discussing equality in relation to education. Discussions of educational reform are very often proxies for conversations about poverty and, insofar as this is the case, it is often unclear how much the conversation actually concerns education itself. Similarly, if one returns to my normative picture and policy prescriptions—the mesa with its peaks; the policies about funding, admission, and municipal planning—you will find that the picture I have painted is entirely about the egalitarian *funding* and *allocation* or *distribution* of some *good* called *education*, but not particularly about whatever the actual good called *education* fundamentally is.

In other words, for all of our talk about education and equality, we do not actually talk very much about how education itself, in itself, relates to equality, regardless of whether the equality we have in mind is human, political, or social, or connected to economic fairness.

And this brings me to the basic problem that motivates these lectures. I think that education itself—a practice of human development—has, intrinsic to the practice, important contributions to make to the defense of human equality, the cultivation of political and social equality, and the emergence of fair economic orders. But I think we have lost sight of just how education, in itself, and putting aside questions of funding and distribution, relates to those egalitarian concerns. If we are to do right by the students we purport to educate, in whatever context and at whatever level, I think we need to recover that vision. Consequently, my goal for

these lectures will be to effect a recovery of our understanding of just how education and equality are intrinsically connected to each other.

Here is the plan for what follows. I begin with some conceptual cleanup work. Drawing on the philosophers John Rawls and Hannah Arendt, I hope to secure some basic conceptual architecture for thinking about education. This work will establish what I will call a *humanistic baseline* for understanding what education is. This cleaned-up understanding of education should help clarify our conversations about our goals for both schooling and higher education. This will be the main work of this first lecture, and I will wrap it up by examining just how a "humanistic baseline" for understanding the meaning of education might help us to reframe key policy questions.

In my second lecture, I will turn to the specific policy domain that appears most freshly lit by my account. This is the domain that many people refer to as "civic education." I argue that we should reorient ourselves to a concept of "participatory readiness," and I will lay out a proposed framework for thinking about the desirable content of a new approach to cultivating such participatory readiness. This "participatory readiness" is actually of critical relevance to other egalitarian concerns, including economic ones, and I will suggest that the cultivation of "participatory readiness" in all probability depends fundamentally on the humanistic aspects of the curriculum. In other words, the identification of the "humanistic baseline" for establishing a justification for education will turn out to have in fact provided a foundation for a defense of the humanities, as well as the beginnings of an explanation for how education in itself has egalitarian potential. This means, of course, that the fates of the humanities and the fate of so-called civic education are likely to rise and fall together.

In sum, the task of these lectures is to clarify our understanding of education, its intrinsic connection to equality, and the relevance of the study of the humanities to education's intrinsic egalitarian potentialities.

TWO CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION—THE VOCATIONAL VS. THE LIBERAL?

For all the talk about education in contemporary culture, do we actually have an adequate framework for saying what it is? As an object of anthropological and sociological analysis, education is a relative newcomer. Although Emile Durkheim and W. E. B. DuBois launched the sociology of education in the late nineteenth century, sustained interest did not emerge until after World War II when the field of the anthropology of

education came into its own. The late inclusion of education among the practices that an anthropologist or sociologist might study reflects the fact that many of the earliest templates for these disciplines—I am thinking of the work of Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, Fustel de Coulanges, Henry Maine, and Max Weber—began from analyses of Western antiquity when education was generally not an autonomous social practice but dependent on other social forms. For instance, in ancient Greece, religious ritual, legal practices, military training, and so on largely provided the context for training the young. Some ancients could conceive of education as an autonomous field of social practice—most notably Plato and Aristotle—but their anticipation of "systems of education" was largely unmatched in practice (although Sparta stands as an exception). In contrast, China's extensive network of formal educational institutions began its development in the third millennium BCE. Only when a social practice becomes autonomous—conducted through rituals or institutions built for the sake of that practice and no other—can it be said to have a logic, and also a structure of action-guiding principles and rules emergent from that logic.

In addition to focusing on autonomous social practices, anthropologists and sociologists have sought to understand their conversion into sociopolitical practices. By this conversion I mean the moment when legitimate public officials acquire authority for a practice that has previously been managed mostly by private individuals, as for instance when a society stops allowing individuals to effect retribution for wrongdoing through methods of self-help and instead designates public authorities to manage responses to wrongdoing. This is the moment when *social* practices of *revenge* instead become a *sociopolitical* practice of *punishment*. In other words, at various points in history, phenomena like revenge, mating, raiding, and possession of land and other goods were co-opted by newly developing political realms and turned into punishment, marriage, war, property, and markets. In the history of Western sociopolitical development, we can say that "revenge" had become "punishment" by at least 800 BCE (although this transition was effected more than once, not only in antiquity but again in the medieval period). Education did not undergo an equivalent conversion until well after antiquity had faded away.

The first versions of Western educational institutions were scribal training centers in ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East, and philosophical, rhetorical, and medical schools as well as early schools for children in Greece and Rome.[13] Over the course of late antiquity and the

Middle Ages, educational institutions took shape through the development of centers of religious training in the different monotheistic traditions, and included the emergence of universities in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford in the eleventh century.[14] The emergence of these institutions was followed by others: to pick out just two examples, the establishment in England of schools for poor boys (for instance, Winchester, Eton) as feeders to the new universities, and during the Renaissance the training of artists in the schools of particular painters. But the processes by which political authorities established universal or compulsory education began in Europe only in the seventeenth century, and in the United States were completed only in 1918, when the last of the states then in the Union made education compulsory, at least through age sixteen.[15] As a consequence of the relatively late arrival in Western history of education as a fully autonomous sociopolitical practice on a par with punishment, economics, and war, scholars are still in the early stages of coming to understand its logic.

Despite the relative youthfulness of education as a state practice, it might seem, however, that our current public conversations about education do not in fact evidence any confusion or uncertainty about the nature of education. This is one of the few areas of public policy where politicians from either major party tend to say roughly the same thing. Both Democrats and Republicans clearly articulate what could reasonably be called a neoliberal educational agenda with a focus on educating the national population to succeed in global market competition. Here is Barack Obama from the 2012 Democratic National Convention:

> I promise you, we can out-educate and out-compete any nation on Earth. Help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers within ten years, and improve early childhood education.
>
> Help give two million workers the chance to learn skills at their community college that will lead directly to a job. Help us work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next ten years. We can meet that goal together.
>
> You can choose that future for America.[16]

And here is Mitt Romney at the 2012 Republican National Convention:

> I am running for president to help create a better future. A future where everyone who wants a job can find one. Where no senior fears

> for the security of their retirement. An America where every parent knows that their child will get an education that leads them to a good job and a bright horizon.
>
> Second, we will give our fellow citizens the skills they need for the jobs of today and the careers of tomorrow. When it comes to the school your child will attend, every parent should have a choice, and every child should have a chance.[17]

The rhetorical affinities extend beyond the presidential campaign trail. Both candidates echoed the language of the preamble to the bipartisan Common Core "college and career readiness" state standards, which were created and promoted by the National Governors Association. Here is a portion of the preamble:

> The Common Core State Standards define the rigorous skills and knowledge in English Language Arts and Mathematics that need to be effectively taught and learned for students to be ready to succeed academically in credit-bearing, college-entry courses and in workforce training programs. These standards have been developed to be:
>
> *Fewer, clearer, and higher, to best drive effective policy and practice;*
>
> *Aligned with college and work expectations, so that all students are prepared for success upon graduating from high school;*
>
> *Inclusive of rigorous content and applications of knowledge through higher-order skills, so that all students are prepared for the 21st century;*
>
> *Internationally benchmarked, so that all students are prepared for succeeding in our global economy and society; and*
>
> *Research and evidence-based.*
>
> The standards intend to set forward thinking goals for student performance based in evidence about what is required for success. The standards developed will set the stage for US education not just beyond next year, but for the next decade, and they must ensure *all* American students are prepared for the global economic workplace.[18]

In short, in this country, we seem to know just what we should be pursuing in education: college and career readiness as preparation for the global economy. Given that this goal is backed by state power generated by the richest and most powerful government the world has ever known, we have to take seriously the idea that it is of considerable consequence for the future of our own culture at least.

What exactly is the cultural consequence of constructing an educational system around this goal of college and career readiness as preparation for the global economy? As our public conversations have unfolded, the reigning political ideology in education has generated the common critique that the orientation is overly "vocational." The story of how such a vocationally oriented frame of global competiveness came to dominate our public conversations about education is familiar. The Soviet launch of the first satellite in 1957 provoked a sense that this country was falling behind in a Cold War science contest. The response was the National Defense of Education Act, signed into law in 1958. A 1983 Reagan-era report, "A Nation at Risk," further spurred the view that the United States was falling behind. Although its data were later debunked, it included provocative summary sentences such as: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."[19] This report is generally understood to have kicked off the era of school reform that still shapes educational discussion and policy. And in 2007, the National Academy of Sciences put out a report called "Rising above the Gathering Storm," which emphasized the need for significant improvements in science and technology education and investment. The report's authors wrote: "An educated, innovative, motivated workforce—human capital—is the most precious resource of any country in this new, flat world. Yet there is widespread concern about our K–12 science and mathematics education system, the foundation of that human capital in today's global economy."[20] This influential report has influenced educational policy conversations, driving an increase of focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. We can see the influence in Obama's 2013 State of the Union address, when he announced a competition to "redesign America's high schools." Rewards would go, he said at the time, to schools that develop more classes "that focus on science, technology, engineering and math—the skills today's employers are looking for to fill jobs right now and in the future."

Those who critique this educational vision typically invoke the "liberal arts" by way of contrast. Of course, a straightforward dichotomy between vocational and liberal learning is relevant mostly in the context of elite colleges and universities. As Louis Menand has argued, such campuses often suffer from "an allergy to the term 'vocational.' "[21] Nonetheless, the antithesis between "vocational" and "liberal" that has developed on college campuses structures our broader debates about the purposes of

education, and these can come to feel stuck in a simple and endless tug of war between those two poles. Is the point of education the life of the mind or the ability to secure a job?

Of course, it is both, and it is, in fact, possible to get past this blockage in public conversation.[22] We can do so by recognizing that our conversations about education have the shape that they do because we are operating with two different concepts of education. In the next section, I would like to clarify those two concepts, in order to lead us to a resolution of the seeming opposition between the vocational and the liberal arts conceptions of education.

Two Concepts of Education: A Humanistic Baseline

Those of you who are philosophers will already know that in referring to "two concepts of education," I am riffing on Rawls, who in 1955 published an important essay called "Two Concepts of Rules."[23] In this early paper, Rawls pointed out that the perpetual debates among penal theorists over whether the proper justification for punishment was deterrent (and therefore utilitarian) or retributive (and thus based on a commonplace morality) stem from a failure to understand the logic of practices, of which punishment was one of his two examples (promise-keeping was the other). He argued (following David Hume, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and John Austin) that for any given practice, there is a distinction between justifying a practice and justifying a particular action falling under it. For example, there is a distinction between justifying punishment and justifying punishing. The first kind of justification requires answering the question, "Why does the state (generally) punish people?" The second kind of justification requires answering the question, "Why did the state punish that man?"

According to Rawls, the answer to the latter question requires a retributive statement, for instance: "That particular man was punished as a response to the wrong he had done and in proportion to that wrong." The answer to the question of why states generally punish may, however, again according to Rawls, be utilitarian. An example would be: "In order to keep wrong-doing to a minimum by deterring would-be wrong-doers through the example of the punishments of others."[24] But Rawls's neat distinction obscures a few other important distinctions. When we ask, "Why does the state (generally) punish people?" we are in fact asking two questions: first, "why has punishment come to exist as an institution that distinguishes human social organization from hives and galaxies?"[25]; and

second, "why is the state justified in operating institutions of punishment?" The first question seeks a causal explanation; the second question seeks a justification for state action.[26]

Take the game of baseball as an example. The emergence of the game as a social practice is *explained* by the end or goal of leisure. But the actions of individuals participating in the game—swinging at balls, running around bases, catching and throwing balls—are *justified* by the goal not of leisure but of scoring more runs than an opponent. And the actions of corporate actors who have co-opted the game of baseball to develop, for instance, a professional version of the sport are justified by the goal of profit. The ends that explain the emergence of a practice, the ends that justify the effort to regulate the practice, and the ends that justify actions undertaken within it are all logically separate; if they turn out to be the same, that coincidence is merely accidental. Thus, it can be a matter of social utility that practices should arise and be co-opted by the state, for which the ends of the actions falling under them are not utilitarian but either moral or eudaimonistic.[27] What do I mean by "eudaimonistic"? The term comes from the Greek word for "happiness" (*eudaimonia*) and designates an ethical outlook organized around the effort of individuals to achieve their full human flourishing by means of the development of their internal capacities.

The case of education resembles that of punishment. Analysts of education move in a perpetual circle when they argue over its proper justification: *economic* competitiveness, the development of *citizens*, or enablement of a eudaimonistic *human flourishing*? We need to recognize that, as with punishment, the logic of education makes two different kinds of justification relevant to the practice: the justification for the state's maintenance of a system of education and the justification for particular instances of teaching carried out within that system.

In order to draw out the point, let us consider the very different schools that emerged in different historical periods prior to the nationalization of education. In chronological order, these are: scribal training centers; philosophical, medical, and rhetorical schools; theological programs; universities; schools of artists. These educational institutions were founded for different reasons—scribal training centers, for instance, to help rulers control their property and the flow of goods; religious training centers, to prepare priests and theologians and thereby to supply religious organizations with manpower. These different schools were thus directed toward diverse ends. But in terms of the activity that occurred within

them, which allows classification of all these institutions as fundamentally about the same thing, namely, education, all shared the aspiration to direct the development of human capacities. Whereas the institutions of formal education arise on the basis of diverse justifications, within these different institutions the activity of educating and also the techniques developed to pursue it are identified by a single end: cultivating human development. This is true even when a student chooses a vocational training course for the sake of making money. For that training to succeed, it must still effect the development of the student qua human being, for that is what it means for any of us to cultivate capacities and abilities.

In our current context, then, it is entirely reasonable that the justification for the co-optation of education by the state, for the conversion of education into a sociopolitical practice, might be utilitarian—a state asserts authority over education as a matter of securing social reproduction. Achieving this requires economic and/or military competitiveness for the state and preservation of its state form; in the context of a democracy, the system-level justification for education therefore entails a twinned utilitarian concern for generating economic and/or military competitiveness and for producing citizens prepared to maintain democratic life.[28] But the justification for the actions falling under the practice, particular instances of educating, the micro-level of justification, cannot be utilitarian.

What do I mean by that strong statement? Clearly, people do often provide utilitarian or more broadly consequentialist justifications for education. The point is that when they do so, they may indeed justify the state's involvement in institutions of education but they actually fail to justify the activity of educating as such. Economists, for instance, distinguish between the consumption and investment benefits of education, or between the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. As Helen Ladd and Susanna Loeb put it:

> Intrinsic benefits arise when education is valued for its own sake such as the pleasure of being able to solve a complex problem or appreciate artistic expression, and extrinsic benefits arise when education serves as an instrument for the attainment of other valued outcomes such the higher income for working parents that is facilitated by having children in school, or the potential for the recipients of education to seek higher paying jobs and fulfilling careers than would otherwise be possible.[29]

But when we scrutinize the extrinsic benefits that are most often identified as flowing from education—higher paying jobs, for instance—we notice that education is only one means of achieving those ends. A person might, for instance, also obtain a higher paying job through cronyism. These extrinsic ends might justify activities other than education; in no way do they necessarily justify education. The ends that define education *as* education, in contrast, and that thereby provide its proper justification, must be ends that can be achieved only through education: these are ends of human development, pursued as such.

Our considered moral judgment, to crib from Rawls, is that the state of affairs where a person has been educated is better than if she has not been; and it is better for her own sake regardless of any consequence of educating her. We recognize educating *as* educating, across different instances of it, because in all cases one party has undertaken to spur the positive human development of another. Across the different examples of education, what counts as success is the activation in the student of positive capacities that had previously been latent. Moreover, we care about the activation of those capacities regardless of the consequences. We do not, for instance, cease educating the child who has cancer because she has cancer. This is not to say that the consequences that flow from activating latent human capacities are unimportant, just that those consequences do not themselves justify the activation.

The important point here is that even when a student pursues education as a means to moneymaking, she is choosing as her means an activity whose form is built around a different set of ends. Of course, as Aristotle long ago pointed out, the ends of moneymaking and of human flourishing are not separate from one another. In order to achieve a broad eudaimonistic human flourishing, we also need the means to live. Close attention to the logic of education reveals any strong distinction between utilitarian and eudaimonistic goals to be overdrawn. Similarly, even if one thinks that one needs to teach a child his tribe's rituals in order to preserve that tribe (a collective utilitarian concern), one also thinks that life in that tribe is in the child's best interest (a eudaimonistic perspective), so one's view about inculcating social norms is tethered to a view about the child's good. An educational system is constituted by a multitude of particular actions that involve the relation between teachers and students, where each student must always be an end in himself. When we try to cultivate good teachers, we seek to instill this instinct. This effort flows from the moral intuition that the appropriate justification for

the actual activity of educating is a broad eudaimonism, and not social utility.

Rawls's neat distinction between the justification for rules that structure practices and the justification for rules that structure the activities conducted in the context of that practice thus helps us to see that thinking about education requires us to think on two levels. And we have to understand when each level of justification is relevant. It is reasonable to think about social utility and about how a whole educational system might achieve social utility. It may even be necessary to do that.[30] But the justification for particular instances of educating must instead be eudaimonistic. What we are thinking about as education will not count as such unless we also think about it from the perspective of the individual being educated. In order to count as education, the practice sponsored by those institutions has to affect the development of an individual qua human being, namely, a creature whose flourishing entails the development of a range of valuable cognitive, affective, and intersubjective capacities. I refer to this as the humanistic baseline for the concept of education.

From the Humanistic Baseline to Four Basic Needs

The next sort of question we have to ask is this: If any given system of education—regardless of the social ends toward which it is directed—must meet a humanistic baseline in order to count as a system of, specifically, *education*, how do we determine what is involved in meeting that humanistic baseline? What sort of education activates latent potential for general human flourishing? This is also to ask which account of human flourishing we should use to give content to the humanistic baseline for education. As we pursue an answer to this question, we will also have to ask whether it is possible to have an approach to education that integrates the two perspectives provided by its system and the micro-level justifications. A coherent account of the purposes of education surely requires such an integration or alignment.

As we initiate our hunt for an acceptable eudaimonistic account of the nature of education, we can define the stakes of the search by reaching back again, if briefly, to the first theorist of education in the Western tradition. Plato argued that the differences among people are such that each should be educated to perform excellently the one kind of work at which she will excel. This would make us all virtuous and therefore happy, he argued, as would assuming our places in a highly stratified

society in which adults perform the single role assigned to them (for instance, political leadership, military service, craftsmanship, trading, or agriculture). But this is not a democratic answer to the question, forced upon us by the logic of practices, of how to justify not merely the institutions of education but also the actions undertaken while educating. And just as Plato's answer is antidemocratic, so too is it illiberal, even if only avant la lettre. Liberalism depends on the idea that the ends of the state and of the individual are separable to a meaningful degree. Plato, of course, argued the opposite view that city and soul cannot, ultimately, adopt divergent aims.[31] He therefore integrated the system-level justification for education and the action-specific justification by proposing a form of education whose purpose was to fit each individual to his assigned social role.

Against Plato, a democratic answer to the question of the kind of education that would achieve full human flourishing starts from a different view of human nature, namely, that despite the differences among us we are all capable of doing multiple jobs, at the very least those of performing our own particular excellence and of acting politically as citizens.[32] To flesh out a democratic account of full human flourishing, we would profit, I think, from turning now to the work of another mid-twentieth-century philosopher, not often considered in concert with Rawls. The person I have in mind is Hannah Arendt. Her 1958 book *The Human Condition* is driven by a consideration of the issue of well-being from the perspective of the individual instead of the social whole.[33] Given the historical proximity of Rawls's 1955 article and Arendt's 1958 book, it is perhaps not surprising that there should be resonances between them. It is more surprising that the lines of thought in contemporary political philosophy that flow from each rush on so separately from one another. Interestingly, Arendt's account in *The Human Condition* provides a valuably democratic account of human flourishing that can serve as a foundation for integrating our two concepts of education: our macro-level social utilitarian concept and our micro-level eudaimonistic concept.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt famously expounds on the content and import of three core human activities: labor, work, and action. Labor is what we undertake out of biological necessity—what we do, in other words, to feed ourselves. It also encompasses sexual reproduction and the energies devoted to child-rearing. Work is what we do out of creative effort, to build the things—whether physical or cultural—that shape our world and establish our social connections with others. Labor and work overlap with each other insofar as our romantic relationships are products

of our social art and, of course, create the context within which we may also pursue biological reproduction. Finally, action identifies the effort we make together as political creatures, struggling in conditions of pluralistic diversity, to come to collective decisions about our polity's course of action.[34]

Arendt's arguments about labor, work, and action have garnered significant scholarly attention, yet one important detail has been overlooked. By describing work, labor, and action as typifying every human existence, Arendt sought to reverse centuries, even millennia, of philosophical effort to differentiate social roles with reference to these activities.[35] Earlier philosophers had assigned to a different social class each of the three domains of activity that for Arendt defined the human condition of each individual. In the idealized Greek city of Aristotle, for instance, securing a stable economic base for life was assigned to a slave class, contributing to the realm of creativity was assigned to tradesmen, and participating in politics, to citizens. Or think again of Plato, who assigned these tasks to farmers, traders, craftsmen, soldiers, and political leaders, and expected very little mobility among these groups.

With her incandescent and liberatory philosophical imagination, Arendt dedifferentiated these three roles and recombined them into an account of the experience of every individual, as themselves the marks of the human condition for each one of us. In an Arendtian account, the potential of the modern union of economics and politics is that we can build polities that are nonstratified such that each individual is responsible for securing his own subsistence (rather than exploiting others[36]); has a life scope that makes it possible to create meaningful social worlds—both intimate and communal; and has a platform for participating in politics. Individual human flourishing, then, depends on the activation of a potential that inheres in all human beings—as a feature of the human condition—to succeed at labor, work, and political action simultaneously.

On the basis of Arendt's arguments in *The Human Condition*, then, we can identify four basic human potentialities that should be activated by education. Through education, we need:

1. To prepare ourselves for breadwinning work;
2. To prepare ourselves for civic and political engagement;
3. To prepare ourselves for creative self-expression and world-making;
4. And to prepare ourselves for rewarding relationships in spaces of intimacy and leisure.

We recognize that the capacities relevant to all these domains are flourishing when we see young people become adults who can support themselves economically without exploiting others, take their place among a world of adult creators, including as creators of rewarding intimate relationships, and participate effectively in their polity's political life. When the humanistic baseline for the micro-level concept of education is given content from such democratic eudaimonism, it orients us toward a pedagogic practice that is in itself egalitarian in that it seeks to meet the same range of needs for all students. Yet there is also another way in which this conceptualization of education makes a contribution to egalitarianism.

When one takes a look at this list of basic educational needs generated from Arendt's democratic eudaimonism, one quickly notices that the utilitarian social justifications for a system of education—that a polity as a whole secures economic competitiveness and, in the case of a democracy, an engaged and effective citizenry—align with two of the four needs any individual requires of education. Each person's individual need to prepare for breadwinning work and for civic and political engagement is simply the other side of the coin of the social need for broad economic competitiveness and an engaged citizenry. In other words, public goods and private goods come together here, and analyzing education in terms of an opposition between them is not necessarily helpful. Similarly, the state's "utilitarian" goods turn out to be features of an individual's "eudaimonistic" good, if merely considered from a different perspective. Although a state seeks an economically successful population, each individual too flourishes only when her potential for successful labor is appropriately activated. And although a democracy needs an engaged and effective citizenry, each individual flourishes only when his potential for action is appropriately tapped.

When we see how the social and the individual come together, bringing the two concepts of education into alignment with each other, we also learn something important about our own contemporary conversations about education. Our current conversations emphasize only one of the social justifications for education—namely, the economic—leaving the state's need to cultivate effective citizens largely to the side. I will return to that topic in my next lecture, for that is where the truly egalitarian work of this humanistic concept of education is done.

Yet for all the surprising proximity between the system-level goals of education and the individual-level goals that emerge from the eudaimonistic account, we should also be grateful that the alignment between social goals and our individual goals is only partial. It should be a cause of

relief that two of the basic needs defining the humanistic baseline for the practice of education—for creative self-expression and world-making; and for rewarding relationships in spaces of intimacy and leisure—do not align with the system-level justifications for education. We do not want the state to colonize our social lives as creatures who build our worlds with others through creative self-expression and who pursue rewarding relationships in spaces of intimacy and leisure.

Yet, although we do not wish the state to colonize those spaces, we do need to ensure that the state leaves space for them. That is, if in failing to see those spaces, the state begins to override them, then that is simply another form of colonization. And this brings us to the topic of just how the humanistic baseline for education might point us toward a reorientation of our education policy discussions generally.

Rawls helped us see that we must consider the goals of educational systems, on the one hand, and of teachers with specific students, on the other. Arendt offers us a eudaimonism that permits bringing social and individual goods into alignment with one another on a democratic footing. Thinking clearly about education requires shifting effectively back and forth between these two registers: the social and the individual, categories that track neither a public good/private good distinction, nor a simplistic utilitarian/nonutilitarian distinction. If the state is to support a system of education that remains a system of *education* as distinct from some other practice, it needs to leave institutions the room to educate such that their pedagogic practices meet the requirements of the humanistic baseline.

The Humanistic Baseline and Education Policy

This idea of two concepts of education should affect reflection on educational policy by requiring us to consider any given policy proposal through each of two lenses. We can assess a policy for its success in meeting the social goods we have in view—perhaps global economic competitiveness. But we must also assess the policy by asking whether the actions it requires and institutions it establishes also satisfy the humanistic baseline that justifies actual educating.

Let me illustrate this point, very briefly, with a few schematic remarks about the policy topic of accountability. Once one sees that there are in fact two kinds of justification relevant to thinking about education, one realizes that there must also be two kinds of accountability relevant to the practice. The system of education, as a whole, has to be held to account in relation to the utilitarian justification, which justifies drawing

the social practice of education within the political realm in the first place; but individual and particular instances of teaching must be held to account in relation to the eudaimonistic justification that should properly structure the relationship between teacher and student.

Does our present approach to accountability employ this distinction? It does not. We wish to hold the system as a whole accountable for the production of economically competitive citizens, but to do so we test individual children, and not for each child's own sake but in order to track change over time in the performance of student cohorts.[37] Individual students are, in other words, made the instruments for judging something other than themselves and their own flourishing. System-level practices of accountability should instead be constructed out of measures that can capture systemwide effects without interfering with the individual teacher–student relationship. We need measurement that touches the system as such, not the particular moves or actions made within it.

Such measures are available. Imaginative educational reformers have already identified some. Thus, Larry Rosenstock, now of High-Tech High in San Diego, a few years ago proposed that we track:

1. Of the entering ninth graders in that education entity (school, district, or state, etc.), what percent graduated from a four year college?
2. Of those students who qualify for free and reduced lunch of those ninth grade entrants, what percent graduated from a four year college?
3. Of those ninth graders not in poverty, what percent graduated from a four year college?
4. Finally, what relative mixtures/concentrations of #2 and #3 were most efficacious for getting the #2's through college?[38]

Similarly, researchers at the Chicago Consortium for School Research have developed an extensive set of indicators to assess the quality of work done by schools and teachers in fostering academic achievement. These indicators are developed on the basis of measures that perform better than standardized tests in predicting student achievement. They also make use of readily available data already independently generated by the practice of educating, so using these data does not interfere with educating. One such indicator is the on-track status of ninth-graders in a given school (with respect to attendance, grades, and course pass-rates); on-track status is a better predictor of high school graduation than eighth-grade test scores or socioeconomic status. Moreover, identification of this

first indicator allows for the development of others. Since "schools that cultivate strong student-teacher relationships, make high school relevant for students, and engage their students average fewer failures, better grades, and better attendance," the consortium has developed indicators to help schools judge how well they are doing these foundational things.[39] These reformers are confident that that they can judge which schools are succeeding and which are not, with rubrics and metrics for accountability that track systemic effects but without interfering with the activity of teaching to do so.

What, then, about holding teachers accountable for their success at the activity of teaching itself? Teachers should indeed be held to account, but for the flourishing (or failure to flourish) of individual children along all the dimensions identified in the democratic eudaimonistic justification for education—progress toward economic self-sufficiency, progress toward a capacity for social and cultural creation, and progress toward a capacity to participate in political life. Here it matters that the measures of system-level performance of the kind developed described above can be analytically connected to specific things that teachers do or fail to do, as in the case of the ninth-grade on-track indicator, where students are more likely to be on-track when teachers develop strong student–teacher relationships, make high school relevant (i.e., future-oriented) for their students, and engage them. Measures of system-level performance are most valuable when they are, as in this case, organically linked, as test scores are not, to specific features of the activity of teaching. Such indicators give parents and students tools that are much more powerful than test scores for holding schools accountable because they give parents and students actionable policies and improvements to propose instead of the generic demand that schools "raise scores."[40]

Policy alternatives thus rest on answers to deeper questions posed by the logic of education as a practice. They carry with them implicit answers to the question of how we justify both a system of education and the practice of actually teaching. By forcing to the surface our thinking about the two concepts of education—the state-level and the micro-level concepts—I hope to have provided a framework to support more rigorous analysis of our policy options. By arguing for the importance of a humanistic baseline in thinking about what education is, I also hope to have restored some balance to our policy conversations, which tend to turn around the state-level concept of education. Most important, when we shift our gaze from the social to the individual justification of education,

and orient ourselves to the humanistic baseline, democratically defined, we are restoring the egalitarian potential of education in itself. The humanistic baseline requires that we think about the education of all students in the context of a broad notion of flourishing. Thus, the humanistic baseline reinforces an egalitarian orientation toward human dignity that can disappear if we focus exclusively on the state-level justifications of education, which instrumentalize the student.

In my next lecture, I will turn to the topic of civic education or, to use more Arendtian language, preparation for participatory readiness. This is the policy domain in which the egalitarian potentiality of education as such most fully shows itself.

NOTES

1. http://www.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx. Education was last on the list of Americans' most important issues in the 1960s and 1970s, but the topic began moving up the charts in 1980 and hit the first position in 2000 (Roper Center at University of Connecticut, Public Opinion Online; from P. McGuinn presentation at the Institute for Advanced Study in the 2009–10 academic year). Its salience has declined since then (as per Policy Agendas Project Web site, http://www.policyagendas.org/page/trend-analysis#), but it still makes Gallup's top ten list.
2. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Kindle ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 71.
3. Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, *The Race between Education and Technology* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010).
4. The politics of education have generated three different egalitarian ideals: equality of opportunity, equality of outcome, and adequacy. Susana Loeb, Helen Ladd, Rob Reich, and Anna Marie Smith discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these in their chapters in Danielle Allen and Robert Reich, eds., *Education, Justice, and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
5. Danielle Allen, "Education and Equality," lecture given at the Institute for Advanced Study, November 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrW6HNi9-QU.
6. Danielle Allen, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (New York: Norton/Liveright, 2014); cf. Clarissa Hayward, *How Americans Make Race: Stories, Institutions, Spaces* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Richard Rothstein, "Racial Segregation and Black Student Achievement," in Allen and Reich, *Education, Justice, and Democracy*, 173–98; Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).
7. Allen, "Education and Equality."
8. Danielle Allen, "Talent Is Everywhere," in *The Future of Affirmative Action: New Paths to Higher Education Diversity after Fisher v. University of*

Texas, edited by R. Kahlenberg (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2013).

9. Danielle Allen, "What 'Tuition' and 'Fees' Leaves Out on College Costs," *Washington Post*, December 19, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/17/AR2010121705587.html.
10. Danielle Allen, "Art of Association," Annual Equality Lecture for British Sociological Association, April 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZJA6uOS-jk; Danielle Allen, "What We Should Be Doing with Diversity on Our College Campuses," *Institute Letter*, Summer 2013, http://www.ias.edu/files/pdfs/publications/letter-2013-summer.pdf.
11. There is the related problem to which Aristotle first called attention in Book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: one must also distinguish between whether one has arithmetic or geometric equality in mind.
12. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 71.
13. On scribal schools, see Christopher Woods, "Bilingualism, Scribal Learning, and the Death of Sumerian," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*: *Unofficial Writing in the Ancient Near East and Beyond*, edited by S. Sanders, 91–120 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006). We hear about one ancient Greek school for children in Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War.*
14. Ian Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
15. Michael Katz, *A History of Compulsory Education Laws*, Fastback Series, no. 75. Bicentennial Series (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976).
16. Transcript: President Obama's Convention Speech, National Public Radio, http://www.npr.org/2012/09/06/160713941/transcript-president-obamas-convention-speech.
17. Transcript: Mitt Romney's Acceptance Speech, National Public Radio, http://www.npr.org/2012/08/30/160357612/transcript-mitt-romneys-acceptance-speech.
18. National Governors Association, "Common Core State Standards Initiative Standards-Setting Criteria," http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Criteria.pdf, and on file with the author.
19. A Nation at Risk, US Department of Education Archived Information, http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html.
20. Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, and National Academy of Engineering. *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007), 30.
21. Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (New York: Norton, 2010), 53. See also Amy Gutmann, "What Makes a University Education Worthwhile?" in *The Aims of Higher Education: Problems of Morality and Justice*, edited by Michael McPherson and Harry Brighouse, 7–25 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).
22. Indeed, several scholars and leaders in higher education have lately been seeking to achieve that. See Gutmann, "What Makes a University Education

Worthwhile?"; Mike Rose, "Heal the Academic-Vocational Schism," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 10, 2012.

23. John Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules," *Philosophical Review* 64, no. 1 (January 1955): 3–32.
24. I am paraphrasing rather than quoting Rawls's argument. I should also note that Rawls excavates the common utilitarian justification for the basic structure of society, in order, eventually, to replace a utilitarian justification at this level with his justification from "justice as fairness." I adopt his diagnosis of social facts on this ground—namely, that utilitarian arguments are commonly those being used at the macro-level of justification—but without moving from that view to an adoption of the theory of justice. I seek to develop my argument about political obligation instead from the content of moves inside the game, the micro-level.
25. In responding to Rawls's argument about practices, the philosopher Stanley Cavell distinguishes two ways in which the label "practice" might be applied: "We may be conceiving of [a practice] either on a par with institutions like kinship systems, law and religion, institutions which distinguish societies from hives or galaxies, general dimensions in terms of which any community of human beings will be described; or we may be thinking of it as a *specific* institution, on a par with monogamy or monotheism or suttee or death by stoning, institutions in terms of which one society is distinguished from another society, or from the same society at an earlier stage" (Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1979) 1999], 299–300). Cavell rightly saw Rawls as concerned with the first category of "practice." I am also concerned with the first category.
26. Here, readers who know Rawls's argument, will notice that I am limiting my use of it to *sociopolitical* practices, which have been co-opted by the state; I am not applying it to practices generally. I am arguing that when Rawls distinguishes between the justification for a practice as such and justification for actions undertaken within the practice, his distinction succeeds, really, only for *sociopolitical* practices, where the state has co-opted some domain of human social activity. In such cases, two actors are relevant to understanding the practice: the state and particular individuals who carry out actions within the domain of the relevant practice. That Rawls's distinction between the two kinds of justification should map onto a distinction between two kinds of actor should come as no surprise. He draws readers' attention to the fact that utilitarianism, understood in its original formulation, concerned social institutions and was used primarily as a criterion for judging social institutions, not for guiding the actions of individuals ("Two Concepts," 18–19 and 19–21). Insofar as he makes space for utilitarianism at the level of justifying practices as such, he is recovering a bounded approach to utilitarianism as relevant mainly to the societal level. When Stanley Cavell criticizes Rawls's argument in "Two Concepts," he focuses on the case of promise-keeping and acknowledges that Rawls's argument works better for punishment, where formal institutions have been set up (Cavell, *Claim of Reason*, 299, 308). In other words, Cavell is

implicitly noting that, if Rawls's argument works, it works for sociopolitical practices.

27. Utility captures the satisfaction that agents take in particular outcomes. Here is one basic formulation: "What does it mean to say that agents are self-interested? It does not necessarily mean that they want to cause harm to each other, or even that they care only about themselves. Instead, it means that each agent has his own description of which states of the world he likes—which can include good things happening to other agents—and that he acts in an attempt to bring about these states of the world. The dominant approach to modeling an agent's interests is *utility theory*. This theoretical approach quantifies an agent's degree of preference across a set of available alternatives, and describes how these preferences change when an agent faces uncertainty about which alternative he will receive. Specifically, a *utility function* is a mapping from states of the world to real numbers. These numbers are interpreted as measures of an agent's level of happiness in the given states" (Kevin Leyton-Brown and Yoav Shoham, *Essentials of Game Theory: A Concise, Multidisciplinary Introduction* [San Rafael: Morgan and Claypool, 2008], 1).
28. If the social justification for democracy is preservation of the state form, then educational systems should look different around the world accordingly as the world continues to hold differences in regime type. On this line of argument, a single international standard for assessing education (such as the PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] test) will be dangerous to any state whose state-form is not adequately captured by that assessment instrument.
29. Helen Ladd and Susana Loeb, "The Challenges of Measuring School Quality: Implications for Educational Equity," in Allen and Reich, *Education, Justice, and Democracy*, 19–42, 20.
30. This thought runs in the opposite direction from the line of argument that Rawls pulled out of his separation of the two levels of justification. His purpose in pulling apart justification for the rules of the game from justification for particular moves in the game was to establish a framework for a concerted challenge to the use of utilitarianism to justify the former.
31. For a particularly compelling account of how to understand Plato's arguments on this subject, see J. Lear, "Inside and Outside the *Republic*." *Phronesis* 37, no. 2 (1992): 184–215.
32. I call this a "democratic view of human nature" because it is implicit in the construction of democratic institutions that draw everyone into political life while also expecting them to be active in other domains.
33. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).
34. Democratic politics is fundamentally a project of negotiating difference (and this was always true, even in homogeneous communities; increased demographic diversity simply makes the centrality of plurality more obvious). Josiah Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), and "What Is Democracy?

What Is It Good For?" paper presented at the James Moffett Lecture, Princeton University, September 30, 2010. I owe my reading of Hannah Arendt, and particularly my understanding of the economic significance of the arguments in *The Human Condition*, largely to Patchen Markell in *Politics Against Rule: Hannah Arendt and* The Human Condition (forthcoming).

35. The philosophical practice of establishing, in essence, caste systems where particular social tasks are assigned to particular social classes appears in non-Western traditions as well. See, for instance, Jennifer London, "Circle of Justice," *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 3 (2011): 425–47.
36. On stringent efforts to determine what is necessary given a nonexploitation criterion, see Gerald A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
37. Here it is worth noting that, as of 2010, the current U.S. presidential administration advocated replacing the cohort model with a growth model designed to track individual student progress. As of 2010, multiple states were also switching to a growth model for accountability. See Rolf Blank, "State Growth Models for School Accountability," Council of Chief State School Officers, June 2010: "States have increased interest in the use of growth models for school accountability. Growth models are based on tracking change in individual student achievement scores over multiple years. A total of 12 states are utilizing growth models that provide estimates of whether student achievement will meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) state proficiency targets within three years. These models were designed to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In addition, 13 states have developed and implemented growth models as required by state policy; these models use different formulas to measure growth for students and schools. This paper is an overview and description of current state activities with growth models. For more, see http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/State_Growth_Models_for_School_Accountability_Progress_on_Developing_and_Reporting_Measures_of_Student_Growth.html#sthash.ZOpCt9p1.dpuf. There does not appear to have been much recent change in this area.
38. Larry Rosenstock, e-mail correspondence with author, August 13, 2010.
39. Chicago Consortium for School Research (CCSR), "Graduation and School Culture: What Matters in the Freshman Year," CCSR Report, https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/ssr/school/1777/high/2009/report/report-freshman/section-freshman-intro.html. See also the reports, Elaine Allensworth and John Q. Easton, "The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation," CCSR (2005), http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/p78.pdf; Elaine Allensworth and John Q. Easton, "What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools," CCSR (2007), http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/what-matters-staying-track-and-graduating-chicago-public-schools.
40. To this end, the Chicago Consortium on School Research disseminates its reports in "briefs" for parents, teachers, and students on how to make use of the CCSR indicators to support student achievement. For an example of a parent brief, see Allensworth and Easton, "On-Track Indicator as a Predictor."

LECTURE II.
PARTICIPATORY READINESS

> λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν, ὃς σμικροτάτωι σώματι καὶ ἀφανεστάτωι θειότατα ἔργα ἀποτελεῖ
>
> Speech is a great power, which achieves the most divine works by means of the smallest and least visible form.
>
> —Gorgias, "Encomium to Helen"

INTRODUCING PARTICIPATORY READINESS

In my first lecture, I argued that our conversations about education are often muddled because we fail to distinguish between two concepts of education: one that justifies the practice at a societal level; and another that justifies actual instances of particular teachers teaching particular students. Once we focus on these two concepts of education, we see that the latter establishes a humanistic baseline for the former. A social system designated as "education," which may be justified and sustained for utilitarian reasons such as a society's global economic competitiveness, can retain that label only if the actual instances of teaching conducted within its ambit are responsive to the eudaimonistic pursuit of human flourishing that underlies all actual instances of teaching, properly understood.

Rawls's conceptual tools allow us to switch back and forth between consideration of the social and the individual. This—the social vs. the individual—is a better distinction, I think, than one between public and private goods or between the extrinsic and intrinsic goods of education. This is because the same phenomenon—for instance, the development of civic agents—can be considered either for its public good aspect (including its susceptibility to free riding) or for its private benefit. And there are, of course, not only intrinsic but also extrinsic benefits that flow to an individual from civic participation.

Once we are prepared to consider education with regard both to a macro societal-level and a micro-level conception, we meet the question of whether it is possible to provide content for the humanistic baseline for education that harmonizes the two concepts. I made the case that, by drawing on Hannah Arendt's account of basic human needs in *The Human Condition*, we can do that successfully. On the basis of her text, I argued that education needs to prepare all students in four ways:

1. For breadwinning work;
2. For civic and political engagement;
3. For creative self-expression and world-making;
4. For rewarding relationships in spaces of intimacy and leisure.

A striking feature of this list of education's aims is that two of them identify goals that—considered from an alternative perspective—are also part of common utilitarian social justifications for education. To say that each person needs preparation for nonexploitative breadwinning work is to consider the issue of societal economic well-being from the perspective of the individual rather than the social whole. Similarly, to say that everyone needs preparation for civic and political engagement is to consider the issue of civic engagement from the perspective of each student rather than the social system.

When we put the Rawlsian and the Arendtian perspectives together, we see that our public discourse about education, our articulations of our collective goals, routinely leave out the civic. This is true despite the fact that civic experience is important to both concepts of education—the social and the individual. We have seen that, for instance, according to the Common Core State standards, again, education "must ensure *all* American students are prepared for the global economic workplace."[1] In general, the rhetoric of educational policy relies almost exclusively on advocating the goals of college and career readiness. The civic has, in short, gone AWOL. My aim, in pursuing the topic of "participatory readiness," is to rectify this.

What exactly is "participatory readiness"? First, the idea of being prepared to participate captures prospects of participation at several social levels: not only the level of the political community but also that of intimate and communitarian relationships. Think again of the four needs I derived from Arendt. Our flourishing as creators entails our engagement in cultural communities of meaning, and even our success in the realm of labor requires participation in social relationships. "Participatory readiness" defines our preparation for civic and political life, but it also undergirds our preparation in all the areas in which we hope to prosper. When young people leave school or college, we hope that they are prepared to participate effectively at work, in communities, and in love. One might well want to pause on the question of what "participatory readiness" entails at the intimate or social level—particularly given the contemporary crisis around sexual assault on college campuses. But the question of what

it means to participate well in civic and political life also merits our fulsome attention. The reason to prioritize this topic—despite the urgencies of the social pathologies of our campuses—is its centrality to our political pathology, the problem of inequalities of many kinds.

Before I turn to the components of "participatory readiness," and what we know about the kinds of education that can achieve them, I would like to take a moment to expand on just how civic and political agency, and their cultivation, are relevant to our understanding of equality, and any effort to address issues of inequality, however those are specified.

PARTICIPATORY READINESS AND EQUALITY

The first link between a broad education for "participatory readiness" and equality is obvious. The idea that all students should be educated for political participation—and not merely a select few prepared for political leadership, as in Plato—is already an egalitarian feature of the humanistic baseline education, as I have fleshed that out. In seeking to give content to the humanistic baseline for education, I described my employment of a democratic eudaimonism developed from Arendt. My embrace of democracy imported an ideal of political equality to the core idea of human flourishing that education supports. In other words, I follow Hannah Arendt (and others) in seeing a basic human need to participate in the realm of action as the explanation for why, among possible regime types, democracy is not only desirable but also the most just.[2] Given that, by this argument, political participation is necessary for a flourishing life, and given that education is preparation for a flourishing life, our curricula and pedagogies must prepare people for an Arendtian life of action. The goal is to maximize participation and thereby to come closer to realizing an ideal of political equality as well as providing the specific sense of fulfillment that accrues to each individual through the experience of empowerment. The aspiration in the micro-level concept of education to prepare students to participate in their communities and polities flows from, and in turn, reinforces a commitment to political equality.

The egalitarian significance of this preparation of the young for civic and political life extends, however, beyond politics. It stretches to every domain in which it matters who makes the decisions that define our collective lives. The importance of "participatory readiness" therefore touches even the realm of economics. Here we can return to the many scholars who propose education as the main remedy for income and wealth inequality. They do so accurately, but for the wrong reason.

Most arguments that education is the solution to economic inequality stress education's potential to achieve broad dissemination of skills. Such broad dissemination is expected to drive down the wage premium on expertise and to help compress the income distribution. I am thinking again of Thomas Piketty's arguments but also of the work of Claudia Goldin and Larry Katz. On this line of thought, education is presumed to bring with it positional advantage. That is, those who have more education—more skills—can be presumed to reap more market rewards than those with lesser educational attainment. Narrowing gaps in educational attainment across the population or equalizing the distribution of educational goods should thus also reduce the positional advantage that accrues to education and reduce, for instance, income inequality. Rob Reich, coeditor with me of the volume *Education, Justice, and Equality*,[3] has drawn my attention to the work of the economist Fred Hirsch on the idea of positionality. Hirsch quips, "If everyone stands on tiptoe, no one sees any better."[4] We might also say, "If everyone stands on tiptoe, then no one is too seriously overshadowed."

But there are limits to how much the positional advantage of education can be moderated through the dissemination of technological skills. As the economist Daron Acemoglu and political scientist Jim Robinson have pointed out, arguments such as this presume a stable framework of technology and political institutions. They put this point particularly effectively when critiquing Piketty's account of income and wealth inequality. His argument fails, they propose, because it ignores politics. Thus they write:

> The quest for general laws of capitalism, or any economic system, is misguided because it is a-institutional. It ignores that it is the institutions and the political equilibrium of a society that determine how technology evolves, how markets function, and how the gains from various different economic arrangements are distributed.[5]

Acemoglu and Robinson remind us that, for instance, Marx's predictions that capitalism would generate wage stagnation or a decline in the share of national income accruing to labor failed at least in the case of the United Kingdom, because important British political reforms influenced wages and labor in the opposite direction. I quote again:

> For example, the Industrial Revolution went hand-in-hand with major political changes, including the development of the state and the

> Reform Acts, which changed British political institutions and the distribution of political power. The economic consequences of these political changes were no less profound. In 1833 a professional factory inspectorate was set up, which brought the real implementation of legislation on the regulation of factory employment. The Factory Act of 1847 was much more radical than previous measures and it came at a time of intense social mobilization in the form of the Chartist movement. The political fallout of the 1832 democratization also led to the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, lowering the price of bread, raising real wages and simultaneously undermining land rents.

In other words, a society's political life intersects with its economic fate. In the case of the United States, Acemoglu and Robinson highlight late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Populist and then Progressive mobilizations that led to reductions of corporate power, a turn of events that also refuted one of Marx's general laws, they argue.

The preparation of citizens for civic and political engagement supports the pursuit of political equality, but political equality, in turn, may well engender more egalitarian approaches to the economy. In other words, education can affect income inequality not merely by spreading technical skills and compressing the income distribution; it can even affect income inequality by influencing "how technology evolves, how markets function, and how the gains from various different economic arrangements are distributed."[6]

The idea of "participatory readiness" and the concept of equality, in short, have several linkages. An education that prepares students for civic and political engagement brings not only a concept of political equality into play but also the prospect of political contestation around issues of economic fairness. Insofar as technology frameworks and political institutions are malleable, the status of education as a positional good may itself be susceptible to change, and the degree of its positionality will in all likelihood vary with the political context. If an education for participatory readiness can affect a society's level of political competitiveness, it may also drive changes not only in the distribution of education but even in its positionality.[7] Consequently, the most effective way for us to direct our educational system toward egalitarian ends could well be to focus on participatory readiness.

When we think about equality in the context of education, we tend to think above all about distributional questions. We imagine that we

will have an egalitarian system when we have managed to fund a system that will genuinely offer the possibility of an equal level of attainment (as distinguished from achievement) to all (or nearly all) students.[8] But we may need to move the conversation one step back and to remind ourselves that fair economic outcomes may themselves depend on genuine political equality. If this is right, then an education for participatory readiness, and not merely for technical skill, is the appropriate way of understanding the linkage between pedagogy and equality.

But if "participatory readiness" is so important, just what should students get ready for? In what do we expect them to participate?

PARTICIPATORY READINESS: READY FOR WHAT?

A basic challenge in answering the question of what students should get ready for is already reflected in a certain instability in our common vocabulary. Would we like to say that we should prepare them for civic engagement? Or for political participation? On this question, we are confused.[9] Thus far in my lectures, I have repeatedly used the pleonastic phrase "civic and political life," and this reflects what I take to be a broadly shared confusion. After all, do those two words not mean fundamentally the same thing? Their etymological roots are similar. "Political" and "civic" come, respectively, from the Greek and Latin terms for "city." Why, then, use both at once? Yet these terms have come to have two distinct rhetorical valences for us. "Civic" is a safe word. It suggests public action undertaken through approved venues and within the confines of long-standing public agendas. "Political" is a more highly charged term. It invokes approved actions such as voting and holding office, but it also suggests protest action, activism, and advocacy, all of which make us nervous when we come to discussions of things like curriculum and pedagogy. We do not, for instance, commonly think that a K–12 education or college education should be organized around teaching people Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*.[10] Yet Alinsky's text does instill participatory readiness of at least *some kind or another*. And whatever kind it is, we are most likely to call an education in Alinsky "political," rather than "civic."

Our strange uncertainty around the term "political" came home to me with a special force when I had the occasion to watch the video of a recent panel that gathered together three young leaders of digital associations. These young people were engaged in activities such as supporting marriage equality, disseminating Hayekian economic ideas, and claiming space in the public sphere for American Muslims. When asked whether

they thought of themselves as political, each said no.[11] This fact underscores the challenge of trying to define the content of an education for "participatory readiness." We cannot quite bring ourselves to agree on whether our object is "the civic" or "the political," and this is partly because we no longer esteem "the political." The lack of equilibrium in our vocabulary—do we want to talk about the "civic" or do we want to talk about the "political"—reflects the current absence of any single, unified conception of what it means to participate in public life.

A historical view can bring perspective to the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to our conceptions of citizenship. The sociologist and communications scholar, Michael Schudson, has made the important point that models of civic education in any given time and place tend to track that time's reigning ideology about citizenship.[12] In the case of the United States, he identifies four separate models of civic agency that have emerged since the founding—with each model stemming from the period's reigning ideals and generating a distinctive approach to socializing the young for political participation.

In the young republic, politics was dominated, Schudson argues, by a model of the citizen as the "trusted, solid" individual, a (white, male) property owner, whose central activity was to vote for esteemed leaders whose wise hands would set the community's course. A religious education directed toward matters of character predominated. With the rise of populist politics and mass political parties, the citizen evolved into the "party loyalist," an individual who turned out for party parades and events, voted for the slate, and reaped economic benefits, such as employment opportunities, through party membership. The intellectual demands were minimal; to vote a party ticket, not even literacy was necessary. With the rise of the progressive era and the professionalization of political administration and journalism, the country saw the emergence of "the informed voter" as the model for citizenship. Voting was still the citizen's main activity, but that citizen was supposed to enter the now private ballot box having consumed high-quality information provided by journalists. With the Civil Rights era came the "rights-conscious" citizen; individuals needed to be both more self-aware about their own rights and more attentive to those of others. The citizen's toolkit now included the courtroom and tactics such as public litigation.

I think it is currently impossible to find a single, unifying model of citizenship dominating our culture—and our uncertainty about the terms "civic" and "political" is just one symptom of this difficulty.[13] Nonetheless,

we can identify a handful of models currently bumping and jostling each other in our collective imagination. To spot them, though, we will need to establish as a backdrop a broad, philosophical conceptualization of the range of action-types that can characterize public life, so that we can consider which features of that range currently have the greatest salience. Just as Hannah Arendt's philosophical views were helpful in identifying the humanistic baseline, her work can advance our thinking here too. We can draw on her account of *action* to limn the backdrop against which to assess just how, in practice, we seem to conceive of the political life these days.

In Arendt's account of action, citizenship is the activity of cocreating a way of life; it is the activity of world-building. The concept, fully understood, extends beyond legal categories of membership in political units. The activity of citizenship—of cocreation and world-building—can occur at many different social levels: in a neighborhood or school, in a networked community or association, in a city, state, or nation, at a global level. As I further specify this idea of civic agency in my own work, it is multifaceted and involves three core tasks.[14] First, there is disinterested deliberation around a public problem.[15] Here the model is the Athenian citizens gathered in the assembly, or the town halls of colonial New Hampshire, or public representatives behaving reasonably in the halls of a legislature. Second, there is prophetic work to shift a society's codes of values; in the public opinion and communications literature, this is now called *frame shifting*.[16] Think here of the rhetorical power of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Martin Luther King Jr. Finally, there is transparently and passionately interested "fair fighting," where a given public actor adopts a cause and pursues it passionately, never pretending to disinterestedness.[17] One might think of the nineteenth-century activists for women's rights, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage.

The ideal civic agent combines capacities to carry out all three of these tasks ethically and justly. Let us take the nineteenth-century women's rights activist, Elizabeth Stanton Cady as an example. At the Seneca Falls Convention she had to function in a deliberative mode for the debate about the text of the Declaration of Sentiments. When she drafted that text, however, before the convention's deliberations, she functioned in the prophetic mode, just as she did in her innumerable speeches. Finally, in campaigning for legal change, as in the adoption of the Married Women's Property Act in New York and similar laws in other states, she functioned as an activist.

Yet if deliberation, prophesy, and contestation are the rudimentary components of civic agency, they do not in themselves determine the content of any given historical moment's conception of citizenship. There is no need for each of these functions to be combined in a single role or citizenly persona, nor is there any guarantee that all three will operate in each historical context. Diverse regime types—from the authoritarian to the liberal to the tribal—have been known to try to shut down heterodox prophets. One or another of these roles may be foregrounded, and it is altogether possible for these tasks to become separated from one another, generating distinguishable kinds of civic roles. I think this latter situation obtains today.

Distinct, alternative roles and personae have developed that emphasize one or another of these three core tasks of civic agency or some combination of them. I designate these roles as the "civically engaged individual," the "activist" or "political entrepreneur," and the "professional politician." Following Schudson's example, we can distinguish these roles by how they define the tasks of civic agency; how they connect to the levers of power; and how they place intellectual and psychological demands on their practitioners.[18]

The "civically engaged individual" focuses on the task of disinterested deliberation and actions that can be said to flow from it. Such citizens focus on pursuing "universal" values, "disinterestedness," "critical thinking," and "bi-partisan" projects.[19] Hence our use of the safe word "civic" for this category of civic agency. Next come the activist and the politician. They are "political" actors, and the unsafe and sometimes unsavory nature of the activity conducted through these second two roles explains our use of the word *political* for them. The activist seeks to change hearts and minds and to fight, in the ideal fairly, for particular outcomes, often making considerable sacrifices to do so. Finally, the professional politician, as currently conceived, focuses mainly on "fighting," and not necessarily on "fighting fair." This role, in contrast to the other two, currently represents a degraded form of civic agency in contemporary discourse; one has only to look at Congress's all-time low approval ratings to recognize this.[20]

Each of these citizenly personae has some affinity with one of the models that Schudson analyzes as grounded in a particular historical era. The "civically engaged individual," has a close affinity with the Progessive era's idealization of the "informed voter"; the activist or political entrepreneur with the Civil Rights era's rights-conscious citizen; and the "politician" with the late nineteenth-century model of the party loyalist. Yet

at this moment all three of these models of civic agency—or updated versions of them—are elbowing and shoving one another in our public spheres. Given this fact, how do we educate for "participatory readiness"? Do we choose one of these models to emphasize? Or is there a way to integrate our understanding?

All three of these citizenly roles include "voting" in their responsibilities. But beyond that institutional responsibility, these roles develop very different conceptions of how to interact with both formal political institutions and the other levers that can be pulled to effect change.[21] They also develop very different conceptions of the types of speech and ethical orientations that should govern civic and political participation.[22] Each of these citizenly roles also presupposes a different approach to the development of intellectual and psychological capacities.

The civically engaged citizen who embraces the ideal of disinterested deliberation and pursues projects of "universal" value must, in some fashion, be clear about and counteract self-interest, must develop ways of testing whether things count as universal, and requires high-quality information on a wide array of issues.[23] The activist must be clear about interest and goals, must be good at strategic and tactical thinking, must understand "the levers of change," must be good at the techniques of storytelling that facilitate "frame shifting," and must have ethical parameters for thinking about the relationship between ends and means.[24] The professional politician, in the ideal, as opposed to in contemporary reality, would have both sets of the above competencies, as well as having expertise in how political institutions themselves function.

Notably, we have lost sight of the "ideal citizen" who combines success in all three citizenly tasks. That is, we have lost sight of the "statesman," who *is* a professional politician but who nonetheless has developed all of the capacities described above as belonging to the other two roles and is thus capable of disinterested deliberation, of just "frame shifting," and of fighting fair, as opposed to being capable merely of fighting.[25] But, even more important, we have also lost sight of the "ordinary citizen," who is not a professional politician, but who has nonetheless developed all of the competencies described above and who is proud to be involved in "politics."

If we are to embrace an education for "participatory readiness," we must aim our pedagogic and curricular work not at any single one of these three models, but at what lies behind all of them: a more fundamental understanding of what politics is. I embrace an Arendtian account

of political life as something positive that consists of the activity of cocreating a way of life.[26] Ultimately, I think that this view of politics generates an account of "participatory readiness" that supports all three models of citizenship: the civically engaged individual, the activist, and the politician. It supports all three roles because each carries out only a subset of the work that constitutes public action. An education that prepares a student for Arendtian action should nourish future civic leaders, activists, *and* politicians. But such an education ought also to permit a reintegration of these role types. As we consider what sorts of pedagogy and curriculum can achieve participatory readiness, we thus have available two possible courses of action. We might direct an education for "participatory readiness" toward the three citizenly personae simultaneously, albeit as distinct and separable, or we might direct that education toward a reintegrated concept of civic agency. Either way, pursuing "participatory readiness" is an ambitious project and requires a much more expansive approach to "civic education" than I have yet seen an example of.

The Content of Participatory Readiness

What should be the content of an education for "participatory readiness?" An aspiration to answer this question is visible in the June 2013 report, called *The Heart of the Matter*, released by the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences established by Congress and organized by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. This report declared its first goal to be to: "Educate Americans in the knowledge, skills, and understanding they will need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy."[27] With this formulation, the report sought to rectify the gap in our public justification for the system of education by restoring a civic component. What is education for? It is for thriving in "democracy," not merely a global economy. So the report argues.

Then the commission detailed the activities for which it thought students should ready themselves. Drawing, among other sources, on the good work of Michael Rebell and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, the commission followed its goal statement with a recommendation:

> The Commission therefore recommends a new dedication to "participatory readiness" as an educational goal. We urge a nationwide commitment to preparing k-12 students for full participation in a democratic society. The Commission commends the Common Core State Standards Initiative for its inclusion of history and civics in the

> basic literacy curriculum. It promotes the competencies necessary for full civic participation in American society: voting, serving on juries, interpreting current events, developing respect for and understanding of differences, along with an ability to articulate one's sense of the common good.[28]

The commission adopted the language of "participatory readiness" but, in its account of the education that achieves this, sketched the contours of civic education largely as we have traditionally known it. This traditional conception focuses on instruction in history and civics, primarily understood as classroom learning about the mechanics of government. Conventionally described as the "how a bill becomes a law" version of civic education, this approach prepares students for "informed" or "dutiful" citizenship, as the media scholar Lance Bennett calls it.[29] This "informed citizen" model is what comes through most strongly in the report.

Yet in the passage quoted above, the commission—on which I need to confess that I served—did extend the basic civic education framework modestly, and in two directions in particular. The report drew attention to the pressing need to prepare students to interact in conditions of diversity and also to the importance of developing in them linguistic competence adequate to offering up compelling visions of the public good. These are extensions on which I believe we can and should build.

There are two problems with the traditional "how a bill becomes a law" approach to civic education, at which the commission's report only hints.

First, to focus on the mechanics of government as the heart of civic education is to focus on only a part of what is needed for the development of participatory readiness. Civic agents do need to understand the strategies and tactics available for bringing about political change, and the structure of political institutions is a part of this. But tactical knowledge is only one of the developmental pillars necessary for civic agency. In addition to tactical and strategic understanding, just as the commission suggests, students also need *verbal empowerment* and *democratic knowledge*. These are the two other developmental pillars supporting civic agency. I will return to both of those concepts in a moment. The second problem with a focus on the institutional mechanics of government as the heart of civic education is that, even as an account of the tactics and strategies of civic agency, it is a limited picture, particularly in this era of new media and a transformed communications landscape. In sum,

"participatory readiness" rests on three developmental pillars: verbal empowerment, democratic knowledge, and a rich understanding of the strategies and tactics that undergird efficacy. I will turn to each of these pillars of "participatory readiness" individually.

First, I address verbal empowerment, which consists of interpretive (or exegetical) and expressive skills. Civic and political action must begin from a diagnosis of our current situation and move from that diagnosis to a prescription for a response. Such interpretive work, or in the language of the Declaration of Independence, the work of reading "the course of human events," can be done only in and through language. Data is only one subset of the linguistic resources available to this work of diagnosis and prescription. Conversational work is necessary to clarify the meaning of data—regardless of how big those data are. The analytical skills that constitute acts of interpretation only ever manifest themselves in language: descriptions of the situation that obtains or of what is to be done.

Moreover, success at the movement from diagnosis to prescription requires not merely the verbal skills embodied in acts of interpretation but also expressive skills. For these social diagnoses to become effective, one must convince others of them. The verbal work involved in civic agency extends well beyond our usual focus on deliberation to include also adversarial and prophetic speech. This component of "participatory readiness" used to be taught, from antiquity through the nineteenth century, under the heading of rhetoric.[30]

Second, "participatory readiness" requires what I, building on the work of classicist and political scientist, Josiah Ober, call *democratic knowledge*.[31] Democracy is an egalitarian political form and one of the great paradoxes of egalitarianism is that it functions not through a reduction or diminishment of the need for leadership but through its increase. Democracies spawn vast numbers of collective decision-making bodies. The Athenians famously had a long list of boards of administrators and civic officers, many populated by lottery. As to our own case, during the period of the Revolutionary War, scarcely a day went by when the Continental Congress did not set up yet more committees to carry out congressional business.[32] Tocqueville, of course, noticed how prolific nineteenth-century Americans were at forming associations and, for all of Robert Putnam's tales in *Bowling Alone* of decline in the twentieth century, we in fact continue to be very busy in this regard.[33] Our forms of association have changed, certainly, and for very good reasons, among them that the law of association was fundamentally restructured between

1970 and 1990, but it is by no means clear that associations are any less common now than at earlier points. (In other words, I think Putnam's story is fundamentally wrong, an issue I address elsewhere.[34])

All this associating generates its own science and demands its own art form.[35] Call these simply the science and art of association. I call this science and art, taken together, "democratic knowledge" because they pinpoint bodies of knowledge that grow up in democratic contexts, specifically. Although there are many components to this science and art of association, I consider its relational elements to be among the most important. On this front, democratic knowledge consists of what I call cosmopolitan bonding skills, on the one hand, and bridging skills on the other. The latter is easier to understand. These bridging skills consist of the capacities by which a translator, a mediator, an individual who can surmount social difference can convert a costly social relationship into one that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Cosmopolitan bonding skills, in contrast, relate to the precise nature of the bonds that we form with the people to whom we feel the most affinity, whether that is because of shared kinship, geographical collocation, ethnicity, religion, or similarity of preferences. For the sake of healthy psychological development, all people need bonding relationships.[36] But not all bonding relationships are the same. We need to bond in ways that help to preserve the democracy of which we are a part.[37] Indeed, the question of how we bond is deeply entangled with the question of whether we are able to bridge.[38] Thus, the critical question for a democratic society is how we can bond with those who are like us so as to help us bridge even with those who differ from us. In order for any method of bonding—for instance, that which begins from social homogeneity or that which begins from interest affinity—to support our capacity to bridge, the very experience of bonding must cultivate receptivity toward the potential of participation in our bonding group by social dissimilars. The question of just what sorts of styles and methods of social bonding can be cosmopolitan in this way is a difficult one, which I will not address in this lecture. Suffice it for our purposes simply to mark out the terrain by identifying this, too, as a core component of "participatory readiness." Cosmopolitan bonding skills and bridging skills are both necessary for civic actors to function effectively across political institutions and other spaces for political action. They are also necessary for the formation of solidarity that supports civic and political action outside of institutions.

Finally, verbal empowerment and the acquisition of democratic knowledge require supplementation by tactical and strategic understanding or knowledge of the mechanics of political action. As I have said, this last area is where civic and political education has traditionally focused. The error in focusing here is, of course, the failure to take the domains of verbal empowerment and democratic knowledge fully into account. But there is also another problem with the traditional focus on the mechanics of government, this one stemming from the transformation of public spheres in our new media age. Traditionally, we have thought about this "tactical" part of civic education as requiring lessons in how a bill becomes a law, but a feature of our new media age is that levers of change outside of political institutions are now easier to pull.[39] Consequently, tactical and strategic understanding now also requires learning about how civic agents can interact with corporations and nongovernmental organizations, or as part of social movements. It requires understanding how cultural norms can be changed and how changes in cultural norms bring about broader political changes.[40] It also requires understanding a new architecture of communication. Where once we needed to know how to write letters to the editor and to Congress, now we need to master the architecture and rhetoric of the Internet and social media.[41] We still have a curricular and pedagogic need for the traditional focus of civic education on the Constitution and structure of government but this domain of strategies and tactics now requires expansion.

The core elements of "participatory readiness" are thus: verbal empowerment; strategic and tactical understanding of the levers of political change, broadly conceived; and democratic, associational know-how. This is a nonexhaustive account of the elements of "participatory readiness," but these components are, I think, the most significant human capacities that require cultivation if each of us is to be well-prepared to function as a civic and political actor.

Cultivating Participatory Readiness

How can we cultivate capacities of these kinds? For the rest of my lecture, I will focus on the relationship between "participatory readiness," and verbal empowerment. We will soon find that the unlikely hero of my story is the humanities, or a liberal arts education. We will also finally see the significance of using the humanistic baseline to define education as it pertains to the actual teaching of actual students.

In the vast universe of educational data one can catch fleeting glimpses here and there of an answer to the question of how teachers can cultivate "participatory readiness." For instance, it is clear that college provides something useful there that our K–12 system generally does not.

As Meira Levinson and others have pointed out, educational attainment is an even better predictor of the likelihood of voting than income.[42] In other words, although we do not talk terribly often or in very consistent ways about how college provides a civic and political education, something is happening on our campuses that engenders "participatory readiness." Importantly, that something is not simply the preparation of students for economic success. It is the importance of the fact that there is an even closer correlation between level of educational attainment and likelihood of voting than between socioeconomic status and likelihood of voting.

There is also an important corollary to the observation that college makes a meaningful difference for "participatory readiness." If, as is shown in Table 1, those who have advanced degrees vote more than those with college degrees, and those with college degrees, more than those with high school degrees, we have what Meira Levinson has called a civic achievement gap. If the goal of an educational system is to achieve participatory readiness for all students, this is an element of our education that we should hope to bring to a satisfactory level by age eighteen, the age of political majority. The civic achievement gap means we are not doing well enough in the K–12 system in cultivating "participatory readiness."

TABLE 1. Percentage of U.S. citizens over 18 who voted in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections by educational attainment.

	2004 Election (percent)	2008 Election (percent)
Educational Attainment		
Less than high school diploma	30	39
High school graduate	56	55
Some college or associate degree	69	68
Bachelor's degree	78	77
Advanced degree	84	83

Data from Meira Levinson, No Citizen Left Behind, Harvard, 2012, p. 35. Figures calculated using data from U.S. Census Bureau (2010b), tables 4a, 5, 8, 13; US Census Bureau (2010c), tables 4b, 5, 8, 13.

TABLE 2. College Graduates' Civic Engagement.

	Humanities	STEM
Ever voted as one year out (class of 2008)	92.8%	83.5%
Wrote to public officials by ten years out (class of 1993)	44.1%	30.1%

Data from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Figures calculated using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, B&B: 09 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study; B&B: 93/03 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study.

What exactly is happening on college campuses, then, and not in the K–12 system that makes this kind of difference? Not all college is the same, of course, and this fact holds an important key. Students have varying experiences depending, among other things, on their choice of major. Interestingly, there is a statistically significant difference (shown in Table 2) between the rates of political participation that we see from those who have graduated with humanities majors and those who graduate with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) majors.

Similarly, participation in social science college curricula is a strong predictor of later political participation, according to Duke University political scientist Sunshine Hillygus.[43] Hillygus conducted the study to control for the possibility of self-selection of those with civic and political interests into social sciences courses, and even with this control in place, she found an effect on later political participation from enrollment in social science courses. Her paper provides strong evidence for a correlation between work in the humanities and social sciences and participatory readiness.

The difference between different educational strands in higher education is mirrored in K–12 education. Just as, those who major in the humanities or take social science courses in college are more likely to participate politically after graduation, so too are those whose verbal skills are higher by the end of high school, as measured by SATs, more likely to become active political participants than those with high math scores. Moreover, the SAT effect endures even when college-level curricular choices are controlled for (see Figure 1).

To identify a correlation is not, of course, to identify causation, but those with more sophisticated verbal skills are clearly more ready to be civic and political participators. This may be because another source of motivation engaged them in politics, and once they were engaged, these

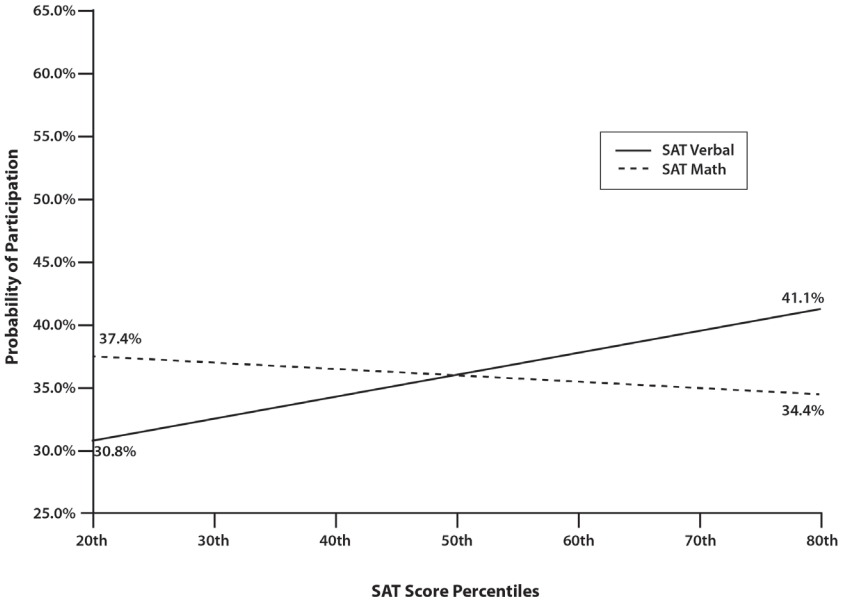

Figure 1. Predicted probability of political participation by SAT percentiles. *Source:* D. Sunshine Hillygus, "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship between Higher Education and Political Engagement." *Political Behavior* 27, no. 1 (2005): 39. Reprinted with permission from Springer Science+Business Media Inc.

students sought the verbal skills that they needed to thrive in the domain of political participation. Or the verbal ability may make it easier to engage. We do not have a study that considers levels of engagement before and after significant increases in verbal ability. Nonetheless, what we do have in data such as these is a tantalizing suggestion that the work of the humanities on verbal empowerment is intrinsically related to the development of "participatory readiness." Explaining just how this is so is an important and largely unaddressed research question.[44]

In addition to the data points that one can find scattered here and there as provocative clues to a profound story about the humanities, language, and participatory readiness, one also finds occasional anecdotes that help elucidate the connection between language and civic agency. In a volume called *Citizenship across the Curriculum*, Rebecca Nowacek, an English professor, relates the following story about the discovery by one humanities student of how her major had distinctively prepared her to participate in public life. Nowacek writes:

> Early in the collaborative process [of working with two classmates on the knotty local problem of school choice within Milwaukee public schools], an English major told me she felt that the value of her disciplinary knowledge was questioned, even slighted. One of her groupmates was a political science major, well versed in questions of public policy. The other was a speech pathologist, with experience working in the local schools. What could someone who sits reading novels bring to their collaborative inquiry? Whether their skepticism was real or only imagined, the English major felt the need to articulate for her groupmates—and for herself—what her studies of literature had prepared her to contribute to the understanding of this knotty local problem. . . . Ultimately she determined that what she could contribute to her group was her capacity to identify and tease out the significance of patterns in discourse. She conducted a careful reading of local newspaper coverage of school choice, identifying a number of disturbing trends.[45]

This English major's heightened linguistic sensitivity was her special skill. My contention here is that it is also the foundational civic competency. It is the English major who was in a position to diagnose what was actually happening in the community, and the meanings of how particular choices were being framed. We see her interpretive skills at work. We also see her expressive skills. She "felt the need to articulate . . . what her studies of literature had prepared her to contribute" and in response to this need she was able to develop and express a memorable answer. The anecdote is too partial for us to know just what political meaning the English major found in the newspaper or to know precisely how she contributed to the world-making in which she was engaged alongside the political science and speech pathology majors. Yet we do see in this anecdote a deployment of the first political skill: diagnosis. Notably, reading novels—interpreting them—was what had prepared this student for her own life of action, in the Arendtian sense.

This investigation of the relationship between the humanities, verbal empowerment, and participatory readiness is nothing more than a suggestive gesture toward precisely how we might cultivate participatory readiness. If indeed verbal empowerment is at the base of political empowerment, and if indeed the humanities have a special influence there, then we have a case for the humanities in their potential to contribute to "participatory readiness." In other words, in my pursuit of the links between education and equality, in these lectures I have wandered into a

defense of the humanities. This is because of the potential of education to advance political equality, a potentiality that depends, I suggest, first and foremost on the humanistic components of the curriculum.

To conclude these lectures, though, I would like to complete these thoughts about the relationship between education and equality. The link that I have suggested among the humanities, language, and participatory readiness brings us to what I think is at the heart of education's egalitarian force. Education's most fundamental egalitarian value is in its development of us as language-using creatures. Our linguistic capacities are what, fundamentally, education taps, and it is their great unfolding that empowers students. This verbal empowerment prepares us for participation in civic and political life. As we cultivate verbal empowerment in our students, we build the foundation for a politically competitive social and political system. We have good reason to expect that a genuinely competitive political system would put matters of economic fairness into play for contestation. This returns us to the idea that, by supporting political equality, educational institutions themselves can affect "how technology evolves, how markets function, and how the gains from various different economic arrangements are distributed." The idea is that there ought to be a developmental "threshold," identified in my account as the cultivation of participatory readiness, that enables human beings to compete politically even with others who have achieved a higher level of educational attainment. The fundamental relationship between education and equality, then, is that the very definition of education rests on a conception of shared human capacities, which, when fully activated, have the potential, by supporting political equality, to move us toward a world that reduces or eliminates the positional aspect of the good of education itself. Consequently, the most valuable way for us to direct our educational system toward egalitarian ends may be by focusing on participatory readiness. Finally, I would suggest that it is perhaps because we have lost sight of the contributions made by the humanities to our educational system that we have also lost sight of the fundamental link between education and equality that I have tried to clarify in these lectures.

EDUCATION FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY

Let me offer a brief conclusion. The great beauty of language's power as a catalyst of human capacity is that we all have access to it, so any of us can choose anywhere, anytime to plumb its depths and climb with it to the heights of human achievement. An adequately egalitarian educational

system would maximally activate the latent capacities in the powerful, invisible body of language, which dwells inside each of us. Even when an educational system fails us, we still have access to self-development. We can educate ourselves, and many have. Before the arrival of compulsory education, there were Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and Susan B. Anthony. After its arrival, there were the participants in the Freedom Schools in the South in the summer of 1964. Today we have the Clemente Courses founded by Earl Shorris and Sarah Hirschman's work on People and Stories.[46] When we strip our idea of education of the state apparatus—that is, of the system-level concept—we see again that what remains is what I have been calling the *humanistic baseline*, the idea that education begins as an effort to unfold the powers that mark us as human, the first of which is language, an effort that any of us can undertake in any social circumstance in which we find ourselves. In this fact, we come back to a fundamental human equality and also to the political equality that language opens up as a possibility for us. We come back to the human capacity, latent in our linguistic power, for world-making—through political contestation and prophesy, through art and deliberation. And we come back to the possibility that the cultivation of participatory readiness leads to political institutions that will themselves pull toward social equality and economic fairness.

NOTES

1. National Governors Association, "Common Core State Standards Initiative Standards-Setting Criteria," http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Criteria.pdf, and on file with the author.
2. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Josiah Ober, "Natural Capacities and Democracy as a Good-in-Itself," *Philosophical Studies* 132 (2007): 59–73; Danielle Allen 2014a.
3. Danielle Allen and Robert Reich, eds., *Education, Justice, and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
4. Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth* (London: Routledge & Kegan and Paul, 1977), 5.
5. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, "The Rise and Fall of General Laws of Capitalism," MIT Open Access, August 2014, http://economics.mit.edu/files 9834.
6. *Ibid*.
7. If it is indeed possible for an adequacy framework to reduce the positional aspects of the good of education, then "adequacy" rather than "equality" may actually be the right allocative solution to the distributive justice problem.

8. "Attainment" refers to the number of years of schooling; "achievement" refers to the level of growth achieved during those years of schooling as exhibited by test scores. It is theoretically possible to equalize attainment, but it is not theoretically possible to equalize achievement because of individual variation.
9. Evidence for this claim comes from five years of experience in the MacArthur Foundation research network on youth and participatory politics. The question of which word, "civic" or "political," to use in discussions of how to educate students for public life returns with a strange insistence, and without much prospect of resolution.
10. Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Vintage, 1971).
11. This was a conference panel titled "From Participatory Culture to Political Participation," at the Futures of Entertainment 6 conference, MIT, November 9–10, 2012; for the video of the panel, see http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/convergenceculture/videos/21729-foe6-from-participatory-culture-to-political-participation.
12. Michael Schudson, "Click Here for Democracy: A History and Critique of an Information-Based Model of Citizenship," in *Democracy and New Media*, edited by Henry Jenkins, 49–60 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).
13. Schudson, in contrast, does identify a single model, which he calls the "monitorial" citizen. The "monitorial" citizen fulfills a watchdog function with regard to officeholders.
14. I have pursued an effort to anatomize political speech across numerous publications, including Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship Since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Allen, *Why Plato Wrote* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Allen, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (New York: Norton/Liveright, 2014); Danielle Allen and Jennifer Light, *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Allen, "Discourse Ethics for Divided Publics," keynote address at the Conference on Moderation at the University of Warwick, June 2014; and "Art of Association" (unpublished manuscript on file with author, presented at University of California at Berkeley, Yale University Law School, and Columbia Law School).
15. The literature on deliberative democracy is relevant here. See, for instance, the work of Jurgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, and Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson.
16. For a treatment of King in this direction, see George Shulman, *American Prophecy: Race and Redemption in American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). On frame shifting, see Deva Woodly, *The Politics of Common Sense: How Social Movements Use Public Discourse to Change Politics and Win Acceptance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
17. Here there is a literature from the study of sport on the ethics of fair fighting, which is relevant, as well as the professional ethics of fields like law and journalism.
18. Schudson, "Click Here for Democracy," 49–60.

19. Terms used at the conference panel, "From Participatory Culture to Political Participation."
20. See Gallup's polls on low approval ratings for Congress, http://www.gallup.com/poll/1600/congress-public.aspx.
21. On the levers of change, see Danielle Allen, "Reconceiving Public Spheres," in Allen and Light, *From Voice to Influence*, 178–208.
22. Allen, "Discourse Ethics for Divided Publics."
23. Howard Gardner, "In Defense of Disinterestedness, in Allen and Light, *From Voice to Influence*, 232–53.
24. On the last point, see Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012): 455–70.
25. For a particularly powerful treatment of the figure of the statesman, see Melissa Lane, *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
26. Cf. D. Allen 2014a.
27. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *The Heart of the Matter* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 19.
28. Ibid., 24.
29. See Lance Bennett, Chris Wells, and Deen Freelon, "Communicating Citizenship Online: Models of Civic Learning in the Youth Web Sphere," *Civic Learning Online Project* (2009), www.engagedyouth.org.
30. Here I effectively reproduce Aristotle's division of rhetoric into deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. The forensic (or judicial) aligns with my category of adversarial speech, and the epideictic, which involves pointing out what is noble and shameful, aligns with my category of the prophetic.
31. Josiah Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
32. For an account of all the committee work involved in the production of the Declaration of Independence, see Allen, *Our Declaration*.
33. Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). For a portrait of the alternative kinds of association being pursued, one needs to add synthesized data from Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and the Quest for a New Community* (New York: Free Press, 1996), and Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining together in America's Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life,* Rothbaum Series (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Mario Small, *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Everett Ladd, *The Ladd Report* (New York: Free Press, 1999).
34. See Allen, "Art of Association."
35. Let me provide an example of the relationship between the science and art of associations. Colleagues and I from the MacArthur Foundation Youth and Participatory Politics research network have developed design principles to

guide the use and construction of digital tools whose purpose is to engage youth in equitable and efficacious civic or political action. These design principles are available at http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/projects/digital-platforms-project. This project synthesized three years' worth of research on youth participatory experience, "the science of associations," in order to generate these principles as guidance for the "art of association."

36. Philip Bromberg, *The Shadow of the Tsunami and the Growth of the Relational Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
37. Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).
38. Bromberg, *Shadow of the Tsunami*; David Eng and Shinhee Han, "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues: The International Journal of Relational Perspectives* 10, no. 4 (2000): 667–700; and Eng and Han, "Desegregating Love: Transnational Adoption, Racial Reparation, and Racial Transitional Objects," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 7, no. 2 (2006): 141–72.
39. Allen, "Reconceiving Public Spheres."
40. See Woodly, *Politics of Common Sense*; Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*; and Allen, "Discourse Ethics for Divided Publics." See also how Adbusters, which founded Occupy Wall Street, describes its project of "culture-jamming": "We are a global network of culture jammers and creatives working to change the way information flows, the way corporations wield power, and the way meaning is produced in our society," http://www.adbusters.org. "According to Mark Dery (1990), cultural jamming is defined as 'artistic terrorism' directed against the information society in which we live'" (Leah Lievrouw, *Alternative and Activist New Media* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011], 72). "The term [culture-jamming] was originally coined by a band by the name of Negativland in 1984. They define it as 'media about media about media' which describes 'billboard alteration and other underground art that seeks to shed light on the dark side of the computer age'" (ibid.).
41. Peter Levine of Tufts University made the case that civic education now requires teaching students to master the "architecture of the internet" at an August 2014 APSA panel on civic education.
42. Miera Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Sidney Verba and Kay Lehman Schlozman, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Raymond Wolfinger and Steven Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).
43. D. Sunshine Hillygus, "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship between Higher Education and Political Engagement," *Political Behavior* 27, no. 1 (2005): 25–47. Since I am giving these lectures at Stanford, I feel obliged to point out that Hillygus earned her PhD at this university. Additional tantalizing evidence is available in the work of David Kidd and Emanuele Castano, on the relationship between reading literary fiction and the "theory of mind" function. See David Kidd and Emanuele Castano, "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind," *Science 18* (October) 342 (6156): 377–80, DOI: 10.1126/science.1239918.

44. At the end of *Citizenship across the Curriculum*, David Scobey laments "the one real lacuna in the book's disciplinary range: attention to the role of the arts and humanities in civic life and civic education" (Michael Smith, Rebecca S. Nowacek, and Jeffrey L. Bernstein, *Citizenship across the Curriculum* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), Kindle location, 2852–53).
45. Rebecca S. Nowacek, "Understanding Citizenship as Vocation in a Multidisciplinary Senior Capstone," in Smith, Nowacek, and Bernstein, *Citizenship across the Curriculum*, Kindle location 1384–652.
46. Earl Shorris, *Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities* (New York: Norton, 2000), and Shorris, *The Art of Freedom: Teaching Humanities to the Poor* (New York: Norton, 2013); Sarah Hirschman, *People and Stories: Who Owns Literature? Communities Find Their Voice through Short Stories* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2009).

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