
III. SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTED TO THE PUBLIC SHPERE

Mothering as World-Building and Other “Hera-cies”: Tracing the Liberal Arts Traditions in Support of Service-Learning and Public Engaged Scholarship

Marie Sandy
(University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee)

Abstract

This article describes the author’s attempt to make sense of the creative tension between conservative and progressive perspectives on liberal education, and what this means for developing an engaged pedagogy that emphasizes service-learning and public engaged scholarship in the humanities and other disciplines. The author outlines the historical origins of the two main academic paradigms in higher education, and describes why the pragmatic-oriented sciences and social sciences are more likely to adopt service-learning and community engaged scholarship, and the humanities are not. However, the humanities-based academic paradigm offers its own justification for support of public engaged scholarship, and additional exploration of this tradition is warranted.

Introduction

“I would like to begin with an oath to the goddess Hera. My warrant for such an unorthodox beginning comes from Socrates, who swore “by Hera” when he was involved in speeches about the betterment of the young. The uttering of such an oath was almost as unorthodox for him as it is for me, though for different reasons. In the Greek world,

“by Hera” was a woman’s oath, Hera being the goddess who superintended childbirth and childrearing. The oath was taken up by Socrates – never one to scorn the wisdom of women and never one to stand upon convention. The oath was used by him to indicate his preference for private, philosophic education as against civic education.” – **Diana Schaub**¹

Is the true purpose of a liberal arts education private, as political philosopher Diana Schaub describes in the opening quote, or public? This question is often debated in the humanities, and is particularly relevant for those exceptional humanities scholars who seek to integrate service-learning and public engaged scholarship within their disciplines; it also has implications for public engaged scholarship as a whole, which can benefit from integrating aspects of the humanities tradition. In this paper I reiterate how the ideals of education practices devoted to private study have always been in productive tension with those promoting a more civically engaged liberal arts education. To illustrate this tension, I first reflect on Schaub’s interpretation of Socrates invoking the Goddess Hera, and then adopt Bruce Kimball’s language of the “orators” and “philosophers”² to outline some of the historical development of these two perspectives. I then consider frameworks that can support public engaged practice in the humanities while pointing to specific humanities concepts such as participation³ in *beauty*, *friendship*, and *practical wisdom* that can be retrieved to enhance service-learning and public engaged scholarship at practical and theoretical levels. While there is no universal consensus on

¹ Diana Schaub, “Can Liberal Education Survive Liberal Democracy?”, *Key Note Address at the American College of Academic Deans* (Charlotte, South Carolina, 2003).

² Bruce Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).

³ In Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work, for example, participation is the overriding and necessary linking activity or action that ties beauty, friendship, and practical wisdom together. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., trans. Sheed and Ward, Ltd. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1960/1975), 481.

terminology in this field,⁴ I define service-learning and public engaged scholarship as approaches to teaching, learning, and research characterized by participation in community-based environments to address community needs, integration of local and expert knowledge, the inclusion of academic texts, reflection, and hands-on work, and may include explicit goals for citizenship and character development as well as aspirations for social justice.

The ‘True’ Domain of Hera

There are (at least) two sides of the story of the private versus public purposes of education. Schaub believed Socrates considered education a private affair, and therefore he pledged an oath to Hera, the goddess of childbirth and childcare, activities that in ancient Greece, at least, occurred in the private domain of the home.⁵ To Schaub and others, education in the Socratic, liberal tradition provides space for sequestered philosophical examination and questioning under the guidance of skilled teachers, rather than being tainted with the affairs of the market place and civic, public square. As an example of this studied insularity, Schaub proudly recounted the tale of how she encouraged her students to focus on reading Pericles’ *Funeral Oration* and Plato’s *Apology* while the Twin Towers burned, challenging them to take comfort in old texts rather than attending to the media or on-campus grief counselors. She called for the protection of higher education from market forces, as well as political content, so that an elite group of liberally educated persons could provide a “needed aristocracy” to counterbalance “democratic mass society”.⁶ These persons seek to fulfill their highest nature and explore what it means to live as free human beings.

But what else might the goddess Hera, who reigned over the primary work of women in the home, say about the merits of private- and public-oriented education? I believe she might have appreciated the struggles of

⁴ Dwight Giles, “Understanding an Emerging Field of Scholarship: Toward a Research Agenda for Engaged, Public Scholarship,” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 12.2 (2008): 97-106.

⁵ Schaub, “*Liberal Education*,” 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

women around the world to simultaneously transform their personal circumstances while revolutionizing the public sphere. In the United States, we learned “the personal is political”⁷ during the second wave of feminism, where women organized for greater justice in the private realms. The movement found that “many apparently private women’s concerns...were in fact broadly shared social problems.”⁸ The issue of domestic violence, for example, was first taken up by women who shared with one another their private pain, in small consciousness-raising circles, usually held in people’s homes, and then took this issue up in the political sphere to challenge societal norms and local, state, and national laws.

On a personal level, I am reminded of Hestia’s round-the-clock commitments in the home, since I am now a mother of young children who demand much of my attention. While they were infants, it was difficult to take on any responsibilities outside of their care and what was necessary to earn income for our household to function. But the love of my children is also responsible for driving me out into the world again. I had always been interested in the issue of homelessness, and had previously worked with homeless mothers and their children on a community organizing project to improve housing options. But I was moved to devote myself to ending family homelessness after I became a mother myself, and learning from the literature that pregnancy and caring for preschool-aged children are major risk factors for homelessness.⁹ I carry an embodied sense of that vulnerability with me.

The connection between the private and public life realms was likely not lost on Socrates, who described his practice of improving the opinions (*doxa*) of young Athenians through one-on-one questioning as “the art of midwifery” or *maieutic*¹⁰ – the private craft over which the goddess Hera had dominion – but planted himself firmly in the public marketplace to do

⁷ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1963).

⁸ Aaron Schutz and Marie Sandy, *Collective Action for Social Change: An Introduction to Community Organizing* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 65.

⁹ Peter Rossi, “Troubling Families: Family Homelessness in America,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 37.3(1994): 342-395.

¹⁰ Hannah Arendt, “Philosophy and Politics,” *Social Research* 57.1 (1990): 81.

this. Hannah Arendt wrote,

If we remain true to his own metaphor of *maieutic* [midwifery], we may say: Socrates wanted to make the city more truthful by delivering each of the citizens of their truths...To Socrates, *maieutic* [midwifery] was a political give and take, fundamentally on a basis of strict equality, the fruits of which could not be measured by the result of arriving at this or that general truth.¹¹

Through his dialectical or *maieutic* process, Socrates sought to help people “give birth” to what they already thought in order to speak more clearly about their experiences. In improving their political opinions in such an intimate way, Arendt proposed that Socrates was attempting to infuse a sense of friendship that was generally missing in the contested, competitive terrain of the Athenian polis, which ultimately became too antagonistic to sustain itself. While friends as individual persons are not equal or the same, through friendship, “we become equal partners in a common world – that they together constitute a community.”¹² Socrates may have hoped these enhanced bonds of community would minimize unnecessary conflicts and help avoid injustices inflicted by the many on the few. Arendt stressed the uniquely political implications of these friendships, and indicated that these bonds that Socrates sought to cultivate would lead to public actions to better support the common good. If people were articulate enough in communicating the truth of how the world opens to them through these friendly connections (their opinions or *doxa*), there could be rule among citizens without leaders. She wrote,

The political element in friendship is that in the truthful dialogue each of the friends can understand the truth inherent in the other’s position...This kind of understanding – seeing the world (as we rather tritely say today) from the other fellow’s point of view – is the political kind of insight *par excellence*...Socrates seems to have

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 83.

believed that the political function of the philosopher was to help establish this kind of common world, built on the understanding of friendship, in which no rules are needed.¹³

Arendt indicated that Socrates was perhaps the first *and* last person to describe the political importance of solitude and private contemplation, where one is in intense dialogue with oneself, as “the necessary condition for the good functioning of the polis,” not just for the select few, but for everyone.¹⁴ What seems private, one-on-one conversation with oneself, or with another, aimed at more clearly seeing the truth of one’s position, therefore has political implications. Of course, we can’t ask Socrates what he “really” meant by his oath to Hera. The word “heresy” – what Mary Daly might be tempted to call “Hera-cy” – originally meant “choice; of a view of life other than the norm.”¹⁵ Arendt’s interpretation of Socrates’ intentions for civic education might itself be considered Hera-cy.¹⁶ In a related vein, feminist scholars propose other Hera-cies, including explorations of how the “private” arts of midwifery, mothering, and nurturing and caring for others, which often take place in private homes, have implications for our participation in public life. Mothering and caregiving today no doubt involve more contested terrain than in Socrates’ day, and there are significant, socially-constructed differences which bear on these experiences based on race, class, cultural and ethnic heritage, and sexual orientation. But in a spirit that might be considered similar to Socrates, these scholars often use feminine speech forms, such as “maternal thinking” to describe relational experiences in which men and women are equally capable of engaging, but which draw on roles and experiences most

¹³ Ibid., 83-84.

¹⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹⁵ Ursule Molinaro, “A Christian Martyr in Reverse,” in *Hypatia’s Daughters*, ed. L. Lopez McAlister. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Arendt’s treatment of the distinctions between the public and private in her book, *The Human Condition*, are well known and widely cited. I reference her 1958/1990 piece, “On Philosophy and Politics,” where she described the *connection* between the aspects of the public and private, particularly through friendship, rather than the distinctions between the two realms.

typically associated with women in most societies. The private life realm, which these writers describe, is based on personal, caring relationships, and they share a concern for friendlier, social relationships in the public life realm suggested by Socrates when they question whether or not the private and the public life realms are really that separate and different from one another.

For example, Sara Ruddick emphasized that the experience of mothering and caring for particular others leads to the principle (but not the absolute rule) of nonviolence in the public life realm.¹⁷ Grace Clement asserts that the ethic of care can interact with and be connected to a concern for justice in the public realm.¹⁸ She notes that the ethic of care in the private life realm presides because our family and friends are particularly vulnerable to our actions and the choices we make; in the public realm, strangers are also vulnerable to our actions, although perhaps not to the same extent that our friends and family are, and we therefore have obligations to them as well. The ethics of care includes focusing on the particularities of a situation while taking into account abstract principles, considering the perspective of the “concrete other” or “concrete collective other,” the idea of “positive rights” of others, such as the right to health care, and a social connection to “those who have justice claims on us.”¹⁹ Nel Noddings describes how our relational self, which involves caring and personal relationships, is first nurtured in private homes; the quality of how well our relational selves are nurtured there impact society.²⁰ She advocates for better social supports to ensure that all children have the benefit of dwelling in adequate housing and caring homes, and proposes that children, well-cared for at home, learn to wander well in the world as adults to create a more just public world.

Nel Noddings considers education “a constellation of encounters,”²¹

¹⁷ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 1989).

¹⁸ Grace Clement, *Care, Autonomy, and Justice: Feminism and the Ethic of Care* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰ Nel Noddings, *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

with particular roles to play in supporting the development of our relational selves. Her work has been used in service-learning and public engaged scholarship to imagine higher education comprised as centers of care where we care for self, others, and our natural environment, and where the educator functions in a nurturing as well as intellectual capacity. Robert Rhoades wrote, "If I am exposed to the inequalities suffered by others, and if I care about others, then I am more likely to engage in political and cultural struggle that leads to social transformation."²² Whether or not it is explicitly described this way, the practice of service-learning and public engaged scholarship are important ways education institutions bridge the gap between the public and private spaces in higher education. There is an affinity with goals of public engaged scholarship and the type of relational ethics the feminist thinkers describe as related to both the private and public life-realms where people interact on a personal level to deepen a sense of connection, which they feel for one another, and act for the public good. Additionally, the kind of democracy Socrates hinted at, where people engage in dialogue together, rather than having each citizen build their own rhetorical muscle to persuade others in large forums, has much in common with the deliberative democracy movement in service-learning and engaged public scholarship.²³ In a deliberative approach, we do not know what truths our students or we ourselves might arrive at through various encounters in community, but it is our responsibility as educators to help us all cultivate our sociological imaginations so that we do not simply reify existing inequalities through community-engaged experiences but interrogate them.²⁴

²² Robert Rhoads, *Community Service and Higher Learning: Explorations of the Caring Self* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 94.

²³ See, for example, Nancy Thomas, "Educating for Deliberative Democracy: The Role of Public Reason and Reasoning," *Journal of College and Character* 9.2 (2007): 1-13.

²⁴ Arendt noted that sympathy and compassion are not enough for political action, and may even negate the ability for political action. All of our relationships we cultivate through these experiences can help develop political judgment, however. Through the academic components of service-learning, educators can help mine the political implications of these friendships that can move us to action, although the forms this action will take are not predetermined. See for example, Hannah Arendt, *Rachel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman* (New York: Harcourt

Disentangling Private and Public in Higher Education

It could be fruitful to explore these connections between maternal thinking and public engaged scholarship further, but there remain fundamentally diverse views about whether or not higher education institutions should integrate the private and public purposes of education at all. The ongoing tension portrayed in Schaub's argument is relevant for the field of service-learning and public engaged scholarship because her perspective is in marked contrast with the basic assumptions of those engaged in the latter. Schaub drew on the work of Leo Strauss to support her understanding of the private purpose of a liberal education, including its emphasis on developing an aristocracy shielded from public life, current events and market forces; listening to conversations among great minds; and "supply[ing] us with experience in things beautiful."²⁵ Rather than retreating from the workings of liberal democracy and the work of the world, public engaged scholarship requires learners to intentionally immerse themselves in action and, increasingly, political action. There are calls for more service-learning work in the political sphere to enable us to exercise our civic muscle through public work,²⁶ and an emphasis on social-justice-based service-learning rather than the "charity" model.²⁷

Public engaged scholarship as a field has often defined its work as a departure from – and even a rejection of – the Socratic-Platonic liberal education that Schaub drew upon. Harkavy and Benson describe service-learning as an attempt to 'de-Platonize' education, and emphasize that the American pragmatic tradition, in particular the work of 20th century pragmatic education reformer John Dewey, is the true origin of this

Press, 1974); Mary Dietz. *Turning Operations: Feminism, Arendt, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁵ Schaub, "Liberal Education," 6.

²⁶ See Harry Boyte, *Civic Agency and the Cult of the Expert* (Columbus, OH: The Kettering Foundation, 2009).

²⁷ See Sam Marullo and Bob Edwards, "From Charity to Justice: The Potential of University-Community Collaboration for Social Change," *American Behavioral Scientist* 43.5 (2000): 895-912.

pedagogy.²⁸ They wrote, “It can be fairly said: In the beginning there was Dewey.”²⁹ The central focus on Dewey and pragmatism continues,³⁰ and it is possible that humanities scholars who wish to make ‘the leap’ to public engaged scholarship may feel they need to discard their discipline’s allegiance to the modern Socratic-Platonic tradition. This may explain why professionals in the humanities continue to be under-represented in service-learning and public engaged scholarship. As George Handley noted, “it has not always been clear that service-learning and the humanities can work together, or even that they have common goals.”³¹ There has been little influence of the humanities on service-learning practice, with Edward Zlotkowski commenting, “Core humanistic disciplines...have contributed relatively little to the [service-learning] movement’s growth and increasing sophistication.”³² There are interpretations of the humanities which promote preparation to live a good life in society, but the basic argument for a private-focused education, proposed by Schaub and others, is rarely addressed directly by those who advocate for a publically engaged approach to education. It may be helpful to understand the origins of these two perspectives, which date back to antiquity and continue to the present day. Of the two perspectives, the more ‘public,’ humanities-based orientation of a liberal arts education evolved first, even though this perspective is

²⁸ Ira Harkavy and Lee Benson, “De-Platonizing and Democratizing Education as the Basis of Service Learning,” in *Academic Service Learning: A Pedagogy of Action and Reflection*, eds. Richard Rhoads and Jeffrey Howard (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰ See Marie Sandy, “Practical Beauty and the Legacy of Pragmatism: Generating Theory for Community-Engaged Scholarship,” *Interchange* 42.3 (2011): 261-285; and Lori Varlotta, “Confronting Consensus: Investigating the Philosophies that Have Informed Service-Learning’s Communities,” *Educational Theory* 47(1997): 453-476.

³¹ George Handley, “The Humanities and Citizenship: A Challenge for Service-Learning,” *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 8.1(2001): 52.

³² Edward Zlotkowski, “Humanistic Learning and Service-Learning at the Liberal Arts College,” in *Developing and Implementing Service-learning Programs, New Directions for Higher Education*, ed. M. Canada and B. Speck. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), 89.

currently “outside of the norm.”³³ The very existence of these two traditions is not widely acknowledged. As Schaub noted, “Since the Enlightenment, the Athenian experience of the opposition between civic education and divine philosophizing has been forgotten.”³⁴

Competing Public and Private Paradigms for Education

To develop this framework, it may be useful to examine more closely the two lineages of the liberal arts traditions described by Kimball as the ‘orators’ and ‘philosophers.’³⁵ Socrates has often been claimed by both the orators and philosophers. However, for our purposes here, the orators include Sophists and Romans who are oriented toward the public good, such as Cicero and Seneca, and the lineage of the philosophers originates from the scientific Presocratics, and includes Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Education in the orators’ tradition emphasizes the cultivation of a community of learners, reflecting on tradition, and preparation for public democratic life, particularly through mastering language and texts, to focus on the ‘conventions’ of human life. In contrast, the tradition of the philosophers emphasizes the private contemplation of ‘eternal’ or ‘primary’ things, unfettered pursuit of truth, and systematic inquiry through the scientific method. The merits of the perspectives of the Sophists and the Socratic-Platonic philosophers were debated publicly and were a part of conversations about education during Greece’s “pedagogical century” from 450 to 350 B.C.³⁶ Both contain positive attributes as well as the possibility for dogmatism.

‘Roving Intellectuals’: The Orators’ Tradition

The public square was the heart of intellectual and public life in ancient Greece, and there were ‘roving intellectuals,’ who for a fee, would ask riddles, and attempt to perplex – and delight – the public with complex types of argument and debate; scholars point to this as the precursor to the Western educational system.³⁷ The ‘Sophists’ or wise men came from this

³³ Molinaro, “A Christian Martyr,” 1.

³⁴ Schaub, “Liberal Education,” 2.

³⁵ Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁷ See John Dillon and Tania Gergel, *The Greek Sophists* (London and New York:

same tradition with the advent of democracy in 508 B.C., where they functioned as professional teachers to help people become effective participants in public life. A common theme considered by the Sophists was the tension between nature and the human realm, often referred to as “convention.”³⁸ While nature is ‘primary,’ the Sophists argued that the human realm is essential for the preservation of civilization, and therefore the actions of and among human beings should receive most of our attention. Most Sophists emphasized the question of how to live a good life individually and collectively, which they considered to be interconnected, and these innate capacities could be cultivated through the arts of deliberation and persuasion. They believed human individual and collective life can always be other than it is because humans have free will, and therefore the Sophists questioned all sorts of human conventions.

The ideal of beauty was intrinsically linked with public life in the Homeric tradition of the Sophists or orators, and therefore this education tradition emphasized poetry, the visual arts, music, ethics, as well as languages. In keeping with its perspective on the communal nature of knowledge and the purpose of learning as the cultivation of the human being, the orators’ tradition focused on the communication of knowledge through learning communities, and prepared students and scholars to act by cultivating good character and skills for participating in democratic forums. For example, Cicero in *De Oratore* wrote, “Thus I think that no one ought to be numbered among the orators who is not polished in all those arts that are proper for a free citizen.”³⁹ In practice, unfortunately, the orators’ tradition in education sometimes involved a rigid fixation on the past, an anti-intellectual stance toward new knowledge, while character and civic education often came to be associated with texts, not living people.

Penguin Books, 2003); and Geoffrey S. Kirk and John E. Raven, *The Presocratics* (Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge at the University Press, 1969).

³⁸ See Dillon and Gergel, *The Greek Sophists*, and George Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³⁹ Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 12.

Divine Philosophizing: The Philosophers' Tradition

The Presocratic philosophers represent another intellectual tradition in ancient Greece and Italy, which was concerned with the 'primary' natural world and "the coherence of things as a whole."⁴⁰ Topics of study for the Presocratics included mathematics, physics and other specialized sciences such as geography and medicine, and they were known for their secret or private learning societies.⁴¹ The impulse for the Presocratic tradition, and later on, the philosophers' tradition, starts with the observation that thinking requires a withdrawal from the world.⁴² Those most intensely devoted to thinking withdraw from human affairs in order to contemplate the eternal, inspired by a sense of wonder. Arendt wrote that the truths here are "much more adequately expressed in a glance, a sound, a gesture, than in speech,"⁴³ and described the space to which they withdraw as the 'contemplative' realm. This is the beginning of the idea of thinking – and knowledge – for its own sake. While the contemplative realm of the philosophers' tradition does not 'do' anything, it is important because its questioning impulse is what keeps the human world turning. Without these questions, the world as we know it would cease to exist. This idea is related to Schaub's notion that a sheltered education of the few indirectly supports a liberal democracy of the many.

Kimball emphasized that Socrates, like the Presocratics before him, advocated for the pursuit of timeless truth untouched by human affairs, and proposed that this removal from public life later became the hallmark for Platonic philosophy and the philosophers' paradigm of education. Plato and Socrates were both concerned with some of the themes taken up by the Sophists, such as how to live a good life or how to design a good society, but Plato, in particular, often proposed more private, less democratic solutions led by expert knowers with divine or specialized knowledge.

The philosophers' paradigm significantly influenced the development

⁴⁰ Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratics*, xi.

⁴¹ Constantine Vamvacas, *The Founders of Western Thought: The Presocratics* (New York: Springer, 2009). Trans. Richard Crist.

⁴² Hannah Arendt, *Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1971).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 31.

of the modern Western university system during the Age of Enlightenment.⁴⁴ It demanded autonomy from church and state to secure freedom for academics to pursue the truth of eternal or unchanging things (e.g. objects of scientific knowledge), knowledge for its own sake, value-neutrality, and radical doubt or skepticism. The post-Enlightenment university integrated teaching and research, created an environment for academics to pursue self-directed research, and included a practical orientation that privileged the natural sciences and often implied control over nature. Unfortunately, the ideals of this system also served to further seal the doors of the ivory tower, as research agendas were not directly connected with the needs or interests of society, but were most shaped by the desires – and dominant paradigms – of academics. Because they were considered to be value-neutral, Gregory Jay charges that Enlightenment ideals “in practice have often masked oppressive inequalities of power and recognition based on factors such as race, class, gender, rationality and sexuality.”⁴⁵

Reconfigured Arts and Sciences during the European Enlightenment Lead to a New Public-Oriented Philosophers’ Paradigm in the United States

In contrast to the earlier periods, the ‘humanities’ disciplines originally associated with the orators’ tradition – including literature, languages, the arts, history, rhetoric, music, ethics, and what we refer to as the academic *discipline* of philosophy – were conjoined with the sciences under the new university model in the West so that the competing perspectives of the orators and philosophers paradigms were—and still are—largely forgotten. To justify their existence during a time, in which they enjoyed less prestige, these disciplines, as well as the new social sciences, had begun to describe their work in terms of the methods of the natural sciences (e.g.

⁴⁴For what follows, see Richard Proctor, *Value-free Science? Purity and Power in Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁴⁵Gregory Jay, “Service Learning, Multiculturalism and the Pedagogies of Difference,” *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 8.2(2008): 255-281, at 256.

Schleiermacher and Dilthey). They developed more specialized functions for their work in line with the ideal of thinking directed towards the pursuit of pure knowledge.⁴⁶ All of higher education, including the humanities, served more private rather than public purposes in this Enlightenment version of the philosophers' paradigm.

Even though the humanities disciplines were changing at this time, many, however, still regarded them as the most prestigious of all academic specializations,⁴⁷ and these disciplines formed the early foundation of higher education in the United States, with the earliest 'American' higher education institutions providing training in Greek, Latin and the classics.⁴⁸ After the American Revolution, however, higher education in the United States became closely aligned with the modern scientific model of the German university to "promote useful knowledge."⁴⁹ In contrast to the European universities, which provided access only to the elites, however, American higher education institutions began to include a populist orientation fairly early in their history, due in part to the need for an educated populace for a democratic, self-governing state.⁵⁰

The American populist orientation developed greater theoretical support through the development of American pragmatism. John Dewey took on the mantle of pragmatism for education reform, and coupled pragmatism's emphasis on science and the scientific method with his interpretation of democracy where individual fulfillment could only be achieved in collective life, and his conviction that all citizens needed to be educated to participate in our democracy.⁵¹ In this way, the conventional public purposes of education, such as citizenship education and preparation

⁴⁶ Proctor, *Value-free Science?*, 17ff, 75ff.

⁴⁷ Because of their geographic connection to the ancient Western civilization and its subsequent linking of higher learning with the medieval Christian church, the orators' tradition is currently strongest in the Latin countries and in religious higher education institutions, according to Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*.

⁴⁸ Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

⁴⁹ Kimball, "Orators and Philosophers," 136.

⁵⁰ See Sandy, "Practical Beauty,"

⁵¹ Richard Bernstein, "Pragmatism, Pluralism and the Healing of Wounds," in *Pragmatism: A Reader*, ed. L. Menand (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

for democracy that had long ago been connected to the orators' paradigm associated with the humanities, were now aligned with the practical, scientific goals of the philosophers' paradigm. This development brought into existence a new *public*, pragmatic philosophers' paradigm in the United States.

The practical, scientific-minded American universities influenced by Dewey began to be associated with greater public access and direct concern with the public good. One consequence of this was that institutions emphasizing the *private* philosophers' paradigm, including those focusing on the classics and other disciplines associated with the humanities were considered less democratic. Benjamin Fine, a farmer and a scholar, described this ideological battle:

They [institutions promoting the classics] argue for an education divorced from the practical aspects of making a living...Opposed to these aristocratic concepts are leaders of the "democratic" philosophy, men and women who believe in expanding the curriculum to include courses that deal with contemporary problems, that relate to student problems in his own community, that remove the aura of mystery and remoteness from the college program. These educators hold that a college education should provide direction for...working in a democracy.⁵²

At the turn of the 20th century, it was even implied that the traditional classics were a part of the legacy of "do-nothing traditions," a view espoused by prominent intellectuals such as Albion Small.⁵³ The longer tradition of the engaged, public-orientation of the humanities, as practiced in the orators' tradition, was overlooked. Today, the connections between public engagement, citizenship and science in higher education continue through the promotion of the public version of the scientific philosopher's paradigm in service-learning and public engaged scholarship. One

⁵² Benjamin Fine, *Democratic Education* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 3.

⁵³ Giles, "Understanding an Emerging Field," 12: 97.

consequence of this is that most of the innovations in the field are in the sciences and social sciences, rather than the humanities. While the service-learning and community engagement field decries the private orientation of the post-Enlightenment philosophers' paradigm begun in Europe, they may not have considered that they may be promoting a more public version of that same structure.

While the orators' paradigm is not well known, glimpses of the orators' rhetoric remain. Reminiscent of the traditional values of the orators, the mission statements of many liberal arts colleges stress civic learning and character development and are "remarkably resonant with the aims of service-learning," according to Zlotkowski,⁵⁴ even though the faculty members in these disciplines tend not to pick up this resonance. Sometimes 'private-oriented' humanities scholars defend this position on grounds related to the Enlightenment ideal of education as the unfettered pursuit of research and knowledge. They may reject the goals of citizenship and real-world application within a liberal education, not only because the pre-Enlightenment tradition of the orators, which integrated democratic citizenship preparation with the humanities, is largely forgotten, but because the American Pragmatic ideal of liberal education connects issues related to democracy and practical work with the 'hard' and 'practical' sciences and not the humanities.

Toward a Humanities-based Approach to Public Engaged Scholarship

One way to support faculty, working in these disciplines, who might be interested in pursuing service-learning and engaged, public scholarship is to go deeper within the orators' tradition to find ways to mine creative, authentic humanities-based approaches to engagement. Several scholars offer perspectives conducive to this approach. Edward Said proposed humanistic and cultural work that engages *directly* with the concerns of everyday life rather than cloistering the humanities in elite enclaves.⁵⁵ He

⁵⁴ Zlotkowski, "Humanistic Learning," 93.

⁵⁵ Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," in *The Politics of Interpretation*, ed. W. Mitchell. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983); and Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*

criticized the non-involvement of the humanities, whose “doctrine of non-interference”⁵⁶ leads to conservative ends, and he provided an inclusive perspective on possibilities of the humanities that are “democratic, open to all classes and backgrounds, and as a process of unending disclosure, discovery, self-criticism, and liberation.”⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Martha Nussbaum links the goal of preparation for citizenship with the humanities in a way that embraces a broader populist educational mission.⁵⁸ She advocates for the kind of humanities education based on both the oratorical tradition of Roman Seneca and the spirit of philosophical inquiry based on Socrates to support the liberal education values of knowing how to question the decisions of oneself and others, empathy, the ideals of world citizen and stewardship for the good of society, and the value of the arts in learning.

We can clearly hear the orators’ tradition in the new humanism education movement,⁵⁹ which describes the symbiotic relationship between individual autonomy and collective humanity, and emphasizes that this connection must be explicitly nurtured over time through engaging and reflecting with others. The philosophical foundations of this approach includes the orators’ or “cultural-classic” tradition with the contemplative aspects of the scientific philosophers’ tradition,⁶⁰ along with the need to work for social change to transform existing political and social inequalities. It could prove to be a good theoretical foundation for humanities scholars who wish practice to engaged, public scholarship. I also propose considering some humanistic concepts, particularly those proposed by philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, which may connect the public and private realms in public engaged work in the humanities. Just as the experience of

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁵⁶ Said, “Opponents, Audiences,” 8.

⁵⁷ Said, “Humanism,” 22.

⁵⁸ Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁵⁹ Wiel Veuglers, ed., *Education and Humanism: Linking Autonomy and Humanity* (Rotterdam, The Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2011).

⁶⁰ Nimrod Aloni, *Enhancing Humanity: The Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Education* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

participation in teaching, learning, and research is essential to our understanding of service-learning and public engaged scholarship, *direct, embodied participation* is the essential component linking all of these concepts.

Participation in Beauty

Hans-George Gadamer maintains that beauty “finds its concrete form in participation (methexis),”⁶¹ and that beauty exists not only in the arts, but in our everyday life.⁶² The beauty of service-learning, and the scholarship of engagement, is that it can enable its learners and practitioners to “stand in a different relation to the world” through their participation in it.⁶³ The orators’ tradition emphasizes the public purposes of beauty, in particular. As Handley noted, there is a need to participate in work to support the arts in the lived spaces in our communities as partners for social change in service-learning.⁶⁴ This can enable us to cultivate empathy, and it can also further the goals of social justice. We sometimes hear alternative arguments from those who claim that ‘beauty’ is at cross purposes with concerns for the public good because it “distracts us from suffering.”⁶⁵ Rather than considering beauty a diversion or simply window-dressing, however, Elaine Scarry has argued that the call of beauty “intensifies the pressure we feel to repair existing injuries”⁶⁶ and encourages us to work toward ethical equality and social justice. We are responsible to that which we find beautiful, what Scarry referred to as “the compact, or contract,”⁶⁷ and she described the etymological connection between ‘fairness’ in beautiful things and ‘fairness’ in matters of justice. She wrote, “[T]hat beautiful things give rise...to fairness not just in the sense of loveliness of aspect but in the sense of a

⁶¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed., trans. Sheed and Ward, Ltd. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1960/1975), 481.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 112.

⁶⁴ Handley, “The Humanities”, 52.

⁶⁵ Scarry, “On Beauty,” 58.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 90.

symmetry of everyone's relations to one another."⁶⁸ Because beauty is available to us through our senses in ways that abstract social relations are not, experience with beautiful things can help us recognize the beauty of equal social relations when they come into being.

Critically, the beauty of the arts accompany and serve as models for social justice work, and social movement scholars are beginning to tap into these connections. Some social movements might cease to exist altogether if they did not integrate art into their social change work.⁶⁹ The Occupy Wall Street movement is a recent example of how the arts were intertwined with a social change movement, which generated local and "virtual" art events, such as posters and other visual media such as video documentaries, puppet shows, poetry readings, performance-art happenings and dramatic "spectacles" or short plays.⁷⁰

Participation in Friendship and Scholarship

The orators' tradition emphasizes participation in a community of scholars, which in service-learning and public engaged scholarship, could extend nicely to include community partners as a part of learning communities. Early academic career or first-year service-learning experiences for humanities students could enhance the retention rate of students in these disciplines, while enabling them to enter in conversation with others who could shape their practice as arts and humanities practitioners.

Participation requires engaging with others from the perspective that we have something to learn, and that we may be wrong. Gianni Vattimo wrote that there is a meaningful relationship between Gadamer's ideal of participation and democracy, stating it "most faithfully reflects the pluralism of modern society that is best expressed, in the political realm, through

⁶⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Shepard, *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

⁷⁰ Richard Kim, "The Audacity of Occupy Wall Street," *The Nation*, November 15, 2011, 15-21.

democracy.”⁷¹ By thoughtfully engaging with others about their perspectives, we can begin to cultivate bonds of friendship. In terms of working to end social inequalities, Gadamer wrote that in the interests of “service to what is considered valid,” one can help solve a problem of another only if they are a friend, and willing to “think with” another rather than “do something for” that person.⁷² Friendships involve caring for the other and remaining open to the truth of our friends’ experiences. Understanding the role of participation for the humanities and social sciences is critical to community-based research endeavors. Gadamer described the “necessity of seeking an epistemological self-understanding which is not based on the credence of the natural sciences,” for these disciplines, because they are based on our participation in, rather than our objective distance from, the traditions in which they find themselves.⁷³ In an interview, Gadamer said,

[T]he ideal of objective knowledge which dominates our concepts of knowledge, science and truth, needs to be supplemented with the ideal of sharing in something, of participating in something...this possible participation is the true criterion for the wealth or the poverty of what we produce in our humanities and social sciences.⁷⁴

Each understanding based on our participation is brought forth in a new voice, and the role of the humanities and social sciences is to articulate those experiences.

Participation to Cultivate Practical Wisdom

Gadamer advocated for the kind of character-forming education that occurs outside or alongside the classroom and within the lived patterns of

⁷¹ Gianni Vattimo, “Hermeneutics and Democracy.” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 23 no. 4(1997): 1-7, at 1.

⁷² Gadamer, “*Truth and Method*,” 278.

⁷³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Sciences,” *Research in Phenomenology* 9(1979): 74-86, at 74.

⁷⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary*, trans. Richard Palmer (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2001).

social life to gain experience in the “habit” of thinking and acting well, or ‘practical wisdom.’ He understood that we develop practical wisdom through experiential learning in multiple situations throughout our lifetimes, and recommended that it is best to cultivate this habit early, offering theoretical support for including direct service-learning and engaged public scholarship experiences early on in the educational careers of students and faculty for character development and citizenship preparation. Gadamer warned that detached, theoretical learning about social issues could desensitize us to the challenges of acting in particular situations when we are in them, and increase the likelihood that we will become arrogant. Practical wisdom, what the Greeks called *phronesis*,⁷⁵ cannot be ‘taught’ in the same way that the skills of the scientific method can, but must be practiced by each individual with regard to her current situation, and therefore always requires a concrete situation in which to practice. At the *individual* level, practical wisdom serves as a guide to assist an individual in making informed or good choices in one’s life, through ‘inner conversations’ with oneself and conversations with those we respect; the *collective* or political form takes place when citizens work to make choices for society as a whole, which often involves reaching conclusions jointly by participating in conversations, and coming to a greater understanding of the solidarities that connect us, despite disagreements or differences. There are no practical wisdom experts, according to Gadamer, as each one of us is responsible for cultivating this capacity, but we can learn from others who have nurtured this capacity in their own lives. In the context of public engaged scholarship, we would be encouraged to learn from many people who have cultivated practical wisdom, including our co-educator

⁷⁵ Jana Noel pointed out how different English translations of the word *phronesis* have led to different educational practices in “On the varieties of *phronesis*,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 31: 273-289. In her 2010 publication, Nel Noddings translated Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* as character, and indicated that it was inadequate to capture the relational dynamics of her concept of the relational self. Other interpreters, including Gadamer, describe the relational, reflective give and take of the development of both the individual and collective forms of *phronesis* in more detail.

community partners.⁷⁶ We can – and should – learn to reflect on our experiences so that we might become more open to future experiences and guide future actions.

Concluding Sentiments

What appears private can be public, as we learned from feminist organizers working for social change, and what is public, in the orators' education tradition, can feel personal, as it emphasizes 'private life realm' values of friendship and understanding the lifeworlds of particular others. One of the compelling aspects of service-learning and public engaged scholarship is that it can provide an important bridge between the Western traditions of both the private and public life realms, by seeking to deepen friendship and understanding by nurturing cultures of care among those with diverse life experiences, and embracing civic or public education and action designed to serve the public good. More work is needed to consider ways the relational ethics of care can deepen public engaged scholarship, particularly as the field moves toward greater political action and calls for social justice work. Feminist thinkers identify ways in which 'marginal' values, commonly associated with the private life realm of maternal care, are relevant to the public life realm. In a similar way, I suggest that the forgotten values and concepts associated with the orators' educational paradigm can be relevant to our public engaged scholarship and service-learning based practices, which are based on a pragmatic version of the philosophers paradigm.

At present, liberal education can – and often does – fulfill both civic, public purposes as well as private purposes, but the proponents of each often co-exist in silos of practice that rarely cross ideological divides. In a twist of history, humanities scholars are more likely to emphasize the post-Enlightenment private tradition of education and are therefore less likely to be involved with service-learning and public engaged scholarship, which includes an explicit civic or public focus commonly associated with the

⁷⁶ Marie Sandy and Barbara Holland "Different worlds and common ground: Community Partner Perspectives in Campus-Community Partnerships," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 13 :1 (2006):30-43.

sciences and American pragmatism. However, we should consider that the root tradition of the humanities—the orators’ educational paradigm—emphasizes the public purposes of education, values developing communities of learners and communicating knowledge, and could embrace the cause of public engaged scholarship in a nuanced way. I sense that the new humanism movement could provide a base for the humanities disciplines to participate in public engaged scholarship and social justice work because it includes values from both the orators’ and philosophers’ paradigms; it could provide a theoretical home to these scholars. Specific concepts associated with the orators can also help create a humanities-based approach to service-learning and public engaged scholarship and enliven this area of scholarship overall, and I have touched upon a couple of those here, including participating in beauty, friendship, and the cultivation of practical wisdom.

There are benefits for including experiences in higher education where the distinct values of the philosophers and orators can be realized. As Schaub and others note, for example, the classics, as presented by the private-oriented post-Enlightenment humanities, do have important lessons to convey about how to live in the present and to “contribute to our understanding of the human condition as a whole.”⁷⁷ I suggest that identifying new ways to blend the public and private goals of liberal education could advance positive alternatives to our current practice.

⁷⁷Rossen Roussev, “Philosophy and the Transition from Theory to Practice,” *Telos* 148 (2009): 86-110.