

MARTHA NUSSBAUM

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP IN AN ERA OF GLOBAL  
CONNECTION

**ABSTRACT.** Higher education makes an important contribution to citizenship. In the United States, the required portion of the “liberal arts education” in colleges and universities can be reformed so as to equip students for the challenges of global citizenship. The paper advocates focusing on three abilities: the Socratic ability to criticize one’s own traditions and to carry on an argument on terms of mutual respect for reason; (2) the ability to think as a citizen of the whole world, not just some local region or group; and (3) the “narrative imagination,” the ability to imagine what it would be like to be in the position of someone very different from oneself. The paper discusses the role of the “liberal arts” curriculum in U. S. education and asks how European universities, with their different structure, might promote these three abilities.

**KEY WORDS:** citizenship, global citizenship, imagination, liberal education, Socrates, university

In 424 B. C., the great ancient Greek comic playwright Aristophanes produced his comedy *Clouds*, about the dangers of Socrates and the “new education.” A young man, eager for the new learning, goes to a “Think-Academy” near his home, run by that strange notorious figure Socrates. A debate is staged for him, contrasting the merits of traditional education with those of the new discipline of Socratic argument. The spokesman for the old education is a tough old soldier. He favors a highly disciplined patriotic regimen, with lots of memorization and not much room for questioning. He loves to recall a time that may never have existed – a time when young people obeyed their parents and wanted nothing more than to die for their country, a time when teachers would teach that grand old song, “Athena, glorious sacker of cities” – not the strange new songs of the present day. Study with me, he booms, and you will look like a real man – broad chest, small tongue, firm buttocks, small genitals (a plus in those days, symbolic of manly self-control).

His opponent is an arguer, a seductive man of words – Socrates seen through the distorting lens of Aristophanic conservatism. He promises the youth that he will learn to think critically about the social origins of apparently timeless moral norms, the distinction between convention and nature. He will learn to construct arguments on his own, heedless of authority. He won’t do much marching. Study with me, he concludes, and you will look



like an intellectual: you will have a big tongue, a sunken narrow chest, soft buttocks, and big genitals (a minus in those days, symbolic of lack of self-restraint). Socrates' self-advertisement, of course, is being slyly scripted by the conservative opposition. The message? The new education will subvert manly self-control, turn young people into sex-obsessed rebels, and destroy the city. The son soon goes home and produces a relativist argument for the conclusion that he should beat his father. The same angry father then takes a torch and burns down the Think-Academy. (It is not made clear whether the son is still inside.) Twenty-five years later, Socrates, on trial for corrupting the young, cites Aristophanes' play as a major source of prejudice against him.

Should a liberal education be an acculturation into the time-honored values of one's own culture? Or should it follow Socrates, arguing that "the examined life" is the best preparation for citizenship? Almost five hundred years later, in the very different culture of the Roman Empire of the first century A. D., the Stoic philosopher Seneca reflected on this same contrast, creating, in the process, our modern concept of liberal education.

Seneca begins his letter by describing the traditional style of education, noting that it is called "liberal" (*liberalis*, "connected to freedom"), because it is understood to be an education for well-brought-up young gentlemen, who were called the *liberales*, the "free-born." He himself, he now announces, would use the term "liberal" in a very different way. In his view, an education is truly "liberal" only if it is one that "liberates" the student's mind, encouraging him or her to take charge of his or her own thinking, leading the Socratic examined life and becoming a reflective critic of traditional practices. (I say "him or her" not just out of contemporary political correctness: Stoic philosophers of the first century AD wrote at length about the equal education of women, and defended the view that women as much as men should lead the examined life.) Seneca goes on to argue that only this sort of education will develop each person's capacity to be fully human, by which he means self-aware, self-governing, and capable of recognizing and respecting the humanity of all our fellow human beings, no matter where they are born, no matter what social class they inhabit, no matter what their gender or ethnic origin. "Soon we shall breathe our last," he concludes in his related treatise *On Anger*. "Meanwhile, while we live, while we are among human beings, let us cultivate our humanity."

In the contemporary United States and Europe, as in ancient Athens and Rome, higher education is changing. New topics have entered the curricula of colleges and universities: the history and culture of non-Western peoples

and of ethnic and racial minorities within the US, the experiences and achievements of women, the history and concerns of lesbians and gay men. These changes have frequently been presented in popular journalism as highly threatening, both to traditional standards of academic excellence and to traditional norms of citizenship. Readers are given the picture of a monolithic highly politicized elite who are attempting to enforce a “politically correct” view of human life, subverting traditional values and teaching students, in effect, to argue in favor of father-beating. Socratic questioning is still on trial. Our debates over the curriculum reveal the same nostalgia for a more obedient, more regimented time, the same suspiciousness of new and independent thinking, that finds expression in Aristophanes’ brilliant portrait of the old education and in the defense by Seneca’s contemporaries of the old-style liberal education in a time of rapid social change.

But we can defend many of the changes in traditional models of liberal education as a response to the challenge of Socrates and Seneca, and I shall argue that it is this paradigm we should consider, as we think about what is well done and not well done in contemporary reforms of liberal education. In fact, by and large, the changes that we witness are attempts to follow Seneca’s advice to cultivate our humanity. Seneca’s ideas of cultivated humanity and world citizenship have had a large influence on modern democratic thought, through Thomas Paine and other writers who were steeped in Stoic ideas. And these ideas have long been at the root of our aspirations, as we construct a higher education that is not simply pre-professional, but a general enrichment of and a cultivation of reasonable, deliberative democratic citizenship.

Today’s universities are shaping future citizens in an age of cultural diversity and increasing internationalization. All modern democracies are inescapably plural. As citizens within each nation we are frequently called upon to make decisions that require some understanding of racial and ethnic and religious groups in that nation, and of the situation of its women and its sexual minorities. As citizens we are also increasingly called upon to understand how issues such as agriculture, human rights, ecology, even business and industry, are generating discussions that bring people together from many different nations. This must happen more and more, if effective solutions to pressing human problems are to be found. But these connections often take, today, a very thin form: the global market, that sees human lives as instruments for gain. If our institutions of higher education do not build a richer network of human connections it is likely that our dealings with one another will be mediated by the defective norms of market exchange. A rich network of human connections, however, will not arise

magically out of our good intentions: we need to think about how our educational institutions contribute to that goal.

The new emphasis on “diversity” in college and university curricula is above all, I would argue, a way of grappling with the altered requirements of citizenship in an era of global connection, an attempt to produce adults who can function as citizens not just of some local region or group but also, and more importantly, as citizens of a complex interlocking world – and function with a richness of human understanding and aspiration that cannot be supplied by economic connections alone. In this attempt, the humanities – often viewed as useless and equally often viewed with suspicion, as scenes of subversion – play a central role.

The systems of university education in Europe have a disadvantage from the point of view of implementing my proposals. All colleges and universities in the United States offer approximately two years of “liberal education” (sometimes also called “general education”) in many subjects before asking students to focus primarily on a major subject for another two years.<sup>1</sup> They do this out of the conviction that higher education is not simply preparation for a career, but a general enrichment of citizenship and life. Thus every undergraduate, whether focused on business or mathematics or art history, will take whatever basic required courses the university sees fit to require. This of course is not the situation in Europe, where for the most part (Scotland being a partial exception) students simply study one or perhaps two subjects, and are admitted to the university in order to pursue that subject. Moreover, professional courses such as law and medicine in the United States are offered only as second degrees, after the candidate has already received a bachelor’s degree in some other subject, whether history or philosophy; in Europe students enter such courses directly. So here is another source of humanistic richness in the professional education of U.S. students that is absent from most European universities.

It is particularly difficult for a system structured in the European way to integrate new forms of study, such as women’s studies and the study of race.<sup>2</sup> Most students do not want these to be their major subject, because they do not lead to many job opportunities. Most often, they are sought out,

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<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, the course of study is rarely linear in this way. Usually students begin study of the major subject early, in the first or certainly the second year; and in the third and fourth years they do not study only one thing, but continue to take some basic required courses and other “elective” (optional) courses outside their major.

<sup>2</sup> For helpful discussion of this issue I am very grateful to the University for Humanist Studies in Utrecht, The Netherlands, which sponsored a conference on these ideas in 1999. This University is the closest thing, in Europe, to an American liberal arts college, with a five-year humanistic curriculum integrating many different subjects.

in the U.S., as either basic required courses or so-called “elective courses”, that is, courses where the student has some latitude to roam outside the major subject. In Europe it has been exceedingly difficult for programs in these areas to get established. In both England and The Netherlands, I know that people in women’s studies feel extremely marginal at most major universities, because the structure of degree programs does not include them, or, if it does, few students want to make the major commitment of doing an entire degree in that area. But short of that, students have little access to those subjects, and the programs are typically more helpful to faculty doing interdisciplinary research than to students.

Ultimately, I believe, the universities of Europe will need to think about adding a segment of general “education for citizenship” to the curriculum, in order to realize the goals that I shall outline here. I shall return to that theme in my conclusion. But now let me proceed with the ideas themselves.

In *Cultivating Humanity*, I have argued that three capacities, above all, are essential to the cultivation of humanity in today’s interlocking world. First is the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions – for living what, following Socrates, we may call “the examined life.” This means a life that accepts no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit, a life that questions all beliefs and accepts only those that survive reason’s demand for consistency and for justification. Training this capacity requires developing the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment.

Testing of this sort frequently produces challenges to tradition, as Socrates knew well when he defended himself against the charge of “corrupting the young.” But he defended his activity on the grounds that democracy needs citizens who can think for themselves rather than simply deferring to authority, who can reason together about their choices rather than just trading claims and counter-claims. Like a gadfly on the back of a noble but sluggish horse, he said, he was waking democracy up so that it could conduct its business in a more reflective and reasonable way.

This norm of deliberative democracy has not been fully realized in our modern democracies, any more than it was in ancient Athens. As I write this, the American controversy about the election continues, and one may observe the extent to which mere rhetoric and the attempt to sway public opinion dominates over all attempts to reason clearly and well. Good reasoning can be found on both sides, and at many levels. But so often the dominant concern of both journalists and politicians is for how

things “play”, for “spin”, rather than for the quality of ideas and arguments. There are some philosophers, notably Alasdair MacIntyre, who see in our situation a defect of modernity itself, and who hold that things were much better in ancient Greece, when we had a secure grasp of an end for human beings imposed by authority on all citizens. I think that MacIntyre is quite wrong here, both about the Greeks and about us. The Greek democracy had just the same problems that we have: that is why Socrates’ mission was necessary. Nor does the solution to those problems require abandoning the Enlightenment’s commitment to self-critical reason, or the commitment to pluralism and toleration that is at the heart of our modern ways of life. Political deliberation can proceed well in a pluralistic society – if citizens have sufficient respect for their own reasoning and really care about the substance of ideas and the structure of arguments. The responsibility for instilling these values lies with our institutions of higher education.

I believe that for this reason instruction in philosophy is an indispensable part of higher education. Of course it can’t be just any type of philosophy course. Large lecture classes are not very much use, because the main purpose is to give students practice in analyzing and constructing arguments in a Socratic fashion. What is crucial is plenty of opportunity for interchange between faculty and students, and many writing assignments, carefully evaluated with ample comments. More or less useless, in my view, are required courses where lectures are given to a huge number of students, who have no opportunity to discuss or to write papers and evaluation is based on a multiple choice examination. This is not Socratic philosophizing, this is unhelpful regurgitation.

Many American universities and colleges, however, have been able to construct curricula that require all students to take one or two courses in philosophy. (Often this is an excellent source of employment for talented Ph.D. students, who are either teaching assistants in such courses or in some cases teach sections of the courses on their own.) Let me mention just one example of the effects of such required courses, a student named Billy Tucker at a business college named Bentley College in Waltham Massachusetts. Tucker went to Bentley because he planned to focus on marketing and did not want a more general academic education. On the other hand, the college wisely requires two semesters of philosophy from all students, and hires enough faculty to keep class size around twenty-five students per faculty member. Tucker encountered a very gifted teacher, originally from India, named Krishna Mallick. Mallick began with the trial and death of Socrates. (I met Tucker at my fitness center, where he was working behind the desk, reading Plato’s *Apology* and *Crito*.) She also showed a film about Socrates, and the combination really grabbed the

imagination of this young man, intelligent but lacking in confidence about his own intellect. He thought it was so odd that Socrates did not escape from prison when he had the chance, but died for the activity of arguing. This example stung his imagination, and he got more and more interested in the course, which continued by presenting the basics of formal logic, so that students could then discover examples of valid and invalid reasoning in newspaper editorials and political speeches. Tucker did really well on this, and was amazed to discover that he actually had a good mind – he had thought he was not that kind of person. Finally, the course assigned students roles in debates about issues of the day that were to be staged before the class. Tucker was puzzled to discover that he was assigned to argue against the death penalty, although he actually supports it.

Tucker told me that this experience gave him an entirely new attitude to political debate: he had never understood that you can argue on behalf of a position that you do not hold yourself. Now he is more likely to see political argument as a process of searching for good answers, rather than just a way of making boasts and establishing your status. Now he knows how to ask what assumptions both sides share, where their differences really lie, and what the structure of each argument is. As you can guess, I think that this result is exactly what Socrates was after, and an exceedingly important result, in a democracy where most people learn their norms of political rhetoric from the rhetoric of talk radio. I believe that such abilities can be cultivated in many different types of classes, but that philosophy does the best job of educating the mind in this way – if taught with sufficient attention to the student's starting point, and with sufficient imagination and creativity. The important thing is that students need to be made active, and I must emphasize that the proposals I am making are no good at all in the absence of resourceful creative teaching that really respects the mind of the pupil.

But now to the second part of my proposal. Citizens who cultivate their humanity need, further, an ability to see themselves as not simply citizens of some local region or group but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern. As I have already said, the world around us is inescapably international. Issues from business to agriculture, from human rights to the relief of famine, call our imaginations to venture beyond narrow group loyalties and to consider the reality of distant lives. As Seneca and the ancient Stoics knew, we very easily think of ourselves in group terms – as Americans first and foremost, as human beings second – or, even more narrowly, as Italian-Americans, or heterosexuals, or African-Americans first, Americans second, and human beings third if at all. We neglect needs and capacities that link us to fellow

citizens who live at a distance, or who look different from ourselves. This means that we are unaware of many prospects of communication and fellowship with them, and also of responsibilities we may have to them. We also sometimes err by neglect of differences, assuming that lives in distant places must be like ours and lacking curiosity about what they are really like. Cultivating our humanity in a complex interlocking world involves understanding the ways in which common needs and aims are differently realized in different circumstances. This requires a great deal of knowledge that American college and university students rarely got in previous eras, knowledge of non-Western cultures, of minorities within their own, of differences of gender and sexuality.

As I have said, Americans face particular dangers in this area. On the one hand, we have been thinking about internal minority traditions for a long time, and to some extent we have succeeded in understanding our nation as a multicultural society, where the contributions of different groups all make a difference. I shall return to that point later. But on the other hand, Americans, unlike most citizens of Sweden, are tremendously ignorant of the other nations of the world. They have little factual knowledge and little curiosity. Institutions of higher education have a crucial role to play in combatting these cultural vices. So as I describe this part of my proposal, I shall focus on teaching involving non-Western cultures, although I shall later return to the role of learning about internal minorities.

Education for world citizenship has two dimensions: the construction of basic required courses that all students take (part of the “liberal education” or “general education” component of a U.S. university education) and the infusion of world-citizenship perspectives in more advanced courses in the different disciplines. Let me give one example at each level, making my description concrete enough to give you an idea of the actual classroom experience.

At Scripps College, in Pomona California, the balmy climate and the lush campus sometimes make studying difficult. As a visitor from Chicago, I feel like getting outside as quickly as possible. Nonetheless, the freshman class, consisting of 250 women, crowds the lecture hall, with eager energy and expectation. Their freshman core course is about to meet, to discuss feminist criticisms of the international human rights movement as a false Western type of universalism, and responses that other feminists have made to those criticisms, defending the human rights movement against the charge of Westernizing and colonizing. (That’s what I am there to do.) Called “Culture, Values, and Representation,” this course, required of all first-year university students, replaced an earlier required course on

Western civilization course that had gotten tired and diffuse. It studies the central ideas of the European enlightenment – in political thought, history, philosophy, literature, and religion. (The staff is drawn from many different departments; instructors take turns giving lectures, and each leads a section.) The study of the Enlightenment is then followed by critical responses to it: by formerly colonized populations, by non-Western philosophy and religion, by Western postmodernist thought, including feminist thought. The course then turns to responses that can be made to those criticisms.

This course obviously does not provide a systematic investigation of even one non-Western culture, but it sets the stage for inquiry and questioning. Its clear focus, its emphasis on cross-cultural debate and reasoning, rather than simply on a collection of facts, and its introduction of non-Western materials through a structured focus on a single set of issues, all make it a valuable introduction to further questioning on these issues. Above all, the course has merit because it plunges students right into some of the most urgent questions they will need to ask today as world citizens: questions about the universal validity or lack of validity of the language of rights, the appropriate way to respond to the legitimate claims of the oppressed. I like this course so much that I have imitated its structure in a seminar that I will soon be conducting for leaders of business and industry at the Aspen Institute in Colorado.

Pedagogically, this course gives a good model of how to deal with large class size without diluting instructional quality. The lectures themselves, of course, do not involve much faculty-student interaction – although a dramatic and problem-oriented lecturing style can do a lot to involve students and prevent passivity. But there is at least one discussion section every week, led by a faculty member, and the sections have around 15 students. There are also very regular writing assignments. Students thus are rendered active participants in the working out of the ideas of the course, and the open-ended structure of criticism and reply indicates to them that these are ongoing problems in human life that they will have to approach as best they can, rather than closed issues to which some knowing intellectual has found a solution. The spirit of questioning carries over into the informal life of the campus. Because all students take it, discussion of its questions fills the dining halls and residences.

Another important aspect of the course's success that needs comment is its interdisciplinary character. Faculty from many different departments are brought together and given financial support to work on the course during the summer, exchanging ideas and getting one another's disciplinary perspectives. Such financial support for development of new ideas

in a deliberative interdisciplinary framework is crucial to making the course as rich as it is.

Now let me turn to a program that aims to affect more advanced course in each of the disciplines. Again, I begin with a description of what faculty are actually doing.

At St. Lawrence University, a small liberal arts college in upstate New York, the snow is already two feet deep by early January. Cars make almost no sound rolling slowly over the packed white surface. But the campus is well-plowed, even at Christmas. In a brightly lit seminar room a group of young faculty, gathering despite the vacation, talk with excitement about their month-long visit to Kenya to study African village life. Having shared the daily lives of ordinary men and women, having joined in local debates about nutrition, polygamy, AIDS, and much else, they are now incorporating the experience into their teaching – in courses in art history, philosophy, religion, women's studies. Planning eagerly for the following summer's trip to India, they are already meeting each week for an evening seminar on Indian culture and history. Group leaders Grant Cornwell from Philosophy and Eve Stoddard from English talk about how they teach students to think critically about cultural relativism, using careful philosophical questioning in the Socratic tradition to criticize the easy but ultimately (they argue) incoherent idea that toleration requires us not to criticize anyone else's way of life. Their students submit closely reasoned papers analyzing arguments for and against outsiders' taking a stand on the practice of female circumcision in Africa.

Again, notice that the success of this program requires interdisciplinary discussion and financial support. The unique travel component was very important to these faculty, but is probably not absolutely indispensable. What is indispensable is the time to sit together and read and work together, learning how the problems of a region of the world look from historical, economic, religious, and other perspectives. Each faculty member will ultimately go on to incorporate this knowledge into the standard course offerings in his or her field. Thus, Economics now offers a course on "African Economies." Art History offers a course focused on representation of the female body in African art. Philosophy offers a course in cultural relativism and the critique of relativism. Biology offers a course in AIDS and the African experience. These courses enrich standard course offerings in each of the departments.

These same two levels need to be considered when we consider what students should learn about minorities and previously excluded groups in their own nation. Once again, the basic courses that all students take should contain a new emphasis on the diversity of the nation's own population.

Thus in many American universities discussions of U.S. history and constitutional traditions now contain a focus on race, the changing situation of women, and the role of immigration and ethnic politics, that would have been previously unknown. At the same time, courses in each of the disciplines must increasingly incorporate and are incorporating these perspectives. Literature courses increasingly focus on works by women and expressing the experience of excluded racial minorities; economics, art history, biology, religious studies – all these can find ways of confronting students with the reality of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. Even in disciplines as traditional as the Greek and Roman Classics, we now study the lives of women in the ancient world, and the role of slavery in ancient economies, something that both promotes a richer understanding of the past and facilitates good deliberation about modern problems.

As I remarked earlier in countries where university curricula have a firm disciplinary focus it will not be easy to incorporate the “general education” part of my proposal. That may happen over time, but it is possible right now to think of ways in which each of the separate disciplines may prepare students more adequately to see themselves as citizens of a multicultural and diverse society, in a multinational interdependent world.

This brings me, in fact, to the third part of my proposal. Citizens cannot think well on the basis of factual knowledge alone. The third ability of the citizen, closely related to the first two, can be called the narrative imagination. This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. The narrative imagination is not uncritical: for we always bring ourselves and our own judgments to the encounter with another, and when we identify with a character in a novel, or a distant person whose life story we imagine, we inevitably will not merely identify, we will also judge that story in the light of our own goals and aspirations. But the first step of understanding the world from the point of view of the other is essential to any responsible act of judgment, since we do not know what we are judging until we see the meaning of an action as the person intends it, the meaning of a speech as it expresses something of importance in the context of that person’s history and social world. The third ability our students should attain is the ability to decipher such meanings through the use of the imagination.

This ability is cultivated, above all, in courses in literature and the arts. Preparing citizens to understand one another is not the only function of the arts in a college curriculum, of course, but it is one extremely important

function, and there are many ways in which such courses may focus on the requirements of citizenship.

Many courses in literature and the arts cultivate this sort of imagination, and many standard and familiar works thus prepare students to understand the situation of people different from themselves. But there is also reason to focus on the incorporation of works that confront students vividly with the experience of minority groups in their own society and of people in distant nations. The moral imagination can often become lazy, according sympathy to the near and the familiar, but refusing it to people who look different. Enlisting students' sympathy for distant lives is thus a way of training, so to speak, the muscles of the imagination.

This point was vividly put by Ralph Ellison, one of America's great novelists, in his novel *Invisible Man*. In an Introduction to a reissue of the novel in 1981, Ellison explicitly links the novelist's art to the possibility of American democracy. By representing both visibility and its evasions, both equality and its refusal, a novel, he wrote, "could be fashioned as a raft of hope, perception and entertainment that might help keep us afloat as we tried to negotiate the snags and whirlpools that mark our nation's vacillating course toward and away from the democratic idea." This is not, he continues, the only goal for fiction; but it is one proper and urgent goal. For a democracy requires not only institutions and procedures, it also requires a particular quality of vision, in order "to defeat this national tendency to deny the common humanity shared by my character and those who might happen to read of his experience" (xxvi).

Let me show you a bit of how Ellison's novel does this, by commenting on its opening paragraph.

A voice speaks to us, from out of a hole in the ground. We don't know where this hole is – somewhere in New York, it appears. It is a warm hole, and full of light; in fact, there is more light in that hole, we are told, than on top of the Empire State Building, or on Broadway. The voice tells us that he loves light, and he can't find much of it in the outside world. Light confirms his reality. Without light, and that is to say virtually always in the world above, he is invisible, formless, deprived of a sense of his own form and his "vital aliveness."

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids – and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination – indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality.

Ellison's novel concerns a refusal of acknowledgment, a humanity that has been effaced. From its very opening, however, the work itself goes to work undoing that refusal of recognition, alluding as it does so to its own moral capacities. The refusal to see the Invisible Man is portrayed as a moral and social defect, but also, more deeply, as a defect of imagination, of the inner eyes with which we look out, through our physical eyes, on the world. The people around the Invisible Man see only various fantastic projections of their own inner world, and they never come into contact with the human reality of his life. *Invisible Man* explores and savagely excoriates these refusals to see, while at the same time inviting its readers to know and see more than the unseeing characters. "Being invisible and without substance, a disembodied voice, as it were, what else could I do? What else but try to tell you what was really happening when your eyes were looking through?" In this way, it works upon the inner eyes of the very readers whose moral failures it castigates, although it refuses the easy notion that mutual visibility can be achieved in one heartfelt leap of brotherhood.

The novel's mordantly satirical treatment of stereotypes, its fantastic use of image and symbol (in, for example, the bizarre dream-like sequence in the white paint factory), and its poignant moments of disappointed hope, all contribute to Ellison's democratic end, linking the novel's sources of pleasure to its sources of insight.

One could go on much further about this wonderful work. But my point is that we need to educate the eyes of our students, by cultivating their ability to see complex humanity in places where they are most accustomed to deny it. Defeating these refusals of vision requires not only a general literary education, but also one that focuses on groups with which our citizens' eyes have particular difficulty.

Although one may certainly add a literary component to courses in many different disciplines, from law to philosophy, I think that here the "liberal education" part of the U.S. system has a special strength, enabling all students to get a common imaginative awakening through confrontation with carefully chosen literary works. It is very difficult to see how students bound for careers in business and industry, for example, will get such a training from courses in those disciplines alone.

Our campuses educate our citizens. This means learning a lot of facts, and mastering techniques of reasoning. But it means something more. It means learning how to be a human being capable of love and imagination.

We may continue to produce narrow citizens who have difficulty understanding people different from themselves, whose imaginations rarely venture beyond their local setting. It is all too easy for the moral imagination to become narrow in this way. Think of Charles Dickens's image of bad citizenship in his novel *A Christmas Carol*, in his portrait of the Ghost of Jacob Marley, who visits Scrooge to warn him of the dangers of a blunted imagination. Marley's Ghost drags through all eternity a chain made of cash boxes, because in life his imagination never ventured outside the walls of his successful business to imagine the lives of the men and women around him, men and women of different social class and background. Scrooge is astonished at the spectacle of his old friend wearing this immense chain. "I wear the chain I forged in life," he tells Scrooge. "I made it link by link and yard by yard. I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it." Trying to deny what he is hearing, Scrooge, terrified, blurts out, "You were always a good man of business, Jacob." "Business," the Ghost dolefully intones. "Mankind was my business. Charity, mercy, benevolence were all my business." (Here in Dickens's own Christian way he is directly alluding to Seneca's ideas of cultivated humanity, and to related ideas of mercy and benevolence.) Then, turning to Scrooge, the Ghost asks, "Don't you feel the weight of the chain you bear yourself?" "My chains!" Scrooge exclaims. "No no." And then, in a smaller voice, "I am afraid."

Scrooge got another chance to learn what the world around him contained. During that fateful night he got what we might call a belated liberal education, traveling to homes rich and poor, to a lighthouse on the sea, to the poverty of his own clerk's home only a mile or so away in Camden town in North London, but a very long mile indeed, the mile that divides rich from poor. We need to produce citizens who have this education while they are still young, before their imaginations are shackled by the weight of daily duties and self-interested plans. We produce all too many citizens who do drag cash boxes around with them, whose imaginations never step out of the counting house. But we have the opportunity to do better, producing Socratic citizens who are capable of thinking for themselves, arguing with tradition, and understanding with sympathy the conditions of lives different from their own. Now we are beginning to seize that opportunity. That is not "political correctness," that is the cultivation of humanity.

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*University of Chicago Law School*  
*Chicago, IL 60637*  
*USA*



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