Introduction: The Pillars Project

Three Tasks

The philosophical task of this book involves my exploration into courage and hope as the virtues required for a balanced, healthy, and purposeful ordinary life in the twenty-first century. However, courage and hope relate to ordinary life if and only if they are understood as intellectual virtues—neither moral nor theological virtues.[1] Teasing out connections between intellectual virtues and ordinary life leads to my defense and explanation of rational perfectionism—as it relates to the development of courage and hope as intellectual virtues.[2] While reflecting upon how our individual and relational commitments "seem impossibly demanding," philosophy ought to offer a realistic version of rational perfectionism—which involves the continual realization "that it is only by keeping an 'impossible' demand in view that one can strive for one's 'unattained but attainable self'."[3] Although wonderfully significant, ordinary life remains difficult; developing the intellectual virtues of courage and hope, as well as seeking rational perfectionism, do not make the difficulties less

1. The groundbreaking work on intellectual virtues remains Linda Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*. Zagzebski, however, does not seek to shift particular moral virtues to intellectual virtues. She treats courage as both an intellectual and a moral virtue, but she does not treat hope as a virtue in *Virtues of the Mind*.

2. In the final sentence of his book on the nature and purpose of universities, from a decidedly Roman Catholic perspective, Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "we can take *courage* from the thought that, in the life of the mind . . . , there is always more to *hope for* than we can reasonably expect" (*God, Philosophy, Universities*, 180; emphasis added).

3. Putnam, *JPGL*, 59 & 72.

difficult but bring about a sense of balance, healthiness, and purpose to one's ordinary life.[4]

As another task of this book, I offer judgments about Christian institutions of higher education—in the context of twenty-first century U.S.A.—and what these institutions of higher education ought to *promise* to prospective undergraduate students and how these institutions should *perform* while teaching and training undergraduate students.[5] Because the philosophical task of the book concerns making an argument about courage and hope as intellectual virtues, I take the Introduction to evaluate the proposals and visions for Christian institutions of higher education that differ from my own.[6]

4. In his review of Putnam's *JPGL*, Benjamin Balint observes, "the proper subject of philosophy is everyday life." He continues, "Leo Strauss once remarked that Socrates expected the truth to be knowable only to philosophers, whereas the prophet Isaiah dreamt of [a day] 'when the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the earth'. In yoking Jewish thought to his efforts to give philosophy a human face . . . , Hilary Putnam—to his profit, and to ours—has sided with Isaiah" ("Wrestling with an Angel," 52). If I have to choose sides between Isaiah and Socrates on this question, I choose Isaiah.

5. What authorizes a professor of philosophy to make judgments about higher education? I actually feel no authority in the judgments I make about higher education, but I find myself inspired by Stanley Cavell's work—who often turns his philosophical arguments into judgments about higher education, pedagogy, and the professorial task. One source for the idea of this book came from Cavell's wonderfully titled *Themes Out of School*, and for the present book I considered the title *Themes Out of College: Intellectual Virtue, Ordinary Life, Rational Perfectionism*.

6. Before entering into these arguments about the nature and purpose of Christian institutions of higher education, in order to make explicit what an academic model of argumentation looks like, I want to specify that I consider myself a friend of two of my interlocutors—Stanley Hauerwas and Todd Ream—and have deep admiration for the third interlocutor Mark Schwen who I met through an interview process with Valparaiso University. Schwen and I share many scholarly interests, and I believe that his on-the-ground work as Provost at Valparaiso provides an ideal model for the office of Provost in the twenty-first century. By detailing my admiration and friendship, I seek to avoid two fallacies in my engagements with their writings: *ad hominem* and the genetic fallacy. On a more positive note, I also seek to demonstrate how to disagree with those whom you admire and befriend. The fact that I engage with these three authors, and their visions for Christian institutions of higher education, means that I have a great deal of respect for their thinking and writing on the subject matter. As the reader will learn, however, I find that they make significant errors in their thinking and writing on the subject matter. I call their errors *significant* precisely because they come from such wonderful overall perspectives. I encourage my readers to study the books that I critique here: Mark Schwen, *Exiles in Eden*; Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth* and *The State of the University*; and Perry Glantzer & Todd Ream, *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education* and *The Idea of a Christian College*.

I sub-title this Introduction, "The Pillars Project," because I also seek to describe and narrate the best ways to understand the words courage, hope, freedom, and knowledge. Why are these words significant? The United Methodist-affiliated Southwestern College (SC) in Winfield, Kansas claims that the foundation and *telos* of a Midwestern Christian education involves the cultivation of courage, hope, freedom, and knowledge. This is also known as the four pillars of the SC educational experience. What do these words mean in the twenty-first century, and how can they be cultivated in a small Christian institution of higher education associated with a denominational body that finds itself in such disunity?[7] I spend the majority of the book answering the first part of this question—slowly describing and narrating what it means to cultivate and understand courage, hope, freedom, and knowledge in the twenty-first century. In terms of the second question: I claim that the continual fracturing of Christian denominations comes with the consequent of denominationally affiliated colleges and universities needing to define themselves on the terms of an *American philosophy of education* while simultaneously respecting the practices and thought of Christian congregations.[8] Survival demands the former; theological traditions require

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I label all of the arguments found in these books concerning the nature and purpose of Christian institutions of higher education as moralist.

7. United Methodist theologian L. Gregory Jones answers a similar question but in relation to the twentieth century: "Imagine the student as a baton. During the first leg of the race, the future [Christian] leader is held by the church, which forms him or her in particular beliefs and practices through congregational life and a whole array of other church-supported activities, such as church camps [and] mission projects. [The baton is passed to] church-related colleges [and] campus ministries. Then . . . the baton [is passed] to a seminary. Seminaries . . . provide the student with the specialized skills ordained leaders need, such as preaching and administration. Upon graduation, the seminary passes the baton once again, handing the student off to the larger church, and especially to the series of congregations he or she will be expected to shepherd" ("Beliefs, Desires, Practices, and the Ends of Theological Education," 185). Jones heavily critiques this twentieth century model but gives little-to-no attention to what Christian institutions of higher education ought to do better (his focus concerns seminary education). My claim is that, in the twenty-first century, Christian institutions of higher education must somehow see themselves anew: not exclusively serving Christians and not understanding itself as the middle leg between congregational life and graduate education.

8. While Alasdair MacIntyre might be able to offer a coherent "Roman Catholic" theological vision for higher education (see footnote #2), the lack of unity within any Protestant denomination renders such a task either aggressively coercive or overly idealistic.

the latter. The American philosophy of education that I build from—for best understanding the four pillars—is Transcendentalism.[9] In this book, I offer a Transcendentalist alternative to the following theological reflections on Christian institutions of higher education.[10] More specifically, I offer Transcendentalism as a correction to both moralism and pragmatism as explanations for the nature and purpose of institutions of higher education.[11]

9. American Transcendentalism has its roots in the German Idealist philosophical traditions—I consider Immanuel Kant's and G. W. F. Hegel's philosophies within the present book—and American Transcendentalism impacted (some say inspired!) Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical existentialism.

10. In *Democracy and Tradition*, Jeffrey Stout provides clarity about "Augustinians" and "Emersonians": Emersonian perfectionism creates a "cultural force that orthodox Christians have found deeply disturbing but have largely misunderstood as an expression of liberal secularism . . . . I want to contrast the Emersonian and Augustinian strands of American religiosity without exaggerating their differences. Ever since Emerson's 'Divinity School Address' of 1838, he and his followers have been engaged in a tug of war with orthodox Christians over the future of American piety. Christians, ever mindful of Augustine's great work *The City of God*, have never been reluctant to condemn the Emersonians for underestimating the human spirit's need for settled institutional and communal forms, including a structure of church authority to reign in spiritual excess. The Emersonians, for their part, would rather quit the church than grant that some holder of church office or even a democratically organized congregation has the authority to administer the distinctions between saved and damned, saint and sinner, true and false prophet, scripture and apocrypha" (*Democracy and Tradition*, 19–20). The primary "Augustinians" Stout refers to throughout his book are Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre. Stout's way of putting this served as one of the motivations for writing a book on an Emersonian—I prefer Transcendentalist—approach to higher education in relation to the "Augustinian" moralist approach to higher education.

11. Extending insights from the previous footnote, Transcendentalism arose as an alternative to the theological moralism of the Augustinian tradition. I am against proposals that base the nature and purpose of Christian institutions on grounds of theological moralism. I champion theological moralism within Christian congregations, which works well for families who relate their identity to Christian convictions, but it fails institutions of higher education in our twenty-first century context. After Ralph Waldo Emerson's writing career, American pragmatism made a significant impact on higher education. The influence of pragmatism has led some institutions of higher education to be too career-centered in what they promise to undergraduate students. I understand American Transcendentalism as forging a helpful middle ground between theological moralism and work-centric pragmatism.

Mark Schwen's Exiles in Eden

Against Mark Schwen's conclusion in *Exiles in Eden*, I argue that small Christian liberal arts colleges do not have to resign themselves to the false choice between developing the character of students or producing original research. I specify that colleges are designed to develop intellectual virtues for their students—not moral virtues. Schwen fails to persuade readers about the unreasonable goal for colleges to develop the moral character of undergraduate students and how this goal is attainable/realistic. I challenge his dichotomy between cultivating moral character and producing original research. We become better teachers for our students when we do what we are trained to do—teach, think, *and* write—rather than what we are not trained to do—act as their parents or priests.[12] If Schwen's argument leads to the problematic conclusion of thinking of professors as parents or priests, then what is the proper metaphor for professors? The French philosopher Michel Foucault says that, within the student-professor relationship,

> the teacher must not merely give the student lessons in skill, pass on knowledge . . . teach . . . logic or how to refute sophism, and nor is this what the student demands from his teacher. A different relationship must be established between them, a relationship of care, assistance, and help. You have come here . . . as [coming] to an *iatreion* (a clinic), you are here to be taken care of, treated. And when you return home, it is not just as an individual who is able to resolve sophisms or get himself admired for his abilities in [a] discussion. You must return home as someone who has been treated, and whose ills have been alleviated.[13]

I find this Foucaultian metaphor to be the most accurate for considering the role of the professor: professor as clinician, neither parent nor priest, who offers intellectual healing.

Stanley Hauerwas's Theological Reflections on Higher Education

Against Stanley Hauerwas's reflections on the university, where the university works alongside the church for the development of the moral character of undergraduate students, I argue that—from a Christian

12. On the problems of professors-as-parents, see Michael G. Cartwright's "Moving Beyond Muddled Missions and Misleading Metaphors," 197–201.

13. Foucault, CT, 271–72

perspective—the church serves as the primary context for moral development. The university should not work alongside the church on this front, and Christian institutions of higher education should not act as substitutes for the church. I agree quite deeply with Hauerwas's "high ecclesiology," and I think that his ecclesiology sets firm boundaries for what colleges and universities ought to promise to undergraduate students. In addition to my conclusion that the church remains the primary context for the moral development of Christians, I add that the family ought to be understood as the primary context for the moral development of non-Christians (pagans, in the positive sense of the word). For instance,[14] professors can teach about the plight and suffering of the poor; professors can even claim that society has obligations toward the poor (as a matter of the "doctrine of right" or external law); professors, however, should not tell their students that they must learn to love and be merciful toward the poor.[15] Students ought to arrive at their own internal convictions, not necessarily during their undergraduate education, but in their adult lives: they ought to know of their obligations to the poor, but they should be neither guilted nor shamed into loving the poor.[16]

The Glantzer/Ream Model for Christian Institutions of Higher Education

Against the Glantzer/Ream model of Christian institutions of higher education, I argue that maintaining the love and worship of God as the main priority within the undergraduate collegiate setting confuses what a college/university is *for*. "Faith seeking understanding" should not be assumed as the foundation for Christian institutions of higher education but, itself, should be up for conversation and debate within Christian institutions of higher education. Their model provides me with an opportunity to distinguish between the content of our beliefs vs. the intellectual virtues. For instance, Wheaton College's handling of Professor Larycia

14. See Hauerwas, *The State of the University*, chapter 12.

15. Ralph Waldo Emerson writes with eloquence and honesty: "Do not tell me of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they my poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong."

16. For further argument with Hauerwas's reflections on the university, see Goodson's "The State of the Secular University": https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/back-issues/vol-14-no-2-november-2015-philosophy-and-theology/the-state-of-the-secular-university-a-critical-review-of-recent-theological-proposals/.

Hawkins demonstrates an over-confidence in the content of their beliefs but comes at the cost of failing to display the intellectual virtues for their students to witness.

A Transcendentalist Approach to Higher Education

I construct a theory of higher education that encourages rational perfectionism instead of moral perfectionism. This distinction becomes significant because it facilitates a Transcendentalist account of perfectionism. With origins in Immanuel Kant's philosophy, a Transcendentalist account of perfectionism takes a further step from a distinction found within Kant's deontological reasoning. Kant distinguishes between holiness and perfection, and Kant's argument can be interpreted and reconstructed in a surprisingly straightforward way.[17] Kant's view of holiness can be summarized in the following way:

1. Individuals are obligated to seek holiness on the basis of "duties toward oneself."
2. The concept of holiness concerns the *subjective* aspects of the moral life, subjective understood in terms of one's dispositions and intentions. No one else can make claims/judgments about the status of one's holiness. Holiness involves self-knowledge.

17. Henry Allison attempts a similar interpretation and reconstruction to the one I offer. Allison writes: "In the 'Doctrine of Virtue', the obligation to holiness is treated within the context of a discussion of duties to oneself as a moral being. Moreover, Kant here distinguishes explicitly . . . between holiness and moral perfection. The former concerns the subjective element in morality, the purity of one's disposition; so the command 'be holy' expresses the requirement to make duty alone the motive of one's actions. The latter concerns the objective element, the extent of one's obligations; so the command 'be perfect' expresses the requirement to perform all one's duties . . . ." Three pages later, he continues: "To begin with, the duty to seek holiness is the obligation to strive toward a well-defined state of moral perfection. As such, there is no infinite regress, although there is . . . an infinite task. For similar reasons, the requirement cannot be dismissed as the product of a confusion of the conditions of moral praise and moral obligation. It is not that one is obligated to strive toward the goal of being worthy of moral praise; it is rather that such praise is appropriately awarded on the basis of the strength of character (virtue) that one manifests in the pursuit of that goal. Moreover, since holiness represents a specific kind of moral perfection, the justification of the claim that we have a duty to strive toward it must be of a piece with the justification of the claim that we have a duty to develop any of our capacities or 'perfections'. In other words, it must consist essentially in an argument to the effect that to neglect to develop these capacities is to deny 'humanity in oneself' and therefore one's status as an end in oneself, an autonomous moral agent" (*Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 175 & 178–79).

3. While holiness involves an individual duty "toward oneself," the commandment "be holy" speaks to the internal and subjective aspect of the self—not necessarily to our outward actions. The commandment means this: to make duty alone the *motive* of our actions.

Kant's view of perfection can be summarized in the following way:

1. Individuals are obligated to seek perfection on the basis of "duties toward others."
2. The concept of perfection concerns the *objective* elements of the moral life, objective understood in terms of one's actions and the performance of one's duties. Others can makes claims/judgments about the status of one's perfection, though these judgments ought to consider the quest for perfection and not the achievement of the state of perfection (a static achievement).[18]
3. While perfection involves our duties to one another, the commandment "be perfect" (found in the Sermon the Mount and the Petrine Epistles) provides us with a universal standard for what is required in the performance of those duties. This standard gets reflected in the first formulation of the categorical imperative, often called the universalization test, "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

Furthermore, Kant argues, "finite *holy* beings . . . could never tempted to violate duty."[19] It remains impossible for others to have knowledge of this lack of temptation. While teaching ethics or moral philosophy, for instance, a professor can explain the logic of both doctrines of holiness and perfection.[20] However, a professor can make normative claims only

18. Kant claims, "It is a human being's duty to *strive* for this perfection, but not to reach it (in this life), and his compliance with this duty can, accordingly, consist only in continual progress" (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 516–17).

19. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 567.

20. The only time I find where Kant actually discusses these two concepts together comes toward the very end of *The Metaphysics of Morals*: "*First*, this perfection consists subjectively in the *purity* (*puritas moralis*) of one's disposition to duty, namely, in the law being by itself alone the incentive, even without the admixture of aims derived from sensibility, and in actions being done not only in conformity with duty but also *from duty*. Here the command is 'be holy.' *Second*, a shaving to do with one's entire moral end, such perfection consists objectively in fulfilling all one's duties and in attaining completely one's moral end with regard to oneself. Here the command is 'be perfect.' But a human being's striving after this end always remains only a progress

about the doctrine of perfection—not the doctrine of holiness. By definition, the motivation for holiness must come exclusively from within the individual whereas the motivation for perfection can come from either an objective (external law) or subjective (internal conviction) source.

Although Kant defends *moral* perfectionism in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, his distinction between holiness and perfection helps to inform the professorial task in the twenty-first century. Professors cannot recommend to their students that they ought to seek holiness within their lives, and I argue that professors cannot and should not suggest *moral* perfectionism to their students either. However, professors should urge students to seek rational perfectionism. A Transcendentalist account of perfection, I argue, takes this further step and claims that rational perfectionism ought to be understood as a condition for moral perfectionism.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendentalism offers a useful guide to understanding the nature and purpose of Christian institutions of higher education in the twenty-first century. Although he does not specifically discuss Christian institutions of higher education at the undergraduate level,[21] Emerson conceives of one's undergraduate education as preparation for ordinary life.[22] With this book, I fill the void within scholarship on Christian institutions of higher education by developing an Emersonian—I prefer the word Transcendentalist—approach to Christian institutions of higher education.[23]

While my aim in this book intends to offer an interpretation of Emerson's Transcendentalism *for* a twenty-first century audience directed *toward* those who rely upon Christian institutions of higher education, adopting this Transcendentalist approach does not entail a wholesale agreement with Emerson's arguments. Rather, I rehearse Emerson's thinking as a way to make my own case for (a) *how* Christian institutions of higher education instill the intellectual virtues in undergraduate students and (b) *why* we ought to view the 3–6 years of undergraduate

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from *one* perfection to another: 'If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, strive for it' [1 Pet 1:16, Matt 5:48, Phil 4:8]" (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 196).

21. In "The Divinity School Address," of course, Emerson addresses the nature and purpose of divinity schools (see RWE, 37–47).

22. For those interested in such judgments, I find Emerson's account of the collegiate setting persuasive but his account of ecclesial life unpersuasive; I find Hauerwas's account of the church persuasive but his account of the university unpersuasive.

23. According to Robert Richardson, no one has written on what an Emersonian perspective on higher education entails at all—neither Christian nor otherwise (see *Emerson*, 250–51).

education as preparation for ordinary life—where a career is one aspect of ordinary life but ought not constitute the only part of ordinary life for which college prepares you. I believe that Christian institutions of higher education have done a great disservice to students, and their families, by being too career-focused in what they promise their students—which I consider the pragmatist understanding of higher education.[24] I speak of higher education as preparation for ordinary life in contrast to the tendency to over-emphasize higher education as preparation exclusively for a career.

Preview of Chapters

In this book, I borrow my methodology from Stanley Cavell's description of the roles of "narrative" and "suspense" employed and implemented by professors of philosophy who also write books:[25]

> Philosophical books are forever postponing their conclusions . . . . Being outwardly systematic, everything is made to depend on how it works; that is, it is a narrative—a narrative of concepts, it so happens—hence based on suspense. In this respect, books of philosophy are of no more philosophical use than novels are . . . .[26]

24. Although there are important differences between our reflections on Christian institutions of higher education, in this sentence I intend to emphasize a similar claim made by Michael G. Cartwright: "*Christian formation of students is more apprenticeship than it is about knowledge acquisition, more about craft than technique, and more about cultivating wisdom than about career-training*" ("Moving Beyond Muddled Missions and Misleading Metaphors," 191).

25. Richard Shusterman describes Cavell's understanding of writing in terms of how philosophical writing ought to be "a deeply personal, deeply ethical work of self-critique and self-transformation" and "if one challenged his 'aversive', difficult style as an obstacle to democracy's egalitarian aims, Cavell might counter that an imposed accessibility or easy style would be false to the struggle for self-knowledge an self-transcendence that is equally central to democracy's project" ("Putnam and Cavell on the Ethics of Democracy," 193–214). Áine Mahon's adds to Shusterman's description: "Such are the perfectionist underpinnings of the philosopher's seemingly tortured and seemingly uncompromising prose" (*The Ironist and the Romantic*, 158).

26. Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary*, 18–19. It remains unclear to me whether Cavell's words here are observational or judgmental.

The sections are designed along these lines of "a narrative of concepts," where I introduce my readers to multiple ways in which the primary concept of each section gets treated and understood by multiple thinkers.

What is the role of "suspense" in this book? With my style of writing, suspense comes via two ways: first, suspending my own conclusions for as long as possible for the purpose of giving the arguments of my conversation partners their due; secondly, I write with the intention to set-up a suspension between myself and the reader where the practical reasoning of the reader becomes required for the application of the argument in their own context(s). I believe this suspension remains part and parcel of the quest for rational perfectionism: reading ought to be understood as a necessary part of the quest for rational perfectionism, but the quest for rational perfectionism also requires readers to make their own judgments about what a text says to him or her as an individual. What it means to be an author—on my terms—involves publicizing (publishing) my judgments on the arguments of others as well as offering my own conclusions and ways of reasoning as an invitation for others (readers) to test out those conclusions and ways of reasoning in their own contexts. I invite argument—agreement, disagreement, nuance—based upon the testing of these conclusions and ways of reasoning. This process means that the "suspense" may not be resolved for quite some time, if resolved at all, because it becomes the responsibilities of the readers to exercise their own practical reasoning for such resolution to occur.

The narrative of Part 1 involves the concepts of freedom and knowledge, and I filter both concepts through my defense and explanation of rational perfectionism. The narrative I construct begins with Iris Murdoch's account of moral perfectionism and goes backward chronologically to Immanuel Kant's deontological reasoning (chapter 1), Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendentalism (chapter 2), and Maimonides's distinctions between four types of perfectionism: physical, financial, moral, and rational (chapter 3). Although I disagree with him over what it looks like, I credit Maimonides with giving me the language of rational perfectionism. Maimonides sets us onto a lengthy narrative concerning the role of perfectionism within Jewish philosophy: Maimonides, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Hilary Putnam (also chapter 3). I conclude chapter 3 by making connections between American Transcendentalism and Jewish philosophy when it comes to my own definition and description of rational perfectionism. I talk about rational

perfectionism in terms of the intellectual virtues required to find our "unattained but attainable self."

In chapter 4, I narrow my focus to the concept of freedom by giving exclusive attention to arguments made by the controversial philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche has an early essay entitled "Schopenhauer as Educator" where he teases out the role of the professor in relation to the perfection of a student. Nietzsche's argument has been labeled both "aesthetic perfectionism" and "moral perfectionism," and I make a case for why his essay ought to be considered a defense of rational perfectionism. Similar to Emerson, Nietzsche sets out the conditions necessary for students to find their higher or unattained selves. Professors have the obligation to nurture these conditions for their students without overdetermining what their higher or unattained self looks like.

The narrative of Part 2 involves the concept of courage. After narrating the concept of courage and how courage gets treated primarily as a moral virtue within Western philosophy, chapter 5 draws the strongest conclusion found in the book: for both feminist and realist reasons, courage needs to be considered exclusively as an intellectual virtue within the twenty-first century. I argue that it has become dangerous for us to teach undergraduate students that courage is a moral virtue because, by doing so, we tempt them—especially male students—to seek unnecessary heroism. Courage as an intellectual virtue, however, guides us in achieving what the American essayist and novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald commended to us a century ago: "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."[27] I add to this that the "ability to function" involves performing well within one's everyday or ordinary life. Christian institutions of higher education ought to encourage their students to develop courage as an intellectual virtue. Holding together the "opposed ideas" of (a) caring for self and fulfilling obligations to others, (b) entering adult life as both career-oriented and family-oriented (traditionally opposed identities), and (c) focusing intently on a singular vocational purpose while remaining open to other vocational options (traditionally opposed roles).

In chapter 6, I say more about the irrationality of heroism in order to come to a full defense of the role of intellectual courage within ordinary life. In chapter 7, I continue the narrative of the concept of courage by exploring Michel Foucault's account of the "courage of truth." I demonstrate

27. Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," 69.

how Foucault's later philosophy gives professors a framework for displaying intellectual courage in the classroom.

Striving toward rational perfectionism properly prepares undergraduate students for their ordinary life. While I offer theories of courage and hope as intellectual virtues, these theories ought to be considered as frameworks for the purpose of practical reasoning within one's ordinary life. All three sections offer arguments intended to connect what undergraduate students learn as part of their higher education to their ordinary life without promising that ordinary life will not have its serious and sobering difficulties.

Difficulties—this is the final word of the previous paragraph. Difficult is a word we use often but hardly reflect upon. In chapter 8, I link the phrase "difficulty of reality" with hope as an intellectual virtue. To think about hope as an intellectual virtue is to think through the logic of the golden mean, and I consider how the logic of the golden mean illuminates hope in two recent Transcendentalist reflections on hope: Stanley Cavell's "Hope against Hope" and Cornel West's "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization." I end chapter 8 with my own account of hope as an intellectual virtue. As an intellectual virtue, hope helps us achieve another point Fitzgerald commended to us a century ago: "One should . . . be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise."[28] To "make them otherwise" involves acknowledging the difficulty of reality and yet learning to maintain intellectual hope.[29]

After establishing hope as an intellectual virtue, I take a surprising turn to the work of Anabaptist theologian and Christian ethicist John Howard Yoder (chapter 9). I say surprising because, to my own surprise, Yoder offers an account of the nature and purpose of Christian higher education quite similar to mine—or it might have been the case that Yoder formed my account of Christian higher education without my knowing it ahead of time. Additionally, he gives us the premises—though never uses the phrase himself—for drawing conclusions about what intellectual hope looks like within the context of Christian institutions of higher education.

In chapter 10, I explore the American philosopher and Leftist intellectual Richard Rorty's account of "social hope." Rorty's philosophy also provides a framework for displaying intellectual hope in higher

28. Ibid.

29. "Imagining otherwise" would be the Kantian phrase to use; see Andrew Cutrofello, *Imagining Otherwise*, chapters 1, 4, 5, 8.

education. I argue that intellectual hope becomes a key component for my understanding of rational perfectionism because Rorty's defense of hope connects our future self with our present self. By turning to Rorty's account of "social hope," I achieve the employment of three philosophers who are usually considered dangerous by Christian scholars/thinkers and are, therefore, shunned as sources of wisdom for Christian institutions of higher education: Nietzsche (chapter 4), Foucault (chapter 7), Rorty (chapter 10).[30]

My Rules for Writing and Other Tips for Readers

While writing this book, I gave myself a few rules as a writer—which I want to share with the reader. I list these rules in the Introduction and not the Preface because the Introduction does not follow these rules. Additionally, I think it will prove helpful to say a bit more about some of the topics found in the discussion on the role of "suspense" in the methodology for the book.

Block Quotations

I provide block quotations, not based upon the standard word count of forty or more words, but to treat certain quotations as objects of study written by a significant philosophical thinker—either dead or alive. When these block quotations are given within the contours of the chapter, then I treat them according to the rules of modern scholarly writing: setting it up properly, explaining and evaluating it afterward.

The block quotations at the beginning of each chapter, however, receive neither set-up nor response from me; they are there to provoke the reader, and I invite the reader to reflect upon the beginning block quotation both before and after reading the entirety of the chapter. How does the argument of chapter change or deepen your own reflections on the given quotation? Does the argument of the chapter agree or disagree with

30. Another way to summarize the book is that I defend my arguments by engaging with and learning from bits of wisdom found within American Transcendentalism (Emerson, Cavell), German Idealism (Kant, Hegel), Jewish philosophy (Maimonides, Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Putnam), neo-pragmatism (Putnam, Rorty, West), postmodern theories about pedagogy (Nietzsche, Foucault, Rorty), and secular accounts of perfectionism (Murdoch, Cavell).

the argument(s) found in the given quotation? Does the given quotation challenge or enhance the arguments given within the chapter?

I sometimes find block quotations distracting when reading serious works of philosophy, and readers should know that I have deliberately placed block quotations in this book for the purpose of inviting readers to argue with me over my explanations and evaluations of the arguments found in these quotations. When I am aware of a disagreement that comes from one of my students, then I place their disagreement in a footnote for purposes of argumentation and nuance.

The Roles of Author and Reader

I set a rule for myself that I ought to write this book more as a "professor" than as an "author"—in the sense that I see my primary goal as introducing philosophical arguments and theories into the conversation concerning the nature and purpose of Christian institutions of higher education in the twenty-first century American context. Being "Christian" should not be a requirement for being part of the canon that Christian institutions of higher education rely upon. In essence, I am introducing a specific philosophical canon into these conversations. This canon includes great works from the Jewish philosophical tradition—Maimonides, Baruch Spinoza, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Emmanuel Levinas—the Continental philosophical tradition—Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Michel Foucault—and the American Transcendentalist tradition—Ralph Waldo Emerson and Stanley Cavell. In my mind, Iris Murdoch stands on her own.

In tandem with this rule, I invite the reader to make her/his own judgments from the analyses and syntheses that I provide throughout this book. Sometimes, I will offer seemingly top-down judgments—namely about the actions or decisions of an actual Christian institution of higher education. Usually, however, I intend the reader to take my analysis or synthesis and—through the skill of practical reasoning—apply it to her/his own unique context.

It became clearer and clearer to me, while writing the book, the importance of explaining and evaluating helpful sources of reasoning than to come across ignorant of those sources and shout about the directions that I think Christian institutions of higher education ought to take. I am not an authority on Christian institutions of higher education, but

I am authorized—by my office as professor of philosophy at a Christian institution of higher education—to enter into conversations about and make connections between what I read (arguments, ideas, and theories within Western philosophy) and what I observe (the actions, words, and the "spirit" of everyday life at Christian institutions of higher education in the twenty-first century context of the U.S.A.). My role as author might be as simple as making connections between what I observe on college campuses and what I read in my office.

Modern Logic

Mostly because of the demands made by the content of the book, I write this book as a deliberate exercise in following the rules of modern logic—which means, for the reader, that I am intentional about my use of *and*s, *or*s, *if*s, and *then*s. I try to point out, especially, the times that I make a conditional vs. bi-conditional claim. I also distinguish between observational and judgmental claims—which does not require a full theory about the fact/value distinction but serves to help the reader know what kind of claim I intend to offer at that moment. To keep my writing in check, readers are invited to test my ways of reasoning on the standards of Stephen E. Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument*, Graham Priests's *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*, and *'They Say'/'I Say': The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*.