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*SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED*

THE NEW AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Remarks by  
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Thank you very much.

*as you like at Brown*

I'm enormously pleased to join ~~in this moment of special~~  
celebration and I extend my congratulations and deep gratitude to  
Professor Eric Conn

- ~~for his inspired contribution to scholarship in the~~  
~~richest, fullest sense~~
- ~~and for being mentor to us all.~~

*At this moment*

This evening I've been asked to talk about the scholar-teacher:  
~~new model or old?~~ And I should like to begin by taking a  
backward glance.

*to future of scholarship.  
scholarship is Brown  
high school*

## I.

When Harvard College was founded in 1636 the focus was on the student.

- Teaching was a central, even sacred function,
- and the highest accolade a professor could receive was the famous one Chaucer extended to the clerk at Oxford:
- "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."

Educating "the whole student" was at the very heart of the colonial college experience

- And, for almost two centuries, that's what scholarship in America was all about.

But, following the War of Independence, the focus of higher learning slowly shifted--

- from the shaping of young lives,
- to the building of a nation.

In 1824, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was founded in Troy, New York.

- And RPI was, according to historian Frederick Rudolph,
- a constant reminder that America needed
  - "railroad builders,
  - bridge builders, and
  - builders of all kinds."



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The Land Grant Act of 1862 linked higher learning to the agricultural revolution.

- And when Lincoln Steffens visited Madison in 1909 he said that,
- "In Wisconsin, the university is as close to the intelligent farmer
  - as his pig pen
  - or his tool house."

At the turn of the century, David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford declared, that

- the entire university movement, in this country, was toward, what he called, "reality and practicality."

To put it simply,

- the scholarship of teaching had been joined
- by the scholarship of building.

Meanwhile, another view of scholarship was emerging.

In the late nineteenth century American academics who studied at Heidelberg and Humboldt

- were profoundly influenced by the emerging scholarship of science.
- Men like Daniel Gilman--who founded Johns Hopkins in 1876--were convinced we needed a new kind of university in America.

And, this vision of scientific scholarship--

- which, at first, was the inspiration of a few,
- soon became the imperative of the many.

After World War II, newly-minted Ph.D.'s traveled to campuses from coast-to-coast

- determined to clone the research model they themselves experienced,

And in 1968, Talcott Parsons wrote that the typical professor

- now resembles the scientist
- more than the "gentleman-scholar."

Thus, by the late twentieth century, higher education priorities in America had profoundly shifted. The focus was

- not on the student, but on the professor,
- not on general, but on specialized knowledge,
- not on loyalty to the campus, but on loyalty to the guild.

And there were two models by which the prestige of college and university might be measured.

- There was the "Berkeley model"--with its world class research,
- and for smaller colleges there was the "Amherst model"--with top students and a faculty profile similar to Berkeley's.

The problem was that the vast majority of campuses

- fell somewhere in between.

To put it simply, we had broadened the mission of higher learning without broadening faculty rewards.

- And while academic hierarchy was pulling in one direction,
- student diversity was pulling in another.

In the early 1960s, I was at Santa Barbara and watched a former teacher training and home economics institution

- being folded into the University of California system.
- It was a wrenching process--as faculty expectations were being dramatically redefined.

I then joined the State University of New York where we struggled to protect diversity in a 64 campus system,

- at a time when everything was "drifting upward,"
- and when research and publication became the single yardstick of success.

Recently at the Carnegie Foundation we've been working on a new report called, ~~a bit audaciously perhaps, The New American Scholar~~ *Scholar Revisited*

- are not suitable I believe the  
drawing of ~~the design~~ by the lay members  
as well as the mosaic of young  
talent in the group.



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The Scholarship of Discovery*research - what we call**So first part here is the*

We begin our report by reaffirming the SCHOLARSHIP of DISCOVERY.

*which is at the heart of academic life.*

- ~~We celebrate those who are on the cutting edge of~~  
~~research,~~
- who ask penetrating questions,
- and who experience the exhilaration that comes from advancing human knowledge.

Vannevar Bush, former president of MIT, put it this way:

- "Universities, he said, "are the wellspring of knowledge and understanding.
- As long as they are vigorous and healthy,
- and as long as scholars are free to pursue the truth wherever it may lead,
- there will be a flow of new scientific knowledge."



And in the Carnegie Report, we conclude that

- sustaining this creative process, affirming the certainty of elegant research.
- is absolutely crucial
- if scholarship is to be vigorously advanced.



Frank Press, the President of the National Academy of Sciences, recently suggested that

- the scientist is, in some respects, an artist, too.

Frank went on to observe that

- "the magnificent Double Helix--which broke the genetic code
- is not only rational," he said,
- "it's beautiful as well."

Clifford Geertz, of the Institute of Advanced Study, in his now famous essay "Blurred Genres," suggests that

- the old categories of knowledge are becoming obsolete,
- "Something is happening," Geertz says, "to the way we think about the way we think."

And I'm convinced the most exciting scholarship going on today is in the new "hyphenated" disciplines

- psycho-linguistics, nuclear medicine, bioengineering, and the like--
- in what Polanyi calls the "overlapping academic neighborhoods."

~~But~~ today, more than at any time in recent memory, researchers are many beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Community with colleagues in other fields giving new credence to scholarship that is both integrative and cooperative as well.

Over fifty years ago, Mark Van Doren wrote that the

- "connectedness of things is what the educator contemplates to the limit of his capacity."

Van Doren concludes by saying that

- "the student who can begin early in life to see things as connected has begun the life of learning."
- And this, it seems to me, is an authentic dimension of scholarship that also must be vigorously pursued.

### The Application of Knowledge

This brings me to category number three.

Beyond the discovery of knowledge--and its integration,

- we also need the SCHOLARSHIP of APPLICATION,
- we <sup>h</sup>need professors who can creatively relate theory to the realities of life.

This uniquely American dimension of scholarship--the usefulness of knowledge--is rooted

- in the land-grant colleges,
- in the polytechnic institutes,
- in the normal schools--institutions that, in the nineteenth century, were,
  - as Woodrow Wilson put it,
  - "IN THE NATION'S SERVICE."



Today,

- our shorelines are polluted,
- the ozone layer is depleted,
- schools are dangerously deficient,
- our cities are imperiled

And scholars urgently need to confront the crises of THIS century--

- just as they responded--so imaginatively--to the needs of AGRICULTURE and INDUSTRY a century ago.

I'm suggesting that, in the end, theory cannot be divorced from practice.

- And the good news is that professional schools--
  - from architecture,
  - to education,
  - to medicine--increasingly are linking scholarship to real life.
- They're demonstrating--on city streets, in classrooms, and in clinics--
  - that new knowledge not only can be APPLIED,
  - but ~~it~~ <sup>that knowledge</sup> also can EMERGE from practice.

*as fact.*

*And all the time*

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Donald Schön writes about what he calls

- the "reflective practitioner." ~~which seems~~

And I'm convinced that in defining the role of the professoriate

~~today,~~ it will be different

- we must give full dignity and full status
- to the SCHOLARSHIP of APPLICATION.



The Presentation of Knowledge

Finally, we need the SCHOLARSHIP of TEACHING--~~which brings me to this moment of special celebration.~~

There is a poster in the Prairie School in Racine, Wisconsin, which reads:

- "This room is a magic place. We are making tomorrow."
- And I'm convinced that in the end, scholarship in its fullest, richest sense, also is reflected in a great teacher whose influence is consequential and endearing.

Several years ago I couldn't sleep and instead of counting sheep I thought about all the teachers I'd had.

- I recalled Miss Rice, my first grade teacher, who first day of school said, "Good morning class, today we learn to read."
- It was Miss Rice who taught me that language is the centerpiece of learning.
- And I find it quite mystical that 50 years later--when I tried to write a book on College, I had a chapter right up front entitled the Centrality of Language. Great teachers live forever!

- I recalled Mr. Wittlinger, a high school history teacher, who, through vital classroom discussions, taught me about democracy in action.
- And I recalled Professor Joseph Smith who read Shakespeare aloud in class and taught me that great literature
  - is not only about the majesty of words,
  - it's about the deepest yearnings of the human spirit.

I then asked what made these teachers truly great and four common characteristics came to mind.

- First, each outstanding teacher in my life was knowledgeable and well informed, there was something there to teach.
- Second, these teachers knew how to relate their knowledge to the readiness of students.
- Third, every outstanding teacher I had was an open, authentic human being who not only taught their subjects but also taught themselves.

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Finally, all of the great teachers in my life encouraged creativity and independence, and I'm convinced that to keep scholarship alive, we need classrooms

- where there is active, not passive learning,
- where students are creative, not conforming,
- and where undergraduates learn to work together, rather than compete.

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For several years, I've been teaching undergraduates at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton.

- As you know this is a public policy school and students are expected to work together on a common project.
- And I'm enormously impressed by the creativity of this approach to learning and also I'm slightly humbled to discover that I still have lots to learn as the students track down new sources and reach their own creative new conclusions.

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This brings me, finally, to the topic of the evening: In celebrating the scholar-teacher, do we use the new model or old?

Looking back, the teachers in the colonial college engaged students in endless recitations. Knowledge was well defined and young scholars were being prepared for a world that was predictable and rigidly defined, and students taught to be conforming, not creative.

024  
Today's students are living in a world that is being politically, socially, economically, and ecologically transformed, and the task of the new scholar-teacher must be to empower students to challenge old assumptions, to go beyond what the professor has presented. And in so doing, the flame of intellect is kept alive, as a new generation of scholars is prepared to be not just academics, but intellectuals who have the audacity to ask new questions and confront old questions that were asked but never solved.

I'm suggesting that teachers at the university are joined in the common endeavor to respond to a basic human need.

- Just as medicine and the law seek to meet the needs of health and justice, so teaching is an intensely moral act in which professors seek to enhance our society through knowledge and through wisdom.



I'm suggesting that

- if students are not stimulated by great teachers,
- if they do not become intellectually and evocatively engaged,
- then all the talk about scholarship--in its richest, fullest sense--

will be simply a diversion.



Robert Oppenheimer--at the 200th anniversary of Columbia University--in an address on the scholarship of teaching concluded that, it's "the proper role" of the scientist that

- he not merely find a new truth--and communicate it to his fellows,
- but it is also the role of the scientist.  
Oppenheimer said, that he teach,
- that he try to bring the most honest and most intelligible account of new knowledge to all who will try to learn"
  - And surely this means inspiring future scholars in the classroom.

It's this spirit that brings us together to join in special tribute to Professor Eric Conn,

- who tonight is receiving the nation's most extraordinary prize that recognizes the scholarship of teaching and research.

Eric Conn has said "My students deserve my respect just as I hope to merit theirs." I salute Professor Conn who throughout his scholarly career has excelled at

- Discovery of knowledge
- Integration of knowledge
- Application of knowledge, and surely has excelled in inspiring and in teaching future scholars, too.

I thank you for being a mentor to us all.

Professor Conn, the highest tribute I can give to you tonight is simply this: "You're good enough to teach!"

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*Conclusions*

And now I'd like to add a more personal note here at the end. As I go around the country, I'm finding more openness and more serious talk about scholarship and faculty renewal than I've heard in 40 years.

- In the 1950s, with all the exciting growth, it seems we were a bit too confident, perhaps.
- In the sixties, we were often too angry.
- In the seventies, we were far too depressed. In the mid-eighties, we got too defensive.

But today I sense a spirit of cautious optimism in the air, and once again, we're asking fundamental questions:

- What should we be teaching?
- How can we evaluate results?
- And how can we expand the reward system so the talents of all colleagues can be honored and well rewarded.

And the question that really intrigues me now is, "What will be higher education legacy of the 1990s?"

I'd like the coming decade to be remembered as a time when creativity and community are powerfully affirmed.

Parker Palmer writes eloquently about the decline of community in higher education. And traces that erosion

- to what he calls, "a bloodless epistemology"--
- to a narrow,
- to a suffocating way of knowing.

Palmer goes on to say that "we shape souls by the shape of our knowledge. And it's here," he says that, "the idea of community must ultimately take root."

Why not imagine a community--in the nineties--

- in which the full array of human talent is well rewarded,
- and where diversity is celebrated, not suppressed.

And if our vision of scholarship can be so enlarged, I'm convinced a true community of learning will emerge in every classroom as students are inspired by great teachers.

Shortly after his appointment as professor of music at UCLA Jascha Heifetz was asked what had prompted his change of career direction.

- "Violin-playing is a perishable art," said Heifetz solemnly. "It must be passed on as a personal skill; otherwise it is lost."
- Then, with a smile, he continued: "I remember my old violin professor in Russia. He said that someday I would be good enough to teach."