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31st Commencement Address

Howard Mumford Jones

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SCHOLARSHIP

Commencement Address

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Howard Mumford Jones

1949

SCHOLARSHIP

Next to the gobbledygook which is the staple of political addresses, I suppose that education produces more tired English than does any other human activity. By "tired English" I mean, of course, words so over-worked that the vigor of life has left them. Who does not sigh at educational English - that language which the late Paul Shorey happily christened pedagogue? Education for leadership, education for tomorrow, education for a changing world - what faded, what distressing terms? During the commencement season they fill the air and drip like dew from the lips of every speaker.

I propose to talk to you about scholarship.

Clearly, scholarship is one of these tired words.

Indeed, it is so tired that nobody quite knows what it means. My contribution to the theory of scholarship consists in the proposition, which I have stolen from Pascal, that scholarship is like God, a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. It is impossible to escape from scholarship; and because this is so, I shall discuss three of its meanings.

In the kindergarten, scholarship begins in discovery and delight. How odd that "a" should be squat and fat, the figure "7" like an up-ended hoe, the word "crayon" like bird's cries. It is unnecessary that word or symbol should have intellectual content at this stage, where everything is enchantment, and Latin is as lovely as Mother Goose. But the delight vanishes, and

the young scholar soon settles into that routine which is necessary to the general schooling of the human race. We cannot forever be on fire with the excitement of novelty, there are multiplication tables to be learned, words to be mastered, the thousand practical facts which furnish the kitchen of the mind - these must become habitual like breathing. Scholarship at this ~~stage~~ ^{level} I shall call learning as ritual, for it resembles dancing and worship. The young scholar is not to inquire or to rebel, but to allow the imprint of custom to be fixed upon him. ~~This~~ we achieve the foundation of the broadest agreement, without which culture cannot exist. Scholarship as ritual is,

then,
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But the child disappears into the youth or maiden, and use and wont no longer suffice for our young barbarians. Ritual is replaced by contest. A game develops, with rules as intricate as chess, and with hostilities as traditional as football. The schoolroom becomes an armed camp, or, if not that, a place set apart for a tournament that has everything in its makeup except chivalry. On the one side, the teacher, armed with mysterious powers; on the other side, native wit and the ingenuity of young America. A code develops to govern this antagonism. The first move is invariably that of the teacher, who advances to a square of knowledge and captures it by assignment - pages 124 to 139 in the textbook, the definitions of five words, such and such a

laboratory exercise, a report on the local gas-works. The next move is that of the pupils, who, recognizing that the assignment runs from page 124 to page 159, prepare precisely that and nothing more; or - and this marks the superior champion - prepare nothing at all. Then, if bluffing succeeds, if they get by, if they are not called on, they win special honor among their fellow warriors. At the hour of examination the teacher sallies forth to war armed in ~~all~~ her panoply, but the pupils, as if to mark their larger numbers, go into battle without any weapons whatsoever. Elaborate rules determine what it is proper for the teacher to demand and what it is reasonable for the pupils to perform, and violation by either side brands the offender as subversive.

The praise of the teacher is that she does not fail to pass her pupils, the praise of the pupil is that he never cracked a book. And so, with a decent minimum of mind, the contenders dedicate their journey to that golden mediocrity which is the god of our educational system. Mediocrity spreads. The notion of education as contest flourishes in the later grades and in the secondary schools, and because many state-supported institutions of higher learning are required by law to admit to their halls any high school graduate in the commonwealth, mediocrity spreads also into the colleges.

Two important consequences follow upon this notion of scholarship as contest. The first is that our elected officials seldom rise above it.

Themselves the products of the secondary schools, or, if college men, having retained in college the notion of education as contest, they demand that scholarship shall remain forever at this low and harmless level. What are schools for, especially in a democracy, if not to make pupils contented with the democratic way of life? Let the schools content themselves with the elements, and the citizens can take care of themselves. The community, jealous of criticism, forbids the teacher to live a private life. It may be some elementary knowledge of economics should be taught in the schools, but let us not examine advertising critically in order that future housewives may learn to penetrate its false and flattering poetry - to do so were to fly in the

face of the chamber of commerce, the city newspaper and the local radio station. Possibly some simple knowledge of biology may be allowed, but let us not admit that these young people are in the throes of their first experience of sex, which, according to the standards of the middle class, is shameful. Above all, let us not take any critical view of the United States, its failures no less than its successes, the problem of race, the problem of religious tension, the problem of labor, the problem of war, the problem of education, the problem of capitalism. Only radicals find fault. Only agents of communism hint that the local common council is not a collection of Solons. Since what is taught must be learned, when teachers "teach"

that advertising may be fallacious, that sex can be healthy, or that politics may involve minority rights and unpopular points of view, it follows from the theory of education as contest that students are being shaped into something vague, disturbing, and certainly "un-American." Therefore it is that principals, superintendents, schoolboards, city councils, trustees~~s~~, regents, state boards of education, legislatures, governors, senators, and the Congress of the United States gravely consider how to put down heterodoxy in the schools by laws or regulations designed to frighten~~y~~ all but the most courageous. We develop a doctrine of guilt by association unknown since the Alien and Sedition laws. No American teacher, so far as I can recollect~~s~~,

has ever been ~~XXXXXXXX~~ convicted of treason;
no American teacher, so far as I know, has ever
conspired to seize even the local government by
force or violence; no American teacher, so far
as I can discover, has ever succeeded in indoctrinating a single class at any time with communism, atheism, materialism, evolution, or whatever is unpopular at the hour. Yet one would infer from the rash of bills and investigations passed or pending that we are faced with an invasion of the teaching profession by "radicals" so numerous, so cunning, so devious that only the strictest police supervision can save our children and the republic.

There is, however, a second important sequel of the theory of scholarship as contest, one

which affects many colleges and universities directly, and colleges like this one indirectly. The Freshman English course at one state university numbers 200 sections. A single introductory course in psychology ~~is~~ at another has over a thousand students. When I attended the University of Wisconsin in the days of Julius Caesar, we thought a student body of 5000 too big; now there are over 20,000 students in Madison. The latest annual report of the Chancellor of New York University says that 56,000 students enrolled last year in classes there. The report of the president's commission on higher education argues that the number of students in higher institutions should be doubled; and totals of the order of five million have been suggested.

Though theorists may prove it is as efficient to lecture to five hundred as to fifty - and if five hundred, why not five thousand, or fifty thousand, or five hundred thousand? - these numbers have mass and weight, they hamper individuality, they narrow the personality. The mere machinery require to care for these armies absorbs energies and requires an admirable mechanical perfection that is unfortunately also wholly dead. Punch cards, examinations graded by electrical devices, the reduction of the student to a number, a brass check, an assigned locker, a bursar's card, an official photograph - the human being is reduced to a two-dimensional system. From the point of view of the registrar, the

dean, the lecturer, the undergraduate becomes a digit, an integer, a sample of handwriting, usually bad, a pawn, which if it is moved correctly across the chessboard, you are bound to reward at the end of the game with the crown of a bachelor's degree, largely because no reason appears why you should not do so. Not scholarship, but administration is the problem of the ~~college~~ ^{academic} world, where the president, the dean, the business manager, the investment councillor and the alumni secretary are more important than the quiet teacher in the classroom. An accumulation of 32 or 64 or 128 credits in the educational bank is scholarship. One wonders what the alumni secretary would make of Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Socrates, Emerson, Tolstoy, if they presented themselves

for graduation.

Because the only universal law of sociology is that everybody is as lazy as he dares to be, the undergraduate remains the high school student taken, as it were, a little later on. The contest is more elaborate, but the rules are the same. "O. I'd like to take Professor So-and-so's course," said a female student at the University of Chicago, "but he's such a hard marker, and I won't spoil a Phi Beta Kappa record for any professor."

"But I've done all the laboratory work," wailed a Michigan student, "and he flunked me just the same!" Each year at Harvard I give out a list of about 250 books, the titles classified to illustrate important phases of American life in

the last half century, saying to the class that since they have chosen the course, I assume they want to read; and that here is a library of pertinent material, adding that all I ask is, they read and report regularly once a week what they have read and what they think about it. "But, professor," the cry goes up, "isn't there any regular daily assignment? What do you want us to do?" "Read," says I. "But how much? when? before the lecture or after? Why don't you tell us how many pages to read?" "Read," I respond with what patience I can, "read - you are adult or about to become so. This is the way reading is done, not by home-work and lesson plans." "But, professor --" the complaint continues, except from the intelligent, who grasp the idea that

scholarship is one and indivisible, not the schoolboy's assumption that lessons are scourges to be administered, thirty stripes today and forty tomorrow.

The poet Keats has a famous phrase, "negative capability." Under pressure of numbers, succumbing to a painless conformity, the student, by virtue of negative capability, in school after school, secure in the faith that he has broken no law, violated no canon, becomes in due course the alumnus and joins that most astonishing of American inventions, the ex-students association. Is not the conformity of mind in the alumni association a strange comment on scholarship? One star differeth from another in glory; but change the

colors on the hatbands or the dresses at the annual reunions, and you will not know the graduates of one college from those of another. The alumni secretary, enlisted in the preservation of intellectual order, concerns himself to maintain procedures only; and the long, last phase of scholarship as contest appears as a tug-of-war between the faculty and its former students, the one seeking to hoodwink the other into believing that dear old Siwash stands simultaneously for conformity and individualism, habit and progress, mass production and leadership, daring and conservatism, leadership of tomorrow and protection of the status quo. Do I seem severe? I merely translate into specific terms the criticism which a Veblen, a Flexner, a Hutchins, a Donham, and

others have made of American academic life.

How break this circle? Mere idiosyncrasy will not do, albeit the New York Sunday Times recently reported a pedagogical movement for the encouragement of **Idiosyncrasy**. Yet to contradict for the sake contradiction is not educative; to differ merely for the sake of difference is dull. The student faced in his freshman year with a demand to write an "original theme" feels depressed by so unreasonable a demand. I share his depression. Two or three million young persons intent on being original~~f~~ would be a doleful performance. Fortunately both nature and nurture come to our rescue, and nature and nurture still divide us into superior and commonplace, persons worth educating and persons worth training. Contrary

to popular belief, said Lord Tweedsmuir, dullness is not a product of education. Education, he explains, may refine, may polish native dullness, but it cannot create what is plainly the gift of God. Yet we have been trying for many years so to refine and polish dullness that, intent on helping mediocrity over the stile, we cannot understand why superior scholars are uncomfortable in school, college, or university.

Now, I respect dullness. It is a healthy state of mind, body, and emotion. Were it not for the wide diffusion of dullness, our newspapers could not perpetually print the same murders, our radio programs might run longer than fifteen minutes, and the collapse of Holleywood would follow the collapse of interest in boy meets girl, boy loses

girl, boy ^{cuts} ~~girl~~ girl. We have scriptural warrant for the prayer: give me neither poverty nor riches, and insofar as mediocrity and dullness are interchangeable, we have good sanction for training mediocrity sufficiently to warrant the hope that its happy possessors may live normal, active, hopeful lives. I have no desire to cut off mediocrity. But our failure is not a failure to furnish education for the average; our failure is to insist that exceptional youth shall conform to average education. We do not characteristically attempt to enrich superior minds, on the illogical grounds that to do so would be to impoverish the education of the majority. This is much like arguing against symphony orchestras on the assumption that they are discouraging to saxophone

players.

Here and there, of course, we have attempted to break what Frank Aydelotte once called the lockstep of education. The honors course, the tutorial system, individual advising, a senior thesis, sectioning by ability - how familiar, and, alas! how trivial these sound! It is only a little chipping and patching. It is something we do with our left hands. It is, for instance, considered honorable, if out of a college faculty of seventy-five, two or three are detailed to look after exceptional ~~students~~ upperclassmen. It is a mark of merit if in the fourth year some ten or twelve per-cent of the graduating class are permitted to go out for honors, as if it took thirty-six months to be sure that superior

students are superior. Meanwhile, of course, superior youth, bored by classroom instruction deliberately aimed below their intellectual level, finds genuine merit and an exciting education in the school paper, the class election, the dramatic club, the sorority. But do we not, in fact, detect superior ability in the secondary schools, and is there any reason to suppose that as our tests improve, our ability to separate the truly able from the merely good, will not increase? But why, if we can thus early separate the two, why lump superiority and mediocrity together for three years only to separate them after this penitential period? Why not begin to nourish individual talent in the freshman year? Why not furnish superior minds with a total

superior curriculum?

All this, however, deals with the mode of scholarship, not its nature, and I turn in conclusion to the third aspect of scholarship: scholarship as civil independence. I am content with Emerson's phrase about the scholar: man thinking. For man thinking -- and it is only the awkwardness of the language that leads me to avoid the phrase "man or woman" -- for man thinking, three elements are necessary -- mastery, intellect, courage. The greatest of these is courage.

First, mastery. The young scholar like the puppy must try his teeth on everything. A wise teacher will see that he comes to no harm. But there comes a time when something happens

analogous to religious conversion, and he abandons his puppy ways of biting on everything, he finds that chemistry or literature, physics or anthropology is a world central to him, to which he also is central. What had been lessons cease to be tasks and become insight. He rejects and accepts, not with the random motions of the child, but from a profound inner compulsion. Why colloid chemistry? Why does the carrying power of a stream vary as the eighth power of its velocity? Why medical insurance? Why Hemingway and not Scott, Bartok and not McDowell, El Greco and not Sir Alma Tadema? When these questions trouble the mind, not as lessons but as philosophy, the young scholar begins to seek truth and ceases merely to study. If, as Robert Frost

remarks, a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom, scholarship begins in curiosity and ends in assimilation. The course notes of every student accumulate, but the scholar assimilates where the undergraduate merely records.

Assimilation, however, is not enough. I do not know how it is in the sciences, but in the arts I notice how graduate students fall into two unequal groups - a large one which takes notes, a small one which reflects and thinks.

Assimilated knowledge may be pedantry. I once knew a man who memorized/ all the presidents of all the Latin American republics. But naming the names of presidents is like cross-word puzzles, an occupation for one's idle hour; what matters is whether, by studying the lives of these officials,

one can discover why the Anglo-Saxon theory of constitutional government does not ~~does not~~ succeed abroad. I will not listen to the callow judgment that Tennyson never wrote a good poem, but I respect the student who weighs the excellence and defects of Tennyson against the excellence and defects of T.S.Eliot. Hard though it is to say how one comes into reflection, scholarship is a function of reflection upon knowledge. In a sense totally different from that Shakespeare meant, ripeness is all, which means that not assimilation only, but intellect is the heart of the scholar's mystery. It is interesting to know that Bacon took bribes, but is more important to have arrived at some notion why The Advancement of Learning helps explain values in

the age of nuclear fission. So in every other field, not what the thing is, but what the thing is good for - here is the consideration that distinguishes the scholar from the pedant.

Mastery, intellect, courage. By courage I mean the capacity to announce and defend considered truth when appropriate occasion shall arise in the life of the state. But the courage to speak ~~up~~^{up} has become the rarest virtue in American culture. The motto of the nation has become: "Don't stick your neck out." A thousand forces today conspire against the statement of the unpopular. The press, the radio, the screen, government itself seem to be in league against the presentation of minority opinion. To declare for peace, to labor toward international under-

standing, to be counted for civil rights or a wider diffusion of medical care or fair employment practices or the prerogative of minority groups has meant in the cases of good and gentle friends of mine that they have been shadowed by government investigators, denounced over the air, and maligned in public prints. Europeans coming here, Americans who have been abroad and return, are saddened and bewildered by the hysteria for conformity which sweeps the land.

Scholars who, deeply concerned over the gradual intrusion of the military into education or by the political secrecy which in our own country interferes with the free flow of science - such men, if they protest, protest at their peril.

In the present mood of the nation Samuel Adams,

Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Thoreau, Jane Adams would all have been discovered to be members of some sort of "subversive" organization, on the ipse dixit of a transient attorney general.

Formerly we thought well of man - in fact, we built the republic upon his capacity to think for himself. Now it is fashionable to distrust him altogether, for man has again become the "thinking reed" whom Pascal so unfortunately defined. The drive to conform, to be afraid, sweeps all before it, and we present to a bewildered world the astonishing spectacle of the greatest nation on earth fearful of it knows not what.

What is the scholar's duty? Not, I am persuaded, to practice a fugitive and cloistered

virtue; but neither do I believe it to be that incessant appeal to the public mind represented by the reappearance of the same names on a score of petitions and protests. Yet there comes a time when the conscientious scholar must announce his stand; and when he does so, he must speak as scholar - that is, with the courage of one who has assimilated knowledge to intellect. When he does so, it is the duty - alas! how often evaded! - of the institution he serves and of its graduates, to applaud his courage and protect his place, even though dean and president and alumni and governing boards disagree with his utterance. For, indeed, if we continue our downward course, if we insist upon stifling the

individual voice, if we demand a total and timid acquiescence by teachers and students in whatever mood or political fashion the current government in Washington or the state capital represents- how shall we differ from those states we went to war to destroy? You who today assume for the first time the formal emblems of scholarship, you, so far as I may, I strictly charge with the duty of protecting for the rest of your lives those independent voices from the colleges and elsewhere, whose independence has been traditionally, and still should be, the finest voice of America. And this I venture to do in the name of that scholarship whose robes you wear and whose diploma by the ceremony of this hour you acquire.

1949

SCHOLARSHIP

Commencement Address

Howard Mumford Jones

Next to the gobbledygook which is the staple of political addresses, I suppose that education produces more tired English than does any other human activity. By "tired English" I mean, of course, words so over-worked that the vigor of life has left them. Who does not sigh at educational English - that language which the late Paul Shorey happily christened pedagogue? Education for leadership, education for tomorrow, education for a changing world - what faded, what distressing terms? During the commencement season they fill the air and drip like dew from the lips of every speaker.

I propose to talk to you about scholarship. Clearly, scholarship is one of these tired words. Indeed, it is so tired that nobody quite knows what it means. My contribution to the theory of scholarship consists in the proposition, which I have stolen from Pascal, that scholarship is like God, a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. It is impossible to escape from scholarship; and because this is so, I shall discuss three of its meanings.

In the kindergarten, scholarship begins in discovery and delight. How odd that "a" should be squat and fat, the figure "7" like an up-ended hoe, the word "crayon" like bird's cries. It is unnecessary that word or symbol should have intellectual content at this stage, where everything is enchantment, and Latin is as lovely as Mother Goose. But the delight vanishes, and the young scholar soon settles into that routine which is necessary to the general schooling of the human race. We cannot forever be on fire with the excitement of novelty, there are multiplication tables to be learned, words to be mastered, the thousand practical facts which furnish the kitchen of the mind - these must become habitual like breathing. Scholarship at this level I shall call learning as ritual, for it resembles dancing and worship.

The young scholar is not to inquire or to rebel, but to allow the imprint of custom to be fixed upon him. Thus we achieve the foundation of the broadest agreement, without which culture cannot exist. Scholarship as ritual is, then, the first stage.

But the child disappears into the youth or maiden, and use and wont no longer suffice for our young barbarians. Ritual is replaced by contest. A game develops, with rules as intricate as chess, and with hostilities as traditional as football. The schoolroom becomes an armed camp, or, if not that, a place set apart for a tournament that has everything in its makeup except chivalry. On the one side, the teacher, armed with mysterious powers; on the other side, native wit and the ingenuity of young America. A code develops to govern this antagonism. The first move is invariably that of the teacher, who advances to a square of knowledge and captures it by assignment - pages 124 to 139 in the text-book, the definitions of five words, such and such a laboratory exercise, a report on the local gas works. The next move is that of the pupils, who, recognizing that the assignment runs from page 124 to page 139, prepare precisely that and nothing more; or - and this marks the superior champion - prepare nothing at all. Then, if bluffing succeeds, if they get by, if they are not called on, they win special honor among their fellow warriors. At the hour of examination the teacher sallies forth to war armed in all her panoply, but the pupils, as if to mark their larger numbers, go into battle without any weapons whatsoever. Elaborate rules determine what it is proper for the teacher to demand and what it is reasonable for the pupils to perform, and violation by either side brands the offender subversive. The praise of the teacher is that she does not fail to pass her pupils, the praise of the pupil is that he never cracked a book. And so, with a decent minimum of mind, the contenders dedicate their journey to that golden mediocrity which is the god of our educational system. Mediocrity spreads. The notion of education as contest flourishes in the later

grades and in the secondary schools, and because many state-supported institutions of higher learning are required by law to admit to their halls any high school graduate in the commonwealth, mediocrity spreads also into the colleges.

Two important consequences follow upon this notion of scholarship as contest. The first is that our elected officials seldom rise above it. Themselves the products of the secondary schools, or, if college men, having retained in college the notion of education as contest, they demand that scholarship shall remain forever at this low and harmless level. What are schools for, especially in a democracy, if not to make pupils contented with the democratic way of life? Let the schools content themselves with the elements, and the citizens can take care of themselves. The community, jealous of criticism, forbids the teacher to live a private life. It may be some elementary knowledge of economics should be taught in the schools, but let us not examine advertising critically in order that future housewives may learn to penetrate its false and flattering poetry - to do so were to fly in the face of the chamber of commerce, the city newspaper and the local radio station. Possibly some simple knowledge of biology may be allowed, but let us not admit that these young people are in the throes of their first experience of sex, which, according to the standards of the middle class, is shameful. Above all, let us not take any critical view of the United States, its failures no less than its successes, the problem of race, the problem of religious tension, the problem of labor, the problem of war, the problem of education, the problem of capitalism. Only radicals find fault. Only agents of communism hint that the local common council is not a collection of Solons. Since what is taught must be learned, when teachers "teach" that advertising may be fallacious, that sex can be healthy, or that politics may involve minority rights and unpopular points of view, it follows from the theory of education as contest that students are being shaped into something vague,

disturbing, and certainly "un-American". Therefore it is that principals, superintendents, schoolboards, city councils, trustees, regents, state boards of education, legislatures, governors, senators, and the Congress of the United States gravely consider how to put down heterodoxy in the schools by laws or regulations designed to frighten all but the most courageous. We develop a doctrine of guilt by association unknown since the Alien and Sedition laws. No American teacher, so far as I can recollect, has ever been convicted of treason; no American teacher, so far as I know, has ever conspired to seize even the local government by force or violence; no American teacher, so far as I can discover, has ever succeeded in indoctrinating a single class at any time with communism, atheism, materialism, evolution, or whatever is unpopular at the hour. Yet one would infer from the rash of bills and investigations passed or pending that we are faced with an invasion of the teaching profession by "radicals" so numerous, so cunning, so devious that only the strictest police supervision can save our children and the republic.

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Because the only universal law of sociology is that everybody is as lazy as he dares to be, the undergraduate remains the high school student taken, as it were, a little later on. The contest is more elaborate, but the rules are the same. "O, I'd like to take Professor So-and-So's course," said a female student at the University of Chicago, "but he's such a hard marker, and I won't spoil a Phi Beta Kappa record for any professor." "But I've done all the laboratory work," wailed a Michigan student, "and he flunked me just the same!" Each year at Harvard I give out a list of about 250 books, the titles classified to illustrate important phases of American life in the last half century, saying to the class that since they have chosen the course, I assume they want to read; and that here is a library of pertinent material, adding that all I ask is, they read and report regularly once a week what

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differ merely for the sake of difference is dull. The student faced in his freshman year with a demand to write an "original theme" feels depressed by so unreasonable demand. I share his depression. Two or three million young persons intent on being original would be a doleful performance. Fortunately both nature and nurture come to our rescue, and nature and nurture still divide us into superior and commonplace, persons worth educating and persons worth training. Contrary to popular belief, said Lord Tweedsmuir, dullness is not a product of education. Education, he explains, may refine, may polish native dullness, but it cannot create what is plainly the gift of God. Yet we have been trying for many years so to refine and polish dullness that, intent on helping mediocrity over the stile, we cannot understand why superior scholars are uncomfortable in school, college, or university.

Now, I respect dullness. It is a healthy state of mind, body, and emotion. Were it not for the wide diffusion of dullness, our newspapers could not perpetually print the same murders, our radio programs might run longer than fifteen minutes, and the collapse of Hollywood would follow the collapse of interest in boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl. We have scriptural warrant for the prayer: give me neither poverty nor riches, and insofar as mediocrity and dullness are interchangeable, we have good sanction for training mediocrity sufficiently to warrant the hope that its happy possessors may live normal, active, hopeful lives. I have no desire to cut off mediocrity. But our failure is not a failure to furnish education for the average; our failure is to insist that exceptional youth shall conform to average education. We do not characteristically attempt to enrich superior minds, on the illogical grounds that to do so would be to impoverish the education of the majority. This is much like arguing against symphony orchestras on the assumption that they are discouraging to saxophone players.

Here and there, of course, we have attempted to break what Frank Aydelotte once called the lockstep of education. The honors course, the tutorial system, individual advising, a senior thesis, sectioning by ability - how familiar, and alas! how trivial these sound! It is only a little chipping and patching. It is

something we do with our left hands. It is, for instance, considered honorable, if out of a college faculty of seventy-five, two or three are detailed to look after exceptional upperclassmen. It is a mark of merit if in the fourth year some ten or twelve percent of the graduating class are permitted to go out for honors, as if it took thirty-six months to be sure that superior students are superior. Meanwhile, of course, superior youth, bored by classroom instruction deliberately aimed below their intellectual level, finds genuine merit and an exciting education in the school paper, the class election, the dramatic club, the sorority. But do we not, in fact, detect superior ability in the secondary schools, and is there any reason to suppose that as our tests improve, our ability to separate the truly able from the merely good, will not increase? But why, if we can thus early separate the two, why lump superiority and mediocrity together for three years only to separate them after this penitential period? Why not begin to nourish individual talent in the freshman year? Why not furnish superior minds with a total superior curriculum?

All this, however, deals with the mode of scholarship, not its nature, and I turn in conclusion to the third aspect of scholarship: scholarship as civil independence. I am content with Emerson's phrase about the scholar: man thinking. For man thinking - and it is only the awkwardness of the language that leads me to avoid the phrase "man or woman" - for man thinking, three elements are necessary - mastery, intellect, courage. The greatest of these is courage.

First, mastery. The young scholar like the puppy must try his teeth on everything. A wise teacher will see that he comes to no harm. But there comes a time when something happens analogous to religious conversion, and he abandons his puppy ways of biting on everything, he finds that chemistry or literature, physics or anthropology is a world central to him, to which he also is central. What had been lessons cease to be tasks and become insight. He rejects and accepts, not with the random motions of the child, but from a profound inner compulsion. Why colloid chemistry? Why does the carrying power of a stream vary as the eighth

power of its velocity? Why medical insurance? Why Hemingway and not Scott, Bartok and not McDowell, El Greco and not Sir Alma Taddema? When these questions trouble the mind, not as lessons but as philosophy, the young scholar begins to seek truth and ceases merely to study. If, as Robert Frost remarks, a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom, scholarship begins in curiosity and ends in assimilation. The course notes of every student accumulate, but the scholar assimilates where the undergraduate merely records.

Assimilation, however, is not enough. I do not know how it is in the sciences, but in the arts I notice how graduate students fall into two unequal groups - a large one which takes notes, a small one which reflects and thinks. Assimilated knowledge may be pedantry. I once knew a man who memorized the names of all the presidents of all the Latin American republics. But naming presidents is like cross-word puzzles, an occupation for one's idle hour; what matters is whether, by studying the lives of these officials, one can discover why the Anglo-Saxon theory of constitutional government does not succeed abroad. I will not listen to the shallow judgment that Tennyson never wrote a good poem, but I respect the student who weighs the excellence and defects of Tennyson against the excellence and defects of T.S.Eliot. Hard though it is to say how one comes into reflection, scholarship is a function of reflection upon knowledge. In a sense totally different from that Shakespeare meant, ripeness is all, which means that not assimilation only, but intellect is the heart of the scholar's mystery. It is interesting to know that Bacon took bribes, but is more important to have arrived at some notion why The Advancement of Learning helps explain values in the age of nuclear fission. So in every other field, not what the thing is, but what the thing is good for - here is the consideration that distinguishes the scholar from the pedant.

Mastery, intellect, courage. By courage I mean the capacity to announce and defend considered truth when appropriate occasion shall arise in the life of the state. But the courage to speak up has become the rarest virtue in American culture. The motto of the nation has become: "Don't stick your neck out." A

thousand forces today conspire against the statement of the unpopular. The press, the radio, the screen, government itself seem to be in league against the presentation of minority opinion. To declare for peace, to labor toward international understanding, to be counted for civil rights or a wider diffusion of medical care or fair employment practices or the prerogative of minority groups has meant in the cases of good and gentle friends of mine that they have been shadowed by government investigators, denounced over the air, and maligned in public prints. Europeans coming here, Americans who have been abroad and return, are saddened and bewildered by the hysteria for conformity which sweeps the land. Scholars who, deeply concerned over the gradual intrusion of the military into education or by the political secrecy which in our own country interferes with the free flow of science - such men, if they protest, protest at their peril. In the present mood of the nation Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Thoreau, Jane Addams would all have been discovered to be members of some sort of "subversive" organization, on the ipse dixit of a transient attorney general. Formerly we thought well of man - in fact, we built the republic upon his capacity to think for himself. Now it is fashionable to distrust him altogether, for man has again become the "thinking reed" whom Pascal so unfortunately defined. The drive to conform, to be afraid, sweeps all before it, and we present to a bewildered world the astonishing spectacle of the greatest nation on earth fearful of it knows not what.

What is the scholar's duty? Not, I am persuaded, to practice a fugitive and cloistered virtue; but neither do I believe it to be that incessant appeal to the public mind represented by the reappearance of the same names on a score of petitions and protests. Yet there comes a time when the conscientious scholar must announce his stand; and when he does so, he must speak as scholar - that is, with the courage of one who has assimilated knowledge to intellect. When he does so, it is the duty - alas! how often evaded! - of the institution he serves and of its graduates, to applaud his courage and protect his place, even though dean and presi-

dent and alumni and governing boards disagree with his utterance. For, indeed, if we continue our downward course, if we insist upon stifling the individual voice, if we demand a total and timid acquiescence by teachers and students in whatever mood or political fashion the current government in Washington or the state capital represents - how shall we differ from those states we went to war to destroy? You who today assume for the first time the formal emblems of scholarship, you, so far as I may, I strictly charge with the duty of protecting for the rest of your lives those independent voices from the colleges and elsewhere, whose independence has been traditionally, and still should be, the finest voice of America. And this I venture to do in the name of that scholarship whose robes you wear and whose diploma by the ceremony of this hour you acquire.

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