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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

## When Research Is Not Enough: Community, Care, and Love

*Yvonna S. Lincoln*

Higher education is the target of multiple attacks, even, one might say, friendly fire. The attacks have come both from external sources—some of whom are sympathetic to higher education’s broader purposes, and some of whom have already sharp and deadly axes to grind sharper still—and from within (Readings, 1996). Each of us can easily review in our minds the stinging, and often exaggerated and unfair, criticisms leveled by such works as *The Closing of the American Mind* (Bloom, 1987), *Profscam* (Sykes, 1988), and *The Tenured Radicals* (Kimball, 1990). Criticism directed at the overall productivity of the professoriate has been disheartening and demoralizing, largely because it tars with a large brush thousands of individuals who have given their lives to teaching, research, academic advising, collegial governance, and service and have done so, as the Lakota Sioux say, “with a good heart.”

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### CRITICISM FROM OUTSIDE THE ACADEMY

Higher education is undergoing severe criticism from outside its walls (O'Brien, 1998). In a broader social sense, we are under fire because the devolution of responsibility for various social programs from the federal government to the states has meant hard choices about limited dollars. In the context of rising demands (and indeed, needs) for increased social services, and in the wake of Reaganomic social policies which successfully argued that the major benefits to accrue from a college education belonged primarily to the individual, rather than to the community or society, we have watched expenditures for higher education at the statewide level fail to keep pace with inflation. Higher education, alongside other social goods and services, appears to be an increasingly discretionary expenditure (Nelson, 1997a, 1997b).

Another tragic inheritance from the social and fiscal policy of the 1980s has been the seemingly rational quest for increased efficiency, for "doing more with less," for "running a lean (mean) operation." In the corporate world, this approach has meant simultaneously higher corporate profits and subsequent massive social dislocation, as businesses have engaged in so-called downsizing (or "rightsizing"), releasing hundreds of thousands of primarily older workers. It is not unusual to read that AT&T has furloughed 11,000 employees on a single day, or that another Fortune 500 company—IBM is a good example—has just eliminated 14,000 jobs. While it is true that higher education could likely look for many ways to increase its efficiency, it is nevertheless, dollar for dollar, not only highly productive in the sense that its expenditures return higher profits than any corporate efforts (Creech, Carpenter, & Davis, 1994), but it also represents an "industry" which has continued to expand virtually without downturn and for which demand continues to outstrip its capacity (Levine, 1997) for nearly 40 years. It has fired, relative to the corporate world, virtually none of its employees as part of a corporate downsizing effort even though it is a "mature industry" (Levine, 1997).

### INTERNAL CRITICISM

We are also experiencing severe criticism from within the academy. The institution of tenure, accused of protecting so-called dead wood, will likely undergo moderate to radical change. Some institutions have created *de facto* tenureless faculties through the simple expedient of no longer offering tenure-bearing contracts to new faculty (Selingo, 1998). Other institutions have sought to deal with the worst abuses of the tenure system by instituting systems of post-tenure review (Leatherman, 1998; Magner, 1995, 1996;

Tierney, in press) to track the productivity of faculty and release the less productive from the ranks.

There has been continuing criticism over the past two decades about the perceived overemphasis on research to the detriment of undergraduate teaching (Cordes, 1996). A new study links the underexpenditure of university foundation funds such as grants and bequests with the falling quality of undergraduate education and the ongoing scarcity of tenured and nationally visible professors in the undergraduate classroom (Wilson, 1998) or indeed, in any classrooms at all. Still other reports and media-attracting research findings claim that professors use universities as little more than holding companies for their own consulting activities (Anderson, 1992), abusing the regulations which sought to keep the professoriate current in business, industrial, and other fields by linking them with client groups outside the university (Sykes, 1988).

No doubt, many of the criticisms have their basis in some example or set of facts, although the pervasiveness of the abuses appears, to those who know these faculty and institutions intimately, to be overstated, unnecessarily punitive, and bordering on the libelous. For every professor who refuses to teach undergraduates, or who finds greater joy in the research arena than in classroom teaching, or who finds ways to get around the state-set limits on consulting days allotted, there are another fifty professors who enjoy teaching, who make strenuous efforts to balance the rigors of research with the communication of cutting-edge work to undergraduates and graduate students alike (Kennedy, 1997), and who consult well within the limits of policy and regulation, if at all. I look around me and see individuals who work hard to ensure diversity—even when confronted with the straitjacket of *Hopwood*—who go out of their way to think about equitable treatment for students, who dream of education as something more than certification for the corporate fast track, and who hope that the long-term research showing that the positive effects of higher education are sometimes not appreciated by students for some decades is true (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

#### A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT “TAKE” ON THE PROBLEM

I would like to offer a somewhat different “take” on the problems which confront higher education. I have discussed this perspective before (Lincoln, 1993), but I have thought much more deeply about the problems confronting higher education as the situation has grown more desperate. I tell my students—although I believe few of them actually understand what I mean or how anxious the statement makes me—that we are unlikely to survive the changing of the millennium with higher education in the form

which it has assumed over the past several centuries (Crone, 1998). When we think about change theory, we primarily imagine change as a process which we design and which we control—or at least direct. My belief is that some of the more profound forms of social and historical change happen without our conscious awareness of their impact, or without an appreciation for their long-term consequences, or even without our knowledge that it *is* change. Who could have forecast that the creation of the interstate highway system would lead to the demise of passenger rail service, and with it, aperiodic oil shortages and the overconsumption of a nonrenewable natural resource? Who might have thought about the destruction of vital, residential city life with the creation of planned, suburban communities? Who looked at the miracle chemicals that permitted the production of vast amounts of food for the underdeveloped world and prognosticated the eventual and nearly permanent degradation of lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater from fertilizer and pesticide poisoning in the run-off?

Willis Harman (1998), a widely respected futurist, wrote in his final book:

Imagine yourself a historian looking back from some time in the twenty-first century. What do you judge the most important thing that happened for the world in the twentieth century? Was it putting a man on the moon? Or creation of the United Nations? Or the development of nuclear weapons, or of computers and artificial intelligence?

My guess is that it will be something much less conspicuous to those of us who are living now, something whose significance will not be fully apparent for decades to come. (p. 21)

My sense is exactly the same as Harman's. I think we are looking at a series of subterranean changes in higher education that portend the same kind of forever-altered future, invisible to us now but being created as we speak.

I do not wish to offer criticism either from without or from within. Rather, I want to imagine a different future for higher education: one which we can direct, and one which is partly under our control. I began to think about this topic seriously three years ago, when I put together a symposium on academic collaboration. It was meant to focus on working in dyads and teams but turned into something much broader and more important. I invited a set of individuals to speak to the issue, especially to speak to what I labeled "psycho-social" aspects of collaborative processes. I called them "psycho-social" because they constituted both psychological reasons to engage in collaboration and social satisfactions to be gained from it. Each of the individuals had collaborated widely, and all of them had collaborated with at least one other individual in the group, often with more than one. As I read their papers, I saw something which I still find as compelling and

moving as virtually anything I have read in higher education. Ann Austin (1996) wrote:

Collaboration for me has been a personal and political choice. . . . When I collaborate, I believe that I am expressing something about what I value in my life and work and what I want the academy of which I am a member to be (p. 12).

It seems useful to ask what we want our own institutions to be, and how we can influence that vision to appear. The issue is actively working to realize—to make real—the kinds of institutions in which we want to live and work, and the kinds of institutions we would like to hand on to the next generation of young faculty members. At the moment, there is but a tattered vision of what the life of the mind could be like, especially as the academy is increasingly characterized by diversity—a substantive, gendered, ethnic, and internationally diverse faculty (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998). Our role now is to position ourselves to hand on to the generation behind us an academy revitalized, full of *élan*, and eager for their commitment (Kolodny, 1998).

Some ideas have already been proposed to guide this repositioning. Parker Palmer has written compellingly about the deliberate and thoughtful recreation of community in higher education (1983) and about the passion for and commitment to teaching (1993; 1998), as has Boyer (1990). Tierney (1993) has proposed a way of thinking about thinking which would permit us to build “communities of difference” within the academy, communities that are marked by “dialogues of respect” that take place in “border zones” where conceptions of reality vary tremendously, and where the values and characteristics we bring to higher education are sometimes perceived as in conflict. He speaks of returning to the Greek ideal of *agape*, a form of love embedded in a sense of common humanity, in brotherhood and sisterhood, and in deep and abiding respect, especially for difference and its varied richnesses. Gamson, likewise, has written about the ongoing fragmentation of a sense of community within higher education (1994, 1996). Mark Schwehn (1993) imagines an academy revitalized by a sense of the spiritual, by means of reintegrating the religious vocation with learning.

I want to echo their words, but enlarge upon them. For those who engage in qualitative research, the term *bricolage* will be familiar. In qualitative research, the practice of *bricolage* is the practice of bringing together, typically in a methods sense, whatever appears to work best in a given context, and with a given group of research participants. It is very much a signal that an inquirer has no preconceived forms of inquiry to which she or he is irretrievably committed. Rather, the inquirer works in a way which is both respectful of the particular context and, at the same time, communi-

cates that a borrowing of tools, methods, and traditions is occurring. Schwehn (1993) also uses the term *bricolage* though his intent is different. His project is a reclamation of “deep meaning” for higher education. In fashioning a new ethic for academia, he describes *bricolage* as “the borrowing from various vocabularies, some contemporary, others retrieved from the past and revived, in order to fashion a critical re-description of a form of human life” (p. 40). Rather than borrowing among methods, he borrows from the vocabularies of ethical systems. This is my project here.

In a class last spring, in those few early moments before time to start, as students assembled and laid out their notebooks and teachers usually line up their handouts and try out the overhead projector, my students asked me what my presidential address was going to be about. Without thinking about it, because my mind was on class matters, I said, “love.” Much to my surprise, my students were delighted at the idea. We got into a conversation far afield from the class material, and I asked them why they wouldn’t think that love was a rather strange and “non-researchy” topic. They looked around at each other, and one of them—often a spokesperson for the class’s feelings about some matter—said, “Well, because for most of us, this is the first class we’ve ever had in higher education where we really knew the professor loved us.”

I was stunned. “What,” I said, “does that mean to you?”

Much of what they told me for the next hour reflected the best writing of the most concerned observers of higher education today—some of whom I have already cited—and I would like to share what my students, many of whom (in that class) were not higher education majors, said, and how that led me to think once again about how we might restore “community” to the higher education community.

For the next hour, the students agreed to be an informal focus group and to think about teaching, learning communities, and caring within the academy. It was astonishing to discover that they often thought about teaching and even about what it might mean to be partners in a learning community. Their words spoke to the “revivified . . . critical re-description” of life in colleges and universities which seems imperative at this moment in history.

### COMMUNITY

My students talked about community, especially a learning community. They were dead certain that “graduate school” was different from “learning community.” They said they felt they had, after many hours of formal coursework, finally, embarked on “an intellectual adventure.” Some of them said that for the first time, they felt as though they had a guide instead of an

“assigned instructor.” They linked this distinction to the idea of a learning community.

Michael Ignatieff (1985), talking about community, said:

Words like *fraternity*, *belonging*, and *community* are so soaked with nostalgia and utopianism that they are nearly useless as guides to the real possibilities of solidarity in modern society. Modern life has changed the possibilities of civic solidarity, and our language stumbles behind like an overburdened porter with a mountain of old cases.

... Our task is to find a language for our need for belonging which is not just a way of expressing nostalgia, fear and estrangement from modernity. (pp. 138-139)

In much the same way, “learning community” has become a nostalgic and debased term representing something for which we long but seem to have little hope of attaining. Parker Palmer has discussed at length the objectifying and alienating effects of the particular ways in which we practice science in the academy and the language we use to talk about the knowledge we are trying to create or transmit. His insight into academic research was that somehow, in maintaining the subject-object dualism of science and its associated language, we have managed to objectify both our students and our colleagues and, concomitantly, to objectify the knowledge we have tried to transmit to them. In so doing, we have created the “fear and estrangement” of which Ignatieff speaks. The long-term effect has been to sever students from the knowledge we offered and to rupture our own relationships with them (Palmer, 1983, 1998). The “commodification” of knowledge (Lincoln, 1998) decried by some of our colleagues is not simply a function of a hungry market that will pay for that knowledge; it is also a result of how members of the professoriate have treated the knowledge we seek and find, and how we share that knowledge with our colleagues and students. We have lost our sense of the sacredness of the pursuit of knowledge and the redemptive power of finding it. We have lost sight of the transformation that occurs between the seeking and the finding. The spiritual dimensions of gaining knowledge and giving it meaning by incorporating it within a moral and cultural framework appears to have been set aside in favor of more tangible rewards. Who among us has shared recently with students the sense of wholeness, connectedness, or “flow” we’ve felt after some long struggle with a manuscript when the insights suddenly fall into place? How will they otherwise know or understand the private pleasures or secret joys of writing as a way of coming to know? (Richardson, 1994; in press) When was the last time that we shared with them not only something we have written but also the intellectual twists and turns which led us to engage in a particular form or piece of writing? How do we explain our



own processes of finding and shaping a problem, so that they comprehend both the hard work and the profound satisfactions?

Palmer (1993) also has insightfully observed that the community is enlarged and made more meaningful when we understand that “every way of knowing has its own moral trajectory” (p. 27)—a way of saying that how we come to know has moral overtones. No forms of knowledge and no ways of knowing are without human implications in moral arenas. All knowledge is, in part, guilty knowledge, merely because humans produce it. Until we share with students the moral affinities of our epistemologies, they will continue to believe that knowledge is separate from, and sometimes irrelevant to, their lives and themselves as moral beings.

In part, I believe this particular class could focus on the sense of community because it is a class where we are very much engaged in discourse about forms of research and ways in which we can come to know that are respectful and that contribute to human dignity and the richness of difference. This particular class of students is sensitive to the possibilities of community and of engaging in research which creates rather than undermines community. The moral dimensions of research are embedded conversations in our discussions of research ethics. But their observations on the establishment of what they called “a weekly community” reflected their own sense that they were engaged in a mutual and collective collaboration with someone who is also on a journey. This journey is sometimes deeply engaged with the moral and ethical dimensions of knowing.

And that led me to an insight. A simple one, really. But it was the sure and certain insight that however faltering or flawed my efforts, I long to be—and try to stay—a learner. And that led me to another realization: that not all of our colleagues are themselves learners in the learning community. Community itself is defined by mutuality and reciprocity. But that mutuality and reciprocity is undermined—and unequal relations are created—when students are expected to learn from those who are themselves no longer learning.

We have all known colleagues who seem to have withered on the vine, however painful it might be to recognize their state. Perhaps one responsibility that goes with “community” is the commitment to work with those colleagues who seem to have lost their zest for learning, their excitement for an intellectual adventure of their own making. In the eager pursuit of our own intellectual satisfactions, we might have lost sight of the developmental needs of others who may not share our energy or psychological makeup, or who may have gotten sidetracked or otherwise derailed from the spirit of shared inquiry. It is not simply that institutions have “dead wood”; that is the industrial model of higher education. In any event, “dead wood,” like rumors of Mark Twain’s death, have been greatly exaggerated. It is that

we<sup>1</sup> are somehow failing to enlist and energize the entire community with a developmental model that nourishes the human spirit and fosters growth, not only in our students but also in ourselves. We must seek new forms of engagement if we are to restore élan to the profession of caring teaching and disciplined inquiry.

### CARING

A community is a place where people care for each other. They care for you. And your responsibility to the community, if you are a member of it, is to care for them in return. Caring does not mean that you have to like every individual, or even that you must share a certain way of knowing about the world. I especially do not believe that, in order to care, one must share a way of knowing. Quite the opposite. As Tierney (1993), Austin (1996) and Noddings (1984) make clear, albeit in different ways, disciplining ourselves to care about those who think and feel differently from us may enlarge and deepen our very capacity for caring. Caring is not just a description or a characteristic; it is a form of relating, a form of relationship.

Noddings argues that caring exists within a framework, a framework which is often a framework of community, or a set of integrated, responsive, often cherished, ties. Care is not just the friendship, affection, love and/or respect which we give individuals who belong to us by virtue of some set of connections or bonds. It is also an ethic—a system within which moral judgments are predicated not simply on legal justice, but rather on the sense of community responsibility, individual need, trust, friendship, and mutual obligation. It contains elements of brotherhood and sisterhood (*agape*; cf. Tierney, 1997), but also of charity and edification (*caritas*; cf. Schwehn, 1993, pp. 10-14, 44-48), and friendship (*philia*; cf. Schwehn, 1993, pp. 61-63). It also contains elements of *eros*, love in the form of physical desire and passion turned toward the mutual project of learning itself.

### LOVE

Leo Buscaglia, who written often of the human need for love, observed pointedly: “To a great extent, the job of dealing with love is left to poets, philosophers and holy men. Scientists seem to avoid the subject” (1972, p. 87). He quotes Abraham Maslow, reflecting that:

It is amazing how little the empirical sciences have to offer on the subject of love. Particularly strange is the silence of the psychologists. Sometimes it is merely sad or irritating, as in the case of the text-books of psychology and sociology particularly, none of which recognizes the subject. (p. 87)

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<sup>1</sup>I use “we” not to indict, but rather to indicate that this is addressed to the professoriate as a whole, myself included.

Buscaglia continues:

Pitirim Sorokin, the famed Harvard sociologist, in his book, *The Ways and Power of Love*, explains why he feels the scientist has long avoided the discussion of love. He states: "The sensate minds emphatically disbelieve in the power of love. It appears to us something illusionary. We call it self-deception, the opiate of people's minds, idealistic bosh, unscientific delusion. We are biased against all theories that try to prove the power of love and other positive forces in determining human behavior and personality; in influencing the course of biological, social, mental and moral evolution; in affecting the direction of historical events; *in shaping social institutions and culture*. In the sensate milieu they appear to be unconvincing, unscientific, prejudiced and superstitious." (p. 88; emphasis mine)

Thus, scientists have ignored love as a psychological construct, as a human motivation, as a meaningful component of community, and as an aspect of moral behavior. We are sometimes squeamish about mixing science or teaching with love. Buscaglia elaborates his thesis on the importance of love:

Love is a dynamic interaction, lived every second of our lives. All of our lives. . . man is either *growing* in love, or dying. . . . If one wishes to know love, one must live love, in action. To think or read about love or carry on profound discourses on love is all very well, but in the last analysis, will offer few if any real answers. (pp. 89-91)

Parker Palmer extends this idea, asserting that, "knowing is loving." He believes that

Curiosity is an amoral passion, a need to know that allows no guidance beyond the need itself. . . .

But another kind of knowledge is available to us, one that begins with a different passion and is drawn toward other ends. . . . This is a knowledge that originates not in curiosity or control, but in compassion, or love—a source celebrated not in our intellectual tradition but in our spiritual heritage. . . .

The goal of a knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds. A knowledge born of compassion aims not at exploiting and manipulating creation, but at reconciling the world to itself. . . . The act of knowing *is* an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own. In such knowing, we know and are known as members of one community, and our knowing becomes a way of reweaving the community's bonds. (1983, pp. 7-9; emphasis his)

Perhaps because to talk of love is to enter the arena of *eros*, of desire, of passion and compassion, of intellectual arousal, perhaps because teaching and interacting with good students is part and parcel of the "calculus of

intimacy” (Murphy, 1993), love is, as Palmer and Buscaglia say, foreign to the academy, foreign even to the scholarly study of human life which characterizes psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education. But it need not be; and indeed, a new language revived with the terms of passion, transformation, and human fulfillment could help us recreate an academy rededicated to the creation of human community.<sup>2</sup>

Before our extended conversation was over, I asked the students that night, “What makes you think I love you?” In one of the most humbling episodes of my teaching life, I took notes for nearly an hour. This is what they said:

When we get back papers from other professors, we just have grades on them. But you go through and correct our grammar. And if our grammar is pretty good, you “edit” and show us ways in which our sentences could be more graceful. Or clearer. When you finish, we know what we did right and we know what we did wrong. And we know what’s missing. And we know when we had a good idea. Nobody else has ever given us feedback like this. That’s how we know you love us.

As a part of this advanced fieldwork methods course, the students must maintain “reflexive journals” throughout the semester. In the journals, they record the joys and frustrations arising from their own fieldwork, thoughts on their interactions with an extended readings list, commentary on classwork, insights they may have had. Sometimes, students write poetry, which they feel better captures some particular feeling or intent. Some of the more aesthetically inclined do drawings (particularly the architecture students, who seem to have exceptional talent for exquisite line work). Sometimes they fret and fuss in writing; sometimes, they rage. Sometimes, they mourn their truncated family lives, sacrificed temporarily to the goals of graduate school. They often remark in these journals that they wanted more out of graduate school than they think they’re getting.

They want to know that their sacrifices will be rewarded by a profound and passionate transformational experience. Many of them—contrary to the prevailing discourse—do not see themselves as our customers, nor do they want to see us as merchants, or purveyors of intellectual consumer goods, shopkeepers. I believe, and my students said to me, that they want meaningful interactions, intellectual challenges, and something that is very like “tough love.”

I believe there are ways in which we can make our love known to them, as they embark on the journeys that meet our own at many crucial junctions. I believe there are ways in which they can join with us in creating

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<sup>2</sup>John Bean (1998) has written in a similar vein. Although this piece was written prior to the publication of his work, we clearly share many of the same concerns.

community, understand our sense of care enough to pass it on to those with whom they work, and share in the love we have for our own learning.

My students shared with me six ways in which they believe they sense love and caring from a teacher in a classroom. These ways follow, in no particular order. First, they said they enjoy having my comments on their journals as well as their papers. The reflexive field work journals are, admittedly, intensely personal sets of writing. They are, however, a necessary tool of qualitative researchers, and their use has been standard since the time of Bruno Malinowski, so requiring such work is good teaching practice.

One student said, "I feel as though I'm in a long conversation with you. You 'talk back' on my journal entries." Another student said, "I never really knew whether what I was talking about in my journal made any sense to anyone else in the world until I got your comments back. Then was the first time in this fieldwork business that I knew I wasn't alone. I can't tell you how it made me feel to know that other students had some of the same problems and worries." I like the idea of being in an ongoing "conversation" with my students, and they clearly prize the feeling, too.

Second, they said that they like having teachers go through correcting their grammar and showing them how sentences might be more elegantly crafted. One of my quieter students said of this process, "I hated it when I got back papers from you, but now I know that my dissertation will be better because you helped me with this." Another student, an international student, said to me, "My English has gotten a lot better since you began helping me. My advisor noticed when I got my draft [dissertation] proposal in." Some of our students do need to work on their writing skills. They sense, when you go beyond their ideas to the expression of those ideas, that you really do care about them and their growth. Working on writing is a form of mentoring for which we have little time; but our better students see it as that extra step that means care.

Laurel Richardson (1994; in press) argues compellingly that fieldwork is not, as others have suggested, merely "writing down" field notes, then "writing up" the case study. Rather, there are many intermediate steps, a series of texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; in press) along the road to various publications. In the preparation of those texts, writing itself assumes a new importance. Writing becomes not merely a vehicle for passing along to our inquiry community the findings and insights we have located, but rather it becomes a way, in and of itself, of making discoveries: about the subjects into which we are inquiring, about ourselves, about our skills in the field, and about our relationships, both with our research participants and with our own disciplinary communities.

Third, my students said they felt empowered because they now knew that they had choices when they engaged in research. Several commented

that this course was the first time in graduate school where they understood that they could exercise choices. These comments may say that we have a program overly heavy with requirements or they may say something about the sense we create in students that there is only one way to do things rigorously—and that is our way. I do not know what the answer is to this problem, but I suspect we ought to foster an atmosphere of more openness—openness to experimentation, openness to choice, and perhaps openness to more work outside of our own colleges.

They said, fourth, that while some courses were “hard,” others were “demanding”—and there was a difference. This is a critical dimension in teaching, and perhaps we have too much of the former, and not enough of the latter. The hard ones, they said, were those where the course content was unfamiliar, alien, and sometimes fear-producing; the demanding ones, on the other hand, were those in which they came to believe they could do the work, but knew they would have to work very hard to do well. The first, they label “Fear City”; the second, they label “Toughlove.”

They said to me that they “loved toughlove” because it made them understand the real meaning of graduate work, because it helped them to understand what they were capable of, and because they began to develop trust in themselves as a result of doing the work and learning to do it well. This suggests to me that we don’t demand enough of our students. The best ones rise to the challenge of good teaching and interesting assignments. They sense the drudgery of “make-work” assignments and intuitively understand that they are somehow being cheated when they are required to engage in such activities. They know, however, when they confront unique assignments, that teachers have spent time thinking about the connection between the content, the application, and their interests.

Fifth, students despise what they call the “95-Very Good Syndrome.” The best ones enjoy having lots of feedback on their papers. How often, rushed for time, have we sent papers back to students barely read? We have seen their work before, perhaps, and so we simply mark the good grades we “know” they are earning, without really engaging their ideas or quarreling with them. My students said to me, “We know you love us, because you really read our papers! Ninety-five percent of the time, we don’t even know whether a professor has read our papers or not.” I do not think my institution is particularly unique. And this is not the first institution where I have either worked or consulted where students have shared with me privately such suspicions or the reputation that some professors have for not reading their students’ papers.

This is not love. This is not care. It is definitely not community. Perhaps it is a place where we need to work not with our students, but with our colleagues, to set standards for what is, at a minimum, good teaching. While

each teacher crafts a singular or unique identity as a teacher, no one of us can be considered a member of the learning community when she or he returns papers unread, unevaluated, unengaged.

Sixth, one of my students, an extremely reflective individual, observed something that I knew was true but did not clearly understand until last spring. He said that he finally understood what it meant to have “psychological space” in the classroom. He felt he had “space” and then was free to understand that, not only is there no genuine or absolute objectivity in the research process, but there is none in teaching, either. All subjects and course content, he now knew, came from some perspective. The consequence, he realized, was that everything he’d learned came from someone’s viewpoint. He wished that he’d understood that earlier; but in any event, he would see the remainder of his coursework in a very different light from this point forward.

Why are we so afraid to demonstrate that our teaching embodies our own personalities, our own professional identities, our own “takes” on a subject, our own perspectives? Are we afraid that we will surrender some of our emotional detachment? Or, perhaps, some of our objectivity? Loving means that we bring our *selves* to the process. When we fail to communicate that students are not getting transcendent knowledge but merely our choices in content and our own sense of what is important, our students are not getting the whole story. This lack of humility undermines community, and it is sufficiently authoritarian that some will believe we do not care for their development as critical thinkers.

### EPILOGUE

I have tried to suggest that we in the professoriate need a new way of thinking about ourselves and the work we do—not only to respond to external critics, but also to respond to our deepest sense that the institutions we have today are not the ones we want, nor are they the institutions we want to hand off to the new generation of faculty we are teaching at this moment. I am mindful that opening up a conversation about what we are and whether it is what we want to be is one way to bring about transformation over time. We can talk about our life, our work, and our callings in different ways. We have excellent guides. Parker Palmer and others have advice worth heeding. We can change. We must.

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