another kind of story—a history to which Benjamin's words bring a different meaning. Was that object transformed into something closer to a cultural treasure, the kind of object that, as Benjamin points out so astutely in the seventh thesis of his "On the Concept of History," was always carried along in triumphal processions and used to draw the powers of empathy into the service of the victors (*Selected Writings*; vol. 4 [Belknap–Harvard UP, 2003; print; 391])?

The tale of misleading quotations from Benjamin meanders away to grow as long as the pinnacles of his prose rise high. In her book on the demise of comparative literature, Gayatri Spivak cites a "lovely aside" Benjamin makes in his essay "Critique of Violence" to invest her way of teaching emancipation with a little of his weight (*Death of a Discipline* [Columbia UP, 2003; print; 33]). In its original context, the line notes the absence of any law in Germany restraining schoolteachers from battering their pupils. One might want to glance briefly into the ash and shadow surrounding the authority of a man who developed the concept of a "pure, divine violence" and whose criticism of Goethe's novel practiced a "sublime violence" in the name of God for the purpose of "shattering it into a thing of shards" ("Critique of Violence"; *Selected Writings*; vol. 1 [Belknap–Harvard UP, 1996; print; 252]). So far in history we have not seen any violence that is divine, even when it is just, and it may well be that we never shall. Extracting fragments from testimony to make a point contrary to the statement in which they appear is also a form of violence. We need, surely, to reflect on how far we should go with that, do we not?

Marcus Bullock
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Why Do Research?

To the Editor:

The question "why do research?" echoes the title of Mark Edmundson's recent book *Why Teach? In Defense of a Real Education* (Bloomsbury USA, 2013; Nook file). Edmundson admirably advocates for an education that matters but is in short supply in the corporate university. Unfortunately, he repeats the cultural truism that "scholarly work . . . has precious little to do with the fundamentals of teaching" (54). In a review of *Why Teach?*, "How Four Years Can (and Should) Transform You," Michael S. Roth picks up this line of argument in opposing "esoteric research" to the real pedagogical work of higher education (*The New York Times*; New York Times, 20 Aug. 2013; Web; 17 Jan. 2014). However, for many gifted and committed teachers, research and teaching cannot and should not be separated. That's a lesson we should be professing to colleagues, administrators, and the general public. Interestingly, many of the students most invested in acquiring a real education rather than a résumé have already learned that lesson.

I was honored to receive a university-wide award for distinguished teaching the same year that my first book was published. The proximity of those two events was no coincidence. It's easy to see the connection between teaching and research when we teach upper-level, specialized courses in our areas of expertise—that is, when our research directly feeds our teaching. Our ambitious research agendas enable us to answer seemingly random—and sometimes off-the-wall—questions with an impromptu mini-lecture, often complete with recommendations for further reading. Our scholarly pursuits provide an extra level of class preparation every day.

What's not so obvious is that many of us are empathetic but demanding writing teachers in first-year general education courses because we have ambitious research agendas. We regularly wrestle with difficult arguments and why they matter; we dance and battle with the written word; we revise and edit; we recast arguments so that they are sharper and clearer and take into account additional evidence. So we respect our young students' struggles with

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the writing process because we share them. But while we identify with students as writers, we hold them to high standards and don't let them off the hook—in large part because we don't let ourselves off the hook.

At my liberal arts institution, our university-wide teaching awards are initiated by student nominations, followed up by careful review of teaching portfolios by a committee of faculty members from diverse disciplines. Most of the winners of these awards are accomplished scholars who are also rigorous, passionate teachers rather than classroom entertainers; most of the student nominators are intellectually ambitious and committed students. As these nominators know or intuit, quality research and quality teaching often go together as readily as love and marriage (gay or straight).

Of course, some university professors disdain teaching in favor of "their own work." Anyone with a PhD and many with a bachelor's degree have sat through excruciating courses in which scholars taught their own books without any regard for the students in front of them. I remember a graduate course that was supposed to be a survey of early American literature. Instead, I was required to read not one but four novels by James Fenimore Cooper and produce an annotated bibliography of Cooper criticism. That professor was using his students as his research assistants rather than providing them with the education they needed to become accomplished teacher-scholars. That faux educator has served as a monitory story throughout my career. In sharp contrast, Susan Gubar, one of my mentors, has been a positive and powerful role model as a prolific scholar, a public intellectual, *and* a demanding, inspiring teacher.

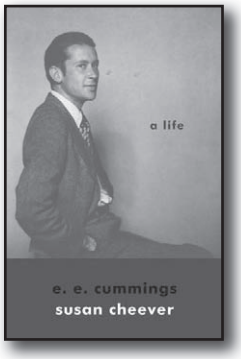
Notably, the biographical note at the end of *Why Teach?* describes the author as a "prize-winning scholar." In one of the book's more arresting essays, Edmundson argues that a real education requires us to slow down in a world that tweets us away from the present into the next possibility ("Dwelling in Possibilities" [32–48]). He positively counterpoints his summer of writing five drafts of a book chapter with a student's summer filled with unreflective, ADD-like activity. Despite Edmundson's claims to the contrary, his scholarly work and the habits of being they engender have much to do with the fundamentals of teaching that he professes.

When we think—or are taught to think—that research and teaching are opposing activities, we encourage competition between professors and students, to the detriment of both groups and to higher education. My own experiences as a teacher, as a scholar, and as a student suggest that we are all better served when we bring teaching and research productively together rather than pit them against each other. To do so, we must recognize the direct and the indirect value of the scholarly enterprise to the sacred art of teaching. To be or not to be a scholar is the wrong question for higher educators.

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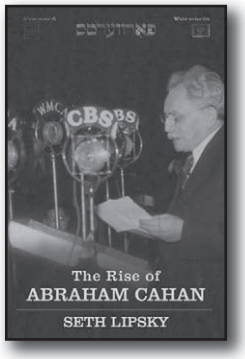
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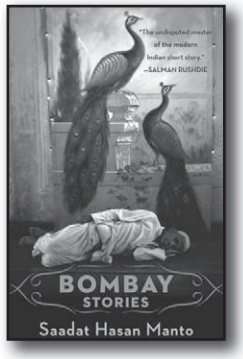
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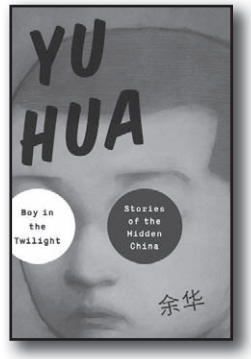


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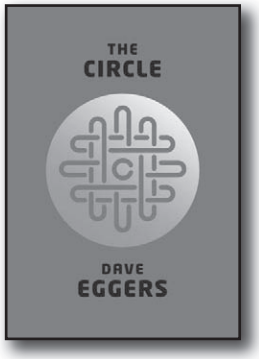


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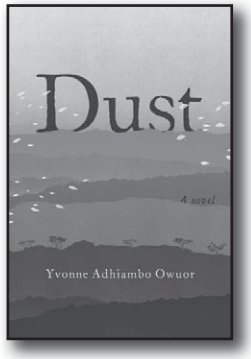
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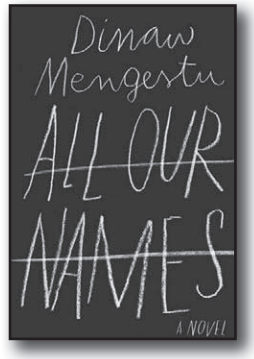
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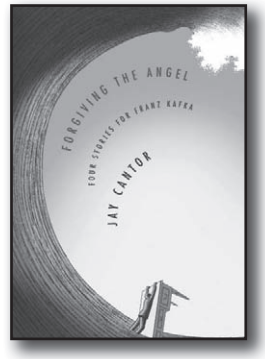
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