

WHY READ?

MARK EDMUNDSON

For Brian Lamb -

With warm con-
gratulations and gratitude.

Mark Edmundson

BLOOMSBURY

BOOKNOTES
BRIAN P. LAMB
C-SPAN AIR DATE

Yale (grad. str.) Woodstock Vermont
Long time ago
my children 12 and 14
attended grad school in 1979

Alan Bloom
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Richard Rorty

Forcault -
Patron saint of
wisdom? - to me in
the bunker of dungeons
in the air.
Merida

798. Mark Edmundson
Why Read?
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Religion - 1st question to students

Matter of belief is crucial to our common future

But what is old to the teacher is new to the student

Get to politics, love, money, the good life - Socrates
knew that's where real thinking starts.

Emerson's Circles p29

Ability to expand one's orbit is essential to ^{health of} democracy

Best beginning reader - to admit - he among all the rest is just
important job for teacher: allow students to make
contact with their ignorance. p35

Stanley Fish - his aim is to be as interesting as he can be
teaching critical thinking p114

James Edwards - normal nihilists - people who
believe in nothing - (except the achievement of their
own advantage)

Leonid Tullin - at first he 'loved' books

"So far we've left the quest of truth to Falwell and to faith"
p51

Truth read for truth?

Woodsworth - dull ache settling into his spirit

"We are blessed always if we live in the present" - Thoreau 58

Henry James - Portrait of a Lady - hated his lead
character

I often teach Iliad - (yale grad) because of
way women treated

Ancients - never accept 2nd place 71

Student athletes - go back ^{WHY READ?} Yes! It makes life
incredibly intense

Homer teaches thymos - desire for glory and praise

Do you like competition

African American student - Christian - like the Iliad
Who will it be Jesus or Achilles

Ultimate test of a book: is the difference it
would make in the conduct of life

BOOKNOTES
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Schopenhauer question - What is life
Shakespeare - cannot tell what he believed
Story of Emerson endorsing Walt Whitman's poems
taking a deep critical delight in a book or an
author is a like falling in love p94

In grad school - became a student of Freud

You say - your fellow scholar most of
whom actually dislike the authors they teach

82 I sometimes preside over a raucous classroom

I teach to "shape the future" not the past

All student perspectives are welcome in class
classroom is free space where they can speak
their minds

a Prof. I met philosophy of teaching

humanism - secular writing a way to shape
people's lives

History p115

condemns one to be the idealist in youth who becomes the disillusioned reactionary in old age.

grad students become dependant - they must make themselves marketable - and that often means betraying themselves

author - grew up in white working class

read auto. of Malcolm X

"The test of a book lies in its power to map or transform life" author 129

Pop culture - more and more taught at university
high school student to college
teachers loved Faulkner - student read Stephen King

Humanities we can teach what is worth taking seriously. "They need to know what's worth taking seriously" - Why?

literature we've come to value - most especially the novel

Religion is now very strong in US but I feel that promise for a large scale turn away from religion is near at hand. 137

Fread

Nietzsche

Arendt

* Democracy, and the democratic humanism
can make it unfold, these are my religion.
~~School should down~~ 25

Proust 107

they would not be my readers but readers
of their own selves.

Dickens - liberalism isn't condescending - it
confers a vitality on the beliefs

Burke prejudice p 115

Author: our current students - less rebellious
than any group I have encountered"

Teachers don't want power over students p 100

"To me there are few pleasures greater than
being influenced: learning something I need
to know from another." author

p 102 Many professors claim to be on left
fact - they do not trust or like unshaded people
they tend to despise the people in whose behalf
they claim to be working.

Robin Leaver - headmaster Woodstock Country School
Educational genius - understanding and
affection for 16 yr. olds & we never seen
separated "My friend is a loss" parents
School closed down 25 yrs. later - a reunion

Writers - Orwell or Dickens - Socialism D.
wouldn't endorse

Writers write books because they are not
satisfied by what is on the shelf p 99

Sleby Forte
Hansel Pount

Emerson -
Robert Richardson