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# Contemplative Reading: Generosity, Meaning-making, Intolerance

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*Students may read a text in much the same way they read a situation or another person. Critical reading can be a deeply self-aware and transformative process. However, at the undergraduate level, it can often be a mere analytical performance that reinforces the notion of radical discontinuity between historical eras and among human experiences. Contemplative reading, as a practice of generosity and connection, can generate self-awareness and transformative engagement with an Other, supporting critical reading. Contemplative readings of vilified or ignored subjects paired with students' direct experiences of their resistance can surface intolerance and encourage meaning-making. In this piece, a traditional assignment of weekly reading responses posted by students to a Learning Management System is revised into a Contemplative Reading assignment. This assignment makes visible the reading process to highlight the skills of generous reading, noticing novelty, recognizing emotional reactivity, owning emotions rather than projecting them, and meaning-making, thereby expanding students' capacities to engage with the world using critical, creative, and contemplative dispositions.*

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## **Introduction**

Over the years many English majors have confessed to me, somewhat proudly, that they no longer read a dinner menu or enjoy a movie without leaping to critical analysis of these texts. Frequently these same students tell me they had become English majors because they loved reading and that now, as junior and seniors, they hate it. While I have been proud of the ways students apply critical thinking skills to life outside the classroom, around 2011 I stopped to reflect: How did my pedagogy trans-

form students' love of reading into hate? And how might my pedagogy instead expand students' capacity to choose how to approach a text, a situation, a person, with not just suspicion and analytical rigor but also with humility, generosity, and curiosity? With love?<sup>1</sup>

At my academic institution, when we talk about pedagogy, *critical thinking* gets lots of attention while the contemplative processes that can precede and complement critical thinking go ignored.<sup>2</sup> That is, before critiquing an article, assumption, or theory, it could be very useful to sit with it on its own terms, give it a generous reading, and consider what we might learn from it (Fitzpatrick, 2019). Contemplative pedagogy creates such contemplative space for students to notice nonjudgmentally, to look and patiently look again, and to bring generous attention and curiosity to the subject at hand prior to moving into critique, analysis, and revision.

Such space can be created through the use of contemplative practices or activities inspired by them. In everyday life, I am among some contemporary contemplatives who engage in practices to interrupt and transform my habitual, unthinking reactions to stimuli. These practices allow me to take a pause to notice the internal and external situation before acting so that when I do act, I come from a place of intention; I "practice" so that my behaviors better align with my values. Basically, these practices introduce a contemplative pause between a stimulus and my response.

In an academic classroom context, a stimulus might be an assignment, a classmate's comment during class discussion, or an assigned text. Over the decades I have observed many students habitually reacting to such stimuli with critique, analysis, and sometimes even shutting-down from disgust, boredom, or frustration. I engage contemplative pedagogy to help students practice additional ways to respond—such as with generosity, curiosity, and patience—and we use contemplative practices to develop the habit of pausing, noticing, and choosing how to respond (Kinane, 2019).

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1 See Kinane, 2013 for early thoughts on this topic.

2 The experiences in this article refer to my professorship at a previous institution, not my current affiliation.

It has been my hope that such pausing may increase students' capacities to, when confronted with challenge, choose love. Here I use "love" similarly to the way that angel Kyodo williams does in a 2018 interview with Krista Tippett:

*Williams:* [...] It is developing our own capacity for spaciousness within ourselves to allow others to be as they are—that that is love. And that doesn't mean that we don't have hopes or wishes that things are changed or shifted, but that to come from a place of love is to be in acceptance of what is, even in the face of moving it towards something that is more whole, more just, more spacious for all of us. It's bigness. It's allowance. It's flexibility. [...] I think that those things are missed when we shortcut talking about King, or we shortcut talking about Gandhi. We leave out the aspects of their underlying motivation for moving things, and we make it about policies and advocacy, when really it is about expanding our capacity for love, as a species.

*Tippett:* That's so interesting, to just focus on that word, "movement"—because again, if we just take a reality base, you don't move people by hating them or criticizing them. And you don't always move people by loving them, but you don't have a chance of doing it with the other tools.

Love, in this sense, counteracts denial. Loving acknowledgement of even that which I find abhorrent allows me to understand myself and contexts better, to move into action with care and live in alignment with my values. Teaching is one way I live my values in the world: I create contemplative space in a literature classroom and invite students to, just for a little while, treat a text the way they may treat a beloved friend. Those who take me up on this invitation practice temporarily bringing care, passion, generosity, and patience to difficult ideas, texts, people, and situations; they practice a hermeneutics of love (Jacobs, 2001) to complement suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970) and critical thinking and advance the cause of justice (williams et al., 2016).

Following Zajonc (2009), I see contemplation as a mode of inquiry, as a process that develops habits of mind that allow for close and deep engagement to complement critical thinking and creative expression. Like many other faculty who have written in this journal and elsewhere, I orient courses, assignments, and activities so that students can give this contemplative attention to a subject—be it a person, idea, text, piece of music, or natural or social phenomenon. Reading, listening, or observing “closely” involves bringing one’s attention to the subject of study, noticing when the mind wanders or projects, and returning the attention to the subject at hand. Reading, listening, or observing “deeply” involves patience so that the subject of study may reveal more of itself over time with repeated attention. Such close and deep contemplative attention usefully precedes and informs analysis, critique, discussion, debate, analysis, interpretation, critique. And it takes practice.

Mind you, before I had learned about contemplative pedagogy I would *tell* students all of the time to do these things—to read, listen, and look closely. However, while I might have *told* students to do these things, and I may have *expected* them to do them, in truth students very often skipped this contemplative process and leapt to producing the critical or creative product. Now, however, I explicitly give students time and space to tend to the contemplative process; I signal its value using our existing mode of currency—the grade—and I link it directly to other course goals and outcomes. As a result, I have seen improvements in students’ accurate recall of course material and their capacities for meaning-making. The sense of community in the classroom and my own enjoyment of the course have also improved as students communicate more thoughtfully with one another and reveal to me fresh approaches to and interpretations of texts (Brown, 2017).

When I invite students to take a contemplative pause—through a practice, activity, or assignment—it is an invitation for them to develop habits of patience, awareness, humility, generosity, and metacognition (Komjathy, 2018). It is also a chance for them to work closely with my discipline’s materials. Crafting assignments and activities that make visible this contemplative process can balance the students’ attention to what they will argue, create, demonstrate, or prove (their product) with atten-

tion to their process and their existing environments, be they scholarly, creative, natural, or social. For example, typically, if the assignment is “read this poem and write a response,” the reading becomes invisible and the thing of value is the response, the critical, the “what I think” rather than “what it says.”

One technique I will share in detail here is inspired by contemplative reading practices from Jewish and Christian traditions wherein readers approach a text with faith in the text’s capacity to have meaning, a curiosity about how it speaks to them, and an intention to gain wisdom from the experience that can be carried into lived life. *Lectio Divina*, for example, as will be familiar to readers of this journal, requires a quieting of the analytical mind, a faith in the text’s ability to have meaning, and an openness to transformation (Augustine, 1958; Keator, 2019). Adopting such dispositions challenges my undergraduate students, particularly seniors, who have honed critical reading practices. They are much more comfortable being suspicious of the text. They come to my courses primed to critique, dissect, argue, and analyze. Critical thinking, critical theory, and critical inquiry have a very robust presence within the program I teach; this context allows me to teach “contemplative” as a complementary disposition to the “critical” habits of mind with which students are already familiar.

Contemplative pedagogy balances my interest in what I think students should know and do—the content and skills of my disciplines—with *how they want to be*. Contemplative pedagogy works with dispositions, with how students want to move through the world. The contemplative reading technique below brings attention to the reading process and *how* students are being with the material. But it features a few additional components tailored to my pedagogical contexts: the two aims of bringing awareness to personal intolerance and of transforming habits of confirmation bias. After all, *contemplative practices are deeply transformative*. As instructors we must be very intentional about what it is we hope to transform by engaging in contemplative pedagogy.

As to whether contemplative practices in general and this assignment in particular have moved the dial on students’ capacities to love, alas, I can’t report on this outcome. I hope that one day, perhaps ten years from now, a student will email me and let me know how their expe-

riences of love have evolved over the years and how our contemplative reading practices impacted those experiences. In the meantime, I am content knowing that students engaged meaningfully with one another and with course material and that this pedagogical approach allows me to live and enact my values in the world.

### **The Assignment: Weekly Preparation Prompts**

Before designing a contemplative assignment for my early British literature survey course and Senior Seminar on Mysticism and Contemplation, I identified the two things I had hoped contemplative practice could transform. First, students come to my classes with a firm sense of themselves as tolerant (or justified in their intolerance) that I want them to rethink. The assignment, therefore, aims to help students recognize their own intolerance. Second, students have a firm sense of an Other in place: The (medieval) past and (Christian) religious texts may be quaint historical artifacts, but they have nothing to teach us now. The assignment, therefore, encourages students to practice generous reading and to “try on” an attitude of curiosity so that they may see beyond what they expect to see (counteracting confirmation bias).

I modified a traditional weekly reading response assignment posted to an online learning management system so that students document their preparation and process rather than focusing merely on the production of argument, thesis, or critique. I describe the assignment a bit differently for each class and use various combinations of the following prompts each week, never assigning all six at the same time:

1. Students notice and write about moment to moment awareness of what arises for them, the reader, as they read. Grammatically, they keep the agency on the reader: What are you noticing? What are you resistant to? What are you drawn to? Students here describe cognitive, somatic, or affective responses that arise during reading. They may notice that they are bored, confused, annoyed, tense, or delighted by a particular passage they read.
2. Students explore the cognitive or biographical bases for their reactions: What experiences are informing your attractions

and aversions? What biases or beliefs are you confirming through what you notice and respond to? Students' subjective, "first-person" experiences become the object of "critical" analysis (Roth, 2006).

3. Students return to the text again, seeking novelty (Langer, 1998). What have I not noticed? What don't I know? What is not familiar? What is surprising? See *what else* it has to say beyond any initial expectations and reactions. This process counteracts the continual reinforcement of existing beliefs.
4. Students practice cultivating a disposition of open curiosity about the text. Rather than hunting for something to argue against or evidence to support their specific thesis, students notice these desires arise and try to return to the text with openness. I make the comparison to listening to a friend talk: If you're too concerned with what you're going to say next, you're not really present with them and listening. So, return to the text to examine its content, rhetoric, and contexts.
5. Students reflect upon what this text may have to teach about its *topic*. They consider: What may you learn about joy, suffering, duality, immanence, transcendence, nature—whatever the topic—through engagement with this text? What wisdom may you carry forward as a result of exploring your own expectations and projections, the words of the text themselves, and its contexts?
6. Students can, finally, engage in open response, including more familiar critique and analysis, according to course or students' learning goals.

The prompts of this assignment have been informed by my engagement with medieval Christian monastic practices (Augustine, 1958; Robertson, 2011, Keator, 2019), contemporary research on emotions and empathy (Barratt, 2017; Coan 2013, 2015; Klimecki et al., 2013), medieval and modern theories of reading (Nussbaum, 1995; Jacobs, 2001; Stock, 2001; Bennett, 2010; Wilhelm & Novak, 2011), mindfulness (Langer, 1998;



Berila, 2016), and eight years of intentional practice of contemplative pedagogy (after twelve years of traditional teaching in higher education).

### Contexts

In my English program at a mid-sized, predominantly white, public institution in rural New Hampshire, many if not all of my students identify as tolerant and open-minded people who are interested in engaging with many sensitive ideas and topics. Whether it is true or not, they represent themselves as tolerant of everything race-wise, class-wise, gender-wise. They don't see themselves as part of the problem of intolerance. Yet these same students often come to my class with the belief that western religions and medieval thinking can be completely dismissed or even hated because it is superstitious, oppressive, misogynistic, and that, following Hobbes, medieval life was "nasty, brutish, and short." While indeed the European Middle Ages deserve and receive serious critical attention in my courses, I am also interested in how students' purely negative assumptions prevent them from seeing the potentially interesting and useful things about this era and how those assumptions allow for uncritical praise of our own cultural moment.

Let me note that I know it can be problematic to ask students to compassionately engage with an oppressive, misogynistic cultural artifact. Here I am informed by Ruth King (2018), bell hooks (1994), and Beth Berila (2016), as well as angel Kyodo Williams as cited above: If we can't engage with what we want changed, we will not be able to change it. At times it is appropriate to face what we find repugnant and thoughtfully engage it.

Another note: It is likely that your students are radically different from mine. If students come to your courses uncritically revering the Great Authors and ready to embrace the timeless wisdom of a romanticized medieval era, your intention for transformation may be different from mine. As a result, your contemplative practice or assignment will look different. What I want to encourage in my fellow instructors is not rote adoption of my assignment, which may be completely inappropriate for your contexts, but rather deep reflection on what your pedagogy is doing, and why, and how *within your own contexts*.<sup>3</sup>

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3 See Dalton, Hall, and Hoyer (2019) for a collection of contextualized assignments using *lectio* and *visio divina*.

Because course enrollment is capped at 25, I have the capacity to respond in detail to students' postings on a weekly basis. Not all students post every week—I usually require students to post six to ten times a semester depending on the course level and other assignments. I've used a variety of grading methods with these postings over the years. In a course where they are "lower stakes" assignments that prepare students for more robust reflections, I grade the postings 2 points for "on target," 1 point for "approaching target," 0 for "no credit," and offer specific guidance on how to engage the dispositions we're aiming to develop with this reading process. Early in the semester I often need to do a bit of work to help students practice contemplative reading, which usually means redirecting them to the prompt. For example, I have had students earn a "0" for posting a traditional critique in response to prompts 1 and 2. Such a response did not identify their reactions to the text nor consider the basis for those reactions. Students can "redo" their first two postings and the lowest grade is dropped so that they have a chance to experiment with this new style of engagement. However, as discussed below, class experiences prepare students for this kind of writing and thinking; the online postings are an extension of the work we do in class and they build toward mid-semester and final projects. I find that by the second posting, most students have gotten the hang of it and enjoy the novelty and power of this style of writing and thinking.

## **Discussion**

I would like to discuss in detail some steps suggested in the prompts above.

Students must be prepared for this assignment. Traditionally, contemplative reading is performed with texts for which a reader already has an affinity or a belief in, such as scripture. In my academic classrooms, I am inviting students to read contemplatively something they don't know, have no reason to respect, or may even have some pre-existing hostility towards. Therefore, before asking my students to engage in a graded contemplative reading assignment, I weave smaller-stakes activities throughout the course to help students practice a disposition hospitable to such an assignment. To practice feeling generosity, patience, and

curiosity, we do contemplative reading, listening, and looking exercises with one another, brief texts, music, and personal items. We also engage activities that ask students to read, write, and discuss rather intimately a range of topics, including:

- What do you feel humbled by? In awe of?
- What “Un-Googleable questions” most interest you? (For example, What is love? What happens after death? Is there a God? What is my “self”? How can I be kind to others and true to myself?)
- Call to mind a beloved friend and imagine the text as that friend. How might you listen to it?

I would urge individual educators to find context-appropriate activities to help their students tap into whatever dispositions the contemplative assignment calls upon, in this case, humility, curiosity, and generosity. The important point here is that this assignment is not merely dropped into a course but rather the disposition required to do this assignment is cultivated in various ways throughout the course: It is *practiced*.

In this assignment, contemplative reading involves moment-to-moment awareness of what is arising for students internally as they read and noting when it happens. In prompt one, students notice what they notice both about the text and their reactions to it. While it could seem that “noticing something about the text” and “noticing your own reaction” are two separate acts, these two processes are in fact deeply connected. Students frequently notice something *because* it has provoked a thought or feeling in them (Langer, 1998). For this prompt, students notice feeling “I like this”; “I don’t like this”; “I’m getting angry”; “I’m getting delighted”; “I’m getting bored” and root that reaction to specific passages in the text. I encourage students to develop a symbolic system for annotating their text with emotional reactions: perhaps a smiley face for liking something, an exclamation mark for surprise, a double underline for anger, a question mark for confusion, etc.

A key step in this “noticing” requires students to *own* the feelings and thoughts that arise through reading a text rather than projecting them on to the text. That is, rather than saying, “This poem is boring” or

“This writer is making me angry,” students say “I’m starting to get bored at this place in the poem,” or “I’m getting angry at this passage.” Outside of this assignment, we practice noticing when reactions arise and owning those reactions in a brief activity I call “changing the grammar of our thoughts.” Here, students write sentences about non-volatile things that “are annoying” or “are great” in their lives. They then re-write these statements until 1) they themselves are the subject in the statements and situation and 2) they note the detail they are responding to. For example, “My roommate is annoying” becomes “I get annoyed when my roommate slams the door.” And, “Weekends are great” becomes “I really like weekends when I can hike.” This exercise highlights students’ agency in situations, ensures the Other is not monolithic, and cultivates precision and vividness in students’ writing.

This first prompt has students noticing their attractions and aversions and owning them; the second prompt has students exploring these attractions and aversions. Students ask themselves: “What is it about me and my assumptions that is making me so angry/bored/happy/excited?” Such emotions can provide information about what is important to us. They often help me clarify my values and I offer students the opportunity to see if that is true for them, too. At this stage, students are not looking to learn or say something about the text, they are looking to learn or say something about *themselves*. This step is really challenging for them and I intervene early and often with feedback on their assignments. Students often want to say something about the text and we work repeatedly—we practice—turning attention and focus back on the self.<sup>4</sup>

These first and second steps are where I most often encounter what I am here calling “intolerance.” In my earlier years of teaching, as I first started making room for students’ emotional responses in my courses, I became alarmed by the increasing levels of vitriol many students expressed towards medieval texts. Students would write such things as: “I am getting so pissed off at this author. I don’t even want to read any more of this women-hating stuff!” and “I am getting so weary of all of this talk

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4 This focus on the reader’s reaction as the object of inquiry does not appear in traditional *lectio divina*. This process is my re-interpretation of Roth’s (2006) “critical first-person learning.”

of God. Why can't people just think for themselves?!" Such responses surprised me and opened up two new areas of exploration, which led me to develop prompts 3 and 4.

I found that as students' negative emotional responses to a text increased, their ability to notice novelty, difference, nuance, and their capacity for deep or accurate analysis decreased. For example, at the start of the semester, before we begin actually looking at medieval literature, I ask students to write about what they expect to find in this literature. Many students write that they expect misogyny. Then, in their initial readings, they tend to see misogyny everywhere and are unable to notice anything else about the text. Basically, they experience confirmation bias. Often students are, to paraphrase Ellen Langer, confusing the stability of their mindset with the stability of the phenomenon itself (1998).<sup>5</sup> And so I explicitly ask students to look for the unexpected, to seek novelty. For example, if a student expected to find misogyny and then they identify it in a passage, they note that moment but they do not stop there. They also look for what they don't yet know or expect. This process counteracts the continual reinforcement of their existing beliefs and allows students to see something new (i.e., to learn) about the past to see what else it has to offer.

Additionally, inviting and even welcoming hostile responses to medieval literature has offered my students the ability to explore "intolerance." As I had mentioned, my students generally self-identify as tolerant and open-minded people. Once we shine a light on how they themselves shut down in the face of perceived misogyny or "God-talk," students witness and examine their own intolerance to ask: "How can I come to terms with the word 'God' so that I can engage with this text or idea?" Let me be clear: Students do not have to ignore misogyny nor protect it from critique and inquiry. Rather, they're invited to try engaging with someone (i.e., a text) who says something apparently misogynistic. If students can do so in ways that seek understanding, so that they may transform the world and in turn be transformed themselves, all the better.

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5 "If we fail to explore several perspectives, we risk confusing the stability of our own mindset with the stability of the phenomenon itself" (p. 133).

The fifth prompt asks students to engage in thematic or “philosophical” reading (Nussbaum, 1995), which may be familiar to many Humanities instructors. Texts contain centuries of (albeit limited types of) human voices that can invite students to explore their values, sense of purpose, and questions of meaning. By noticing themes in texts and doing meaning-making by connecting themes to their lives, students reflect upon what they believe and why. As a result of reading contemplatively, students might not develop *the* answer to what love is, how to use knowledge, how to deal with death and despair, or how to cultivate joy, but they may gain facility with considering multiple options for how they want to live with these questions and live into the answers (to paraphrase Rilke). For their final projects, many students frequently choose to revisit, revise, and synthesize their responses to this prompt from throughout the semester, creating “Commonplace Books,” compendiums of wisdom that connect various literary passages to their lived experiences, new realizations, and commitments for future action (Kinane, 2018).<sup>6</sup>

The sixth prompt is an open response that can be tailored to individual course or class goals. Reading contemplatively doesn’t mean we jettison the critical mind and naively adopt and accept everything unquestioningly. Rather, it provides choices about how to engage; students can adopt multiple perspectives; they can be critical *and* contemplative. They can practice a hermeneutic of love that challenges themselves and that which they encounter to transform.

In the years I have been working with variations of this assignment, I have seen an increase in students’ sense of community (as observed and expressed in course evaluations), willingness to take interpretive risks, and capacity to remember details as well as big-picture elements of texts (in activities and assessments). In course evaluations students often state that they enjoyed this course more than they thought they would, considering the content (medieval literature). I have been humbled by the vulnerability students share with me and one another and am inspired by their willingness to re-think and look again, and occasionally to stand

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6 Additionally, see Keator (2019), particularly chapters four, five, and six, for a fuller discussion of this kind of reading and assignment, which mirrors my own theory and praxis.

by their initial reactions after careful consideration and “trying on” other perspectives. This assignment has increased the quality of students’ work as well as their affective experience of the course—and my own.

I developed this particular version of contemplative reading because I believe that, if my particular demographic of students is to participate in the creation of just, rigorous, respectful, communities, they must be able to:

- acknowledge ways they are part of the problem of intolerance;
- explore an Other and seek points of identification with and/or learning from, with humility and curiosity;
- understand their own emotions and those of others; and
- have the capacity to engage meaningfully with texts (and people) that aggravate, infuriate, or bore them.

These beliefs drive my use of both critical and contemplative reading as necessary and complementary approaches and shape the “objectives” of course assignments. We practice reading a difficult text both critically and contemplatively in the classroom so that we may engage with a difficult person both wisely and humanely in the world. While I can look for these features in students’ assignments as I evaluate their course work, I acknowledge I can’t be sure they are applying these skills and dispositions to life outside the classroom. I’ll simply note that I am fortunate to be connected to former students through social media and that I observe with interest their engagements and negotiations through the years. I have hope.

### **Final Thoughts**

I will close by offering some considerations for instructors who are developing contemplative exercises, activities, and assignments for their own courses and fields.

First, I invite instructors to take a fractal view of teaching wherein every part has the same character as the whole (Brown, 2017). For example, I wish for students to be intentional, self-aware, reflective, and values-aligned; I practice intentionality, self-awareness, reflection, and values-alignment and design course activities and assignments with these

goals (Kinane, 2019). Part of this process includes reflecting on what is most deeply meaningful about my field and sharing that core of meaning with students via activities and assignments. For example, I read, write, and think about the past because it

- surfaces my own assumptions and expectations: I learn self-awareness;
- brings perspective to my current life and moment: I learn humility;
- teaches me that the world has not always been this way and need not always be this way: I gain inspiration; and
- helps me return to the present and see it with fresh eyes: I experience transformation.

Deep reflection on why I am a scholar of the Humanities brings awareness to what is most pressing for me to share with students, which is not necessarily the content of my field but rather the human processes that engagement with this field develops. I invite my colleagues to engage in such reflection and bring the fruit of that reflection into students' experiences.

Which brings me to the second consideration: I would invite instructors to care more for the humans in the room than the content of one's field. Developing contemplative activities and assignments may mean one needs to "cover" less material. Instructors may need to make peace with the amount of attention contemplative courses give to students' disposition as well as disciplinary content and skills.

Third, I would invite instructors to be transparent with students about course goals and how assignments and activities build contemplative competencies and dispositions. I used to develop contemplative assignments to cultivate in students the dispositions of patience, generosity, tolerance for ambiguity, and curiosity, but never made these goals explicit to students nor linked contemplative experiences to the other content and skill-based goals of the course. Reviewing the "Human Dimensions" and "Caring" elements of Fink's taxonomy of significant learning (2013) helped me develop transparency and alignment in goals and assignments, increasing students' trust in me and their appreciation for



the value of these assignments. I also feel comfortable theorizing the word “love” in my classrooms; I explicitly share with students that love is an action that we can and will practice this semester through how we read texts and one another.

Fourth, know your contexts. As I have mentioned repeatedly, my unique contexts and experiences informed the assignment described above. I offer this assignment and reflection not as a prescription for what other instructors should do but rather as inspiration for instructors to reflect upon as they develop their own context-appropriate contemplative practices and assignments. I offer an example of a process, not a generally-applicable product.

The ways that contemplative reading calls students’ attention to the particular, the local, the context, and the detail, can, according to Ellen Langer (1998), improve memory and learning. According to Jane Bennett (2010) it can provoke enchantment, which leads to ethical action. For Martha Nussbaum (1995), it is a facet of public reasoning. I have great hope in the ways contemplative processes in the classroom can create compassionate engagement with the wider world and I make this small offering, in humility, towards that end.

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