Learning About Education Metaphors: Study as a Way of Life

The best education for the best of us
is the best education for all of us.
—Robert M. Hutchins
"...selves are not something
one can study and provide for;
they are something one struggles for."
—Walker Percy

The trouble with a cheap, specialized education
is that you never stop paying for it.
—Marshall McLuhan

The Meanings of Study
There was a time when "study" referred to concerted actions taken with regard to the written word. To study was to pore over some pieces of writing, to delve into them, to internalize them to the degree that they became part of the person reading them. For example, in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Diogenes Laertius recounts the path of learning taken by Zeno of Citium, founder of early Stoicism. Laertius writes,

Zeno consulted the oracle to know what he should do to attain the best life, and the god's response was that he should take on the complexion of the dead. Whereupon, perceiving what this meant, he studied ancient authors. (1991, p. 111)

In this context the word "study" is used as a verb and it expresses a particular action or mode of being. It refers to doing something with texts, something that not only affects our complexion but vitally bears upon our ability to "attain the best life." Here, then, people undertook the task of study in order to become someone, in order to take on a complexion or be transformed. But a word's meaning never sits still, for the word "study" soon enough came to mean the room within a home named for the act of studying. "The study," that is, designated a physical space where persons could pore over texts or studied in the study.

But then a new noun took the place of the word "study," as could be heard in a study and found in some of the noun, as in: "study translates into something writ large," and this is the beginning of the end for the old meaning of the noun, as in: "study translates into something writ large," and this is the beginning of the end for the old meaning of the noun, as in:

Many people continue to do people still study reading; people also read and write, but they still take the time to good deal of time either much time do they spend it?

Here is another way not a bucket or physical imagine that minds are.

Consider the diagrams

Diagram A represents arrows represent information words and familiar syntagmation. During easy reading, fuller, denser, and more ideas.

Diagram B represents where people encounter even indigestible ideas. The container itself enlarges during serious study with emptiness) and actually moments, moments when that a different kind of

Diagram C represents when we deeply challenge...
... could pore over texts or get lost in spells of concentration; people sat and studied in the study.

But then a new noun came to town. This was the highly modern noun “a study,” as could be heard in expressions like, “Dr. so and so conducted a study and found....” And quickly thereafter emerged the plural form of the noun, as in: “studies have shown...”. Here the meaning of “study” translates into something like “research programs” or “experimental science writ large,” and this latter meaning, unfortunately, may have been the beginning of the end for the other meanings of the word.

Many people conduct studies and read about them, but to what extent do people still study readings? People read about findings and data, and people also read and write reports about studies, but the question is: do they still take the time to study? Yes, people today admittedly spend a good deal of time either reading studies or reading about them, but how much time do they spend studying readings?

Here is another way to come at this issue. Now, of course, a mind is not a bucket or physical container, but we might, for illustrative purposes, imagine that minds are somehow similar to containers in some ways. Consider the diagrams below:

**Diagram A**

Diagram A represents the mind during *easy reading*, or browsing. The arrows represent information, and, in this case, people encounter familiar words and familiar syntax. They quickly access easily digestible information. During easy reading, or browsing, the container seems to be getting fuller, denser, and more compact, and so people actually feel like they are getting smarter. Diagram B, represents the mind during *serious study* where people encounter new words, unfamiliar syntax, and challenging or even indigestible ideas. Here, in contrast to moments of easy reading, the container itself enlarges to meet the new kinds of information. Moreover, during serious study we experience a decreased density (an increased emptiness) and actually feel dumber than ever. Ironically, it is at these moments when we face and endure our intellectual limitations, that a different kind of intellectual growth is occurring. Additionally, when we deeply challenge ourselves through study and strive to cultivate
ourselves, we can develop considerably. Our past, to those who now meet us, can be nearly absent. In other words, people can know about our past only through the person we are now, and it can seem as if the person we were then never even was.

It also may help to consider the different motives behind “reading studies” and “studying readings.” Immediately we can notice at least one key difference between the two: the former attempts to outwardly build a coherent base of knowledge and the latter attempts to inwardly facilitate the spiritual/existential/ethical development of character. Those who read studies often wish to find, develop, and continuously monitor the coherence of a grand transpersonal edifice call “the literature”; they collectively can read the latest contributions to the “body of knowledge.” This is essentially different from someone who studies the worldviews of the ancients or various bodies of the world’s great literature. For such study readers are neither interested in discovering what is “statistically significant” nor in accumulating coherent additions to the stock body of knowledge.

For centuries, people in all walks of life, not just scholars and academicians, have studied readings to recover resources for thinking about contemporary problems and/or to live more personally fulfilling lives. They even studied in the hopes of gaining a better sense of who they are and who they ought to become. Today, the contemporary scene in the U.S. seems so “pop-psychological.” Many people assume that their minds or even their selves are a “done deal,” something given to them at birth. Reading, they correlate less, does not cultivate the very fabric of mind; it merely gives someone more information. Many students, symptomatic of the culture generally, seem to believe in some kind of “information stuff” that is fundamentally discontinuous with a “mind-thing” and imagine that minds remain unchanged by “information obtained.” People believe they can try to understand something (anything at all), without being changed into a different someone by way of that particular understanding. All of the above, perhaps obviously, is exacerbated where information is understood as bit by bit the same, quantifiable and measurable as a substance. The point here is this: when all learning is equated with accessing and acquiring information, as in quickly skimming various studies or searching the web and clicking around a few convenient websites, we can mourn for the loss of study in this deeper sense.

It is as if we increasingly want a secret, a trick, some new technologies, something that will make study easier if not more efficient. You know, “streamline it” for today’s active multi-tasking person. And, to complicate matters, the recent proliferation of pedagogical techniques makes it seem that studying should be getting easier all the time. Students (and even some faculty) are practically surprised that study remains challenging and can’t be made easier. To make matters worse, people today sense the great amount of information they personally are born with and cultural progress is natural. In other words, we need to interrogate where he will be and who he will become.

When a breed of sheep is born because the sheep is different when a person himself to the generation spiritually developed it with him in death. If it happen through his self.

There seems to be no one area, especially in one’s culture, that objects may be something and progress in a linear way.

At best, it can be exempted.

Education Metaphor

Is not all of the above, back in the days of education came to be known as “students are consumers,” people. Unfortunately, grand modern culture do seem to the purchased from the university too is paralleled by the who explicitly sell the “it”.

Now, to be fair, we accept that we are consumers, to some extent. We deny the growing tide of stratum of student life and the much “educational package” study guides, hand-outs, grades, credit-hours, etc. let the “educational package” and practices of learning student who has the de may have the greatest de educational package in v to provide students with “experience” unfortunately it be all about.

If for argument’s sake we make the possibility to the expression
to those who now meet an now know about our past seem as if the person we 10tives behind “reading can notice at least one its to outwardly build a 1ts to inwardly facilitate aracter. Those who read monitor the coherence ~;they collectively candge.” This is essentially views of the ancients or such study readers are not particularly significant” nor in uly of knowledge.

Just scholars and academ- for thinking about ulyly fulfilling lives. They of who they are and who, once in the U.S. seems so UR their minds or even their at birth. Reading, they are the fabric of mind; it merely, symptomatic of the and of “information stuff” ing thing” and imagine that read. People believe they without being changed understanding. All of information is under- as a substance. not with accessing and serious studies or searching sites, we can mourn for

Some new technologies, are more efficient. You know, person. And, to compli-ical techniques makes the time. Students (and study remains chal-urse, people today sense the great amount of information available but they seem to presume that they personally are born atop the shoulders of previous generations, as if cultural progress is naturally given to them personally. But is this not a belief we need to interrogate? Søren Kierkegaard helps us begin such an interrogation where he writes:

When a breed of sheep, for example, is improved, improved sheep are born because the specimen merely expresses the species. But surely it is different when an individual, who is qualified by spirit, relates himself to the generation.... Development of spirit is self-activity; the spiritually developed individual takes his spiritual development along with him in death. If a succeeding individual is to attain it, it must occur through his self-activity. (1992, p. 345)

There seems to be no progress other than individual progress in many areas, especially in one’s education. While material and technological objects may be something that the larger anonymous culture can bestow and progress in a linear way, cultivation of self or spirit or character is not. At best, it can be exemplified by others but never bestowed by them.

Education Metaphors

Is not all of the above, basically, how the contemporary commercialization of education came to be? It provides a backdrop in which an expression such as “students are consumers buying a degree” can seem to make sense to people. Unfortunately, growing numbers of people in contemporary Western culture do seem to think of their education as some kind of product purchased from the university. And, perhaps even more unfortunate, this too is paralleled by the steady rise of university marketing departments who explicitly sell the “image” of the university.

Now, to be fair, we admittedly live in a consumer society and students are consumers, to some degree, in their lives more generally. It is also hard to deny the growing tide of identity merchandising that forms the sub-stratum of student life across campuses in the U.S. There is, moreover, so much “educational packaging” in the form of outlines, syllabi, lecture notes, study guides, hand-outs, reader-friendly textbooks with bold faced terms, grades, credit-hours, etc., that it is easy, for both students and professors, to let the “educational packaging” replace the less easily commodified habits and practices of learning. As Walker Percy writes, “To put it bluntly: A student who has the desire to get at a dogfish or a Shakespeare sonnet may have the greatest difficulty in salvaging the creature itself from the educational package in which it is presented” (1954, p. 57). Thus, the effort to provide students with some kind of consumer package of “university-experience” unfortunately reduces what they (and we) take education to be all about.

If for argument’s sake we assume that the backdrop lending intelligibility to the expression “students are consumers” is not going away soon,
we might want to critically ask: Whose interests are served by it? The students? I don't think so, but, then again, maybe. Some students may take comfort in the thought that the “customer is always right.” How about professors? I don't think so, but, then again, maybe. If the students are consumers and the university is a business that sells degrees, then professors, rather than having duties to their vocation, are little more than “employees.” And employees, as everyone knows, can always say, “I don't know; I just work here.” Could it be that those who have the most to gain from the idea that “students are consumers” and/or “university is a business” are neither teachers nor students?

Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*, suggests that Socrates refused to take money for teaching. He further suggests that this was not an act of altruism, but a refusal to get involved with someone who was willing to pay for an education but unwilling to do the necessary work. In other words, Socrates refrained from taking money for his instruction because he never wanted to be stuck trying to “teach” an intractable learner, someone whose only real commitment was a willingness to pay. It is also worth underscoring that, in this way, Socrates avoided one of the main sources of teacher burnout. Such exhaustion comes from having to deal with people who think they're buying something. Such persons may think that they have the right, or perhaps should have the right, to attend class or not, to do the readings or not, to try or not. A few might learn a demeanor, a kind of bodily attitude nicely summarized by postures and comportments that say: “I want to pay little attention, occasionally do the readings, never do additional or not required reading, and maybe even skip every once and a while, that is my prerogative. I am paying for my education.” Teacher burnout, I am suggesting, emerges, emerges not directly from such behavior but because these same persons often want it both ways: they want the prerogative to care or not (to be “into” the class or not) but they also want their professors to care all the time, to consistently support and encourage them just in case they do happen to get into it. This is how some bad teachers became bad teachers. They got burnt out trying to remain vigilant in caring about people who want the license to either care or not care about themselves.

Today, education is expensive but that's not the half of it. The real rub starts to dawn upon you only as you understand that you can't buy an education and never could. At best, people pay for exposure to the resources by which they may be able to develop habits and resources for the life-long projects of cultivating character, handling responsibilities and duties, and implementing visions.

To reveal the nature of education, we can imagine a comic reversal where stores are transformed into universities so that “buying is learning.” In such “university-stores,” a customer puts a few bags of vegetables on the counter and the cashier says, “That will be $4.25.” The customer delivers the money or at least the vegetables into a bag, on food production in the specific detail the amount of these vegetables. Finally, I'll trust you to do at least taken care of, you are free means to buy groceries—performance have been occurring that one can buy an education. But then again maybe exactly as described above, the other way, and basically. Perhaps many “customers” have paid the full amount for the less than the required amount. Too bad that it is not until goods is now empty, not.

It is funny that those education” seem to forget that is parasitic upon another means, the substance.” We go in the students “receive” an education. Maybe we'd move closer to those. Students, that is, who have built up their understanding of study, are to take advantage, are also learning. One's education is study. An education, to the extent that can be grown or perhaps the difficulty with the expectation comes from what we give.

But this too remains literally shakes out as “habits,” with the recognition that in fact, so much on-going learning how to challenge the task is to construct. But as Ker used to tear out obstructions, to need to weed and prune, with the recognition that...
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Socrates refused to take was not an act of altruism, because he never wanted to do the readings or In other words, Socrates care or not (to be "into" that say: "If I want to pay additional or 'not required' I get paid either way." Perhaps many "customers" walk out of the university-store without having paid the full amount for the goods. They might have cheated the store, paid less than the required amount, and/or failed to do the exercises at home. Too bad that it is not until they get back home that they realize their bag of goods is now empty, nothing but a piece of paper.

It is funny that those who liken "university study" to "buying an education" seem to forget that the metaphor, "knowledge is commodity" is parasitic upon another metaphor that is just as dubious: "knowledge is a substance." We go in the wrong direction even courting the notion that students "receive" an education, or, for that matter, that they can buy one. Maybe we'd move closer to the truth by saying, "People build their educations." Students, that is, are given an environment which gathers others who have built up their education, and they, through collective university study, are to take advantage of the opportunity to learn with others who are also learning. One's education is co-built through co-learning and co-study. An education, to the extent that any metaphor will do, is something that can be grown or perhaps cultivated, but never merely received. Part of the difficulty with the expression, "getting an education," is that education comes from what we give to our studies not what we get from them.

But this too remains limited in its own way, for an education that actually shakes out as "habits of lifelong learning" is never merely a building. In fact, so much on-going learning is actually a kind of unlearning: it is learning how to challenge already held beliefs and assumptions. To learn is to construct. But as Kenneth Burke reminds us, there is "no construction without destruction." To build up habits of lifelong learning we may have to tear out obstructions, to level and remove unwanted materials; we may need to weed and prune. To really get in the learning-mode is to begin with the recognition that we all, each of us, have many received, erroneous,
and facile notions and pet theories that need to be expurgated, extirpated, expunged and even exorcised.

**Further Challenges to Study**

In his essay “Explanation as Motive,” Lee Thayer (1997) argues that what motivates us is not the past but the future. Explanations in the present are the trajectory we set toward the future. In the classroom, for example, some students may study readings as if they want to know them for the rest of their lives, but other students may do just enough cursory glancing at them to be able to produce some kind of “evidence that they read” or at least “tried to read.” These latter students read not to understand so much as to be able to say that they had read. Other students, knowing that they could say that they tried but didn't understand, don't read at all. Others still, read with ready-made critiques and look for places in the text where the critique fits. Could it be that people have created so many workable explanations for why they don't understand something that they now have difficulty taking study seriously?

The relation of explanation to motives also applies to matters of attendance and pop-quizzes over assigned readings. If professors demand attendance and have a fair percentage of the grade calculated by pop-quizzes, they provide students with helpful explanations to their peers. When peer Pressured to go out to party rather than do their homework, students are now better equipped to justify staying home to study. They can resort to: “There may be a quiz tomorrow.”

This logic applies not only to students but to people more generally, *professors included*. As Thayer suggests, “Whatever explanations or ‘excuses’ you accept from others are the ones you will get—from others and yourself” (1997, p. 142). I once asked students to explain what this meant, and one student suggested that some professors are lazy and like to let class out early. They talk like they are doing you a favor, and they may even “cut you some slack” in other ways because they want you to “cut them some slack” back. Some professors, the student went on, may even openly, though somewhat jokingly, acknowledge a mutual interest in “slacking.”

Another student told of a certain professor who every night, in a once-a-week three-hour evening class, would begin with the statement, “Alright. Let’s get started so we can all get home.” The professor, perhaps trying to identify with the students, selected mutual feelings of wanting to be elsewhere as the means of identification. Because the stated reason to get started was completely tangential to the course itself, the occasion was made unwelcome and undesirable. It turned the class meeting into something very other than a highly desirable gathering between and among aspiring public intellectuals. All of this was accomplished in less than 10 words. I was not surprised to hear that on average, so the student reported, the class ended more than an hour early each night and students rarely asked questions. Apparently, they were doing what they did when they studied with the notion of “free time” as an assumption that they were successful in getting.

Maybe I’m being too tough on professors who are so adept at pedagogy material across” within less than 10 words. Perhaps they were so effective in making it seem deeply and thoroughly engaging that many students, when they arrived for a slackening undermining the notion of “free time” as it actually is now. How did this come to be?

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understand what they are doing when they study with teachers.

Maybe I'm being too tough on such professors. Maybe such profes-
sors are so adept at pedagogical techniques that they are able to get “the
material across” within less time. Maybe such a person has so well selected
easily digestible readings that none of the students needed to study them,
and, because they were so clear, no one need ask questions about them.
Or, perhaps we can more clearly see the deep problems that come along
with the assumptions that “knowledge is a commodity,” “students are
consumers,” and the "university is a business.”

The Value of Study in Today's Times

In her essay “Symbolization and Value,” anthropologist Dorothy Lee (1959)
discusses how symbols take on value and provides invaluable insight for
professors who are interested in assuring that students' educational experi-
ences are valuable. She begins by showing that value cannot be arbitrarily
assigned or simply attributed to items or situations. On the contrary, she
argues that a symbol takes its significance and its value according to actual
situations and contexts in which it has participated. Her point, rightly
understood, suggests the following bit of advice about pop-quizzes, extra-
readings, and other ways that rigor and difficult study can be brought into
a classroom. Most professors know what happens at some point in the
semester: students begin their “meltdown” pleas for reduced workload.
They might ask, “Can't we drop the lowest quiz?” or, “How about one
less paper?” Such pleas and requests ask professors to loosen the reigns,
basically cut the students some slack. Professors should think hard before
considering any changes. When students are grumbling and moaning
about their efforts and labors and are asking for some relief, they are, in
fact, doing other than what appears on the surface. They are constructing
and ritually enacting heroism narratives. They are, as it were, dramatically
setting the stage. This is why professors should rarely give into such pleas,
for a slackening undermines the possibility of student heroism. Professors
who stay tough all the way through can comfort themselves by the thought
that many students, when everything has settled, will be even more the
heroes for having “made it through” the semester.

Could it be that people too easily fail to understand the temporality
that they are, and so, many of their everyday frustrations and difficulties
arise from little more than “wanting to be done”? Don't people today
seem deeply and thoroughly impatient? It is as if we have reduced time
to space and take ourselves as wholly splayed out in some kind of spatial
now. How did this come to pass?

In his Work, Time and Leisure, Sebastian de Grazia (1964) outlines the
notion of “free time” as it emerged after the advent of modern clocks,
mechanization, and industrialization. The early promise of such automation was a life of increased leisure, but the end result turned out to be a kind of neutralized and commercialized time, a time that could be spent or wasted, a time outside of the individual. This kind of time made leisure increasingly impossible. The encumbrance of this objective time, which itself becomes subject to economic calculations, makes “time wasted” sound like such a dereliction. In the modern era, we came to internalize a time as “over-against” us. Today, many people who sense that time is little “their own” therefore do little to downright nothing in a pathetic attempt to prove that the time is theirs. Consider this in terms of practical application: teachers are known for trying, at least during the first week or so, to scare students out of class. Partly true, perhaps in some regards. The larger truth is that such teachers hope to appear most scary to those students who assume they can get through the course without studying the readings. These are also, perhaps not surprisingly, the students who seem to think that they are getting away with something when they don’t do the readings. Who, exactly, do they imagine they’re sticking it to?

To recover the habit of study as a vital means for growing selves worth wanting, we need to address an important issue that could be dealt with at great lengths. It concerns a mode of self-defeat, one that mostly goes unnoticed or is explained away under terms such as “average,” “mediocre,” or more simply, “just how things are.” We might imagine a book-length treatment, the title of which would be, “How We Stick It to Ourselves: An Ecology of Intrapersonal Oppression and Self-Defeat.” The work would entail a massive study of all of the ways that individuals, suffering from self-estrangement and from some adversarial relation to a felt or imagined social order and set of cultural expectations, come to believe that they are somehow “sticking it to someone” when they lay around and do little to nothing. It is as if the only kind of freedom that people understand is “freedom from constraint.” They seem not to grasp the many ways that freedom can be liberated by constraint, such is the freedom to.

For further illustration of derelict freedom, let me tell a fantastical tale. There once was a boy who was born of a well-to-do family in a well-to-do town in a well-to-do culture. This boy made ample use of a devoted servant by the simple employment of finger gestures and inarticulate sounds. In time, the boy’s requests grew and grew as did the range of challenging and unenjoyable obligations encumbered by the servant. By young adulthood, this pandered-to lad had grown exceptionally indolent and bored. He spend most days idly lying about his room, comfortably—even if feebly—tucked into bed, and his self-willed enfeebledness grew worse and worse. Those who would serve him would fetch his meals and bring in new entertainments for his enjoyment. On special occasions, a second servant would attend so that the one could fan the boy while the other would feed him decorticated gruel. But as might have been anticipated, the enfeebled boy grew tired of this and disliked any entertainment that was “not his own.” And so, all of the above he would do from his nest, involving the guitar, Latin, whittling, and other quickly dismissed because he found them boring. After years of passing time, he was so bored that he found all of the above to be a waste of time.

In contrast, his servant had grown bored with the boy’s many challenges and decided that he was right that the boy had stuck it to himself. In a state of desperation, the servant had stolen the boy’s cell phone, and the story of the pathetic well-to-do boy became more than he already knew he was. He found his cell phone, and it led him to a room where he found a goldmine of valuable artifacts and stories. He became more than he already knew he was.

As some cultural critics have suggested, we need to resurrect it from the dead. The work that lies ahead is to recover and reassert that serious study is one of the most intimate acts.

If the ultimate ends of education are to reanimate in capacities for life-long learning, Hoffer reminds us: “...it is not the mere 'learned' who inherit a world, but the French novelist Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said, 'He who hears a man flaunting his learnedness is quite willing to do honor to the man's death.' We are never done with ourselves, nourishing our soul but what we have done.

To be a learner is to be willing to take seriously the promise of the path itself is the destination of the most intimate acts.
mise of such automation turned out to be a kind of leisure, which itself becomes wasted sound like such a term, it became clear that people would be spent or wasted, made leisure increasingly like "over-time is little "their own" or over-time is little "their own" attempt to prove that the personal application: teachers would teach or so, to scare students into doing the readings. The larger truth is that no one seems to think that they can't do the readings. Who, for growing selves worth nothing, a case that could be dealt with lightly, that one that mostly goes to "average," "mediocre," or "imagine a book-length maintaining "over- time is little "their own" attempt to prove that the personal application: teachers would teach or so, to scare students into doing the readings. The larger truth is that no one seems to think that they can't do the readings. Who, for growing selves worth nothing, a case that could be dealt with lightly, that one that mostly goes to "average," "mediocre," or "not enjoyable right now."

But as might have been foreseen, frustrations deepened. The thoroughly enfeebled boy grew tired of entertainments he'd already seen, and he also disliked any entertainments that were, as he said, "not enjoyable right now." And so, all of the activities and crafts which might have compelled him from his nest, involvements such as: painting, basketball, playing the guitar, Latin, whittling, tennis, chess, yoga, juggling, study, etc., all were quickly dismissed because they were not entertaining on the first lesson. After years of passing time so idly, the young man's atrophy was profound. In contrast, his servant had grown strong through continuously meeting the boy's many challenging demands and he, after winning a scholarship, decided that he was right now ready to go off to college.

In a state of desperation, the frail young man struggled across the room, found his cell-phone, and called to hire a new servant. And so went the story of the pathetic well-to-do young man: never able to run and jump, he does not dance, he neither studies philosophy nor laughs and cries with artists of the ages. Spending his life as an all-too-immediate self, he failed to create a self worth wanting. He forever remained, he who never became more than he already was.

### Conclusion: Study as a Way of Life

As some cultural critics mourn the passing of "literacy" and others try to resurrect it from the dead, I, for one, join those who recognize the death sentence as prematurely declared. All hope is not lost. The larger task ahead is to recover and re-enliven the sense that living itself is an art and that serious study is one of the richest resources for continued self-growth and development in that art.

If the ultimate ends of university study are growth and development in capacities for life-long learning, then no product is ever delivered. Eric Hoffer reminds us: "...it is 'the learners' who will inherit the world, for 'the learned' inherit a world that increasingly no longer exists." And, the French novelist Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1950) writes, "You sometimes hear a man flaunting his past. 'I am he who has done this or that.' I am quite willing to do honor to such a man, but on the condition that he is dead." We are never done, never completed. It's not what we've read that nourishes our soul but what we are now reading (or continue to pore over). To be a learner is to be without arrival; it is to be on a path such that the path itself is the destination.

We humanize ourselves when we study, for study is the self-activity by which we relate to others and thereby become ourselves. To study is to take seriously the promise that others' minds, even those others who are already dead, can grow into one's own mind. To study a great mind is one of the most intimate acts in which we can engage. It is to risk becoming...
transformed, and this is so different than looking at tabloids or browsing the Web to inform ourselves about items and changes of the day. To study, to genuinely and authentically get in the learning mode, is to celebrate a free time worth wanting. It is to develop the life-habits whereby we learn to find the time to sit in a quiet place and grow.

Notes
1 I wish to thank, and dedicate this essay to, Valerie V. Peterson. She not only greatly assisted by way of extensive editing and proofreading, the work itself congealed out of the many discussions we have had about teaching, learning, and study. I also wish to thank Anthony Thompson for his assistance in the final stages.
2 The even more ironic posture appears in the “humanistic social sciences” where people not only assume to leave themselves unaffected by their self-understandings but they also take themselves to be the objects of inquiry.
3 Once students graduate, everything they say is, in some way, associated with their Alma Mater. I so vividly remember some of Jill Hutchins’ rants. I was completing research for my Master’s thesis on athletics and Hutchins was the coach for Illinois State University’s Lady Redbirds. At various points through the season, she would say to them: “When you step on another campus you stand as delegates and representatives of Illinois State University. If I see or hear anyone act other than exemplary, if you appear unsportsmanlike—like, or use foul language, you will be benched. Everything you do, how you come off, is a statement on your university. Be great out there.” Graduates are henceforth delegates and ambassadors of the university. They have a responsibility to live up to the name. If, when talking to people, they say things that are dull, inarticulate and misguided, people will ask, “Where did you get your education?” If you do, you can explain them without an easy explanation or “pressures” them, then you wanted to the cabinet.
4 How about we imagine of professors: a professor tour-guide and a professor expedition-leader? The former takes the customer satisfied and down the mountains and is willing to the task. It is about of accomplishment. It is perhaps these metaphors is another if this does help to offset the “information transfer.” It are more or less transparant, can imagine information metaphor “A text is a city staying at least a few days getting a sense of what is there, by spending some time it can be sure that you’re there.”
5 A high school mentality is such that you should be able to do your homework, and if your homework is done correctly, you deserve an A. This is so different from a university mentality: here the homework is never complete; one should always be asking for additional readings. In an unpublished manuscript, Lee Thayer provides useful discussion of saturating the learning environment. He thus expresses a bit of skepticism regarding the desirability of identifying 100% of the content of a course and then attempting to deliver over that 100% to 100% of the students. This is perhaps acceptable to some degree for some kinds of instruction, but for classes such as human communication theory, media studies, and
at tabloids or browsing images of the day." To study, seeking mode, is to celebrate a habit whereby we learn.

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6 In class I sometimes open the lecture on this essay by setting up the following scenario: imagine that you have 14 and 15-year-old children and that you are going to be away for the evening. Now, also imagine that you trust your kids and have a great relationship with them, and what is more, you have a large and well-stocked liquor cabinet. The question is: do you lock the liquor cabinet? Students, commonly taking the obvious "bait," quickly reply that to lock it would be too distrusting. The essay, on the contrary, seems to imply the following bit of advice: Lock the cabinet. If you do, you can explain to your children that you do not want to leave them without an easy explanation to their peers. If someone encourages or "pressures" them, they can always respond, "It might be fun but even if I wanted to the cabinet is locked."

7 How about we imaginatively consider a comparison between two kinds of professors: a professor who assumes a role similar to a travel-agent/tour-guide and a professor who assumes a role similar to a mountaineer/expedition-leader? The former wants people to get a good deal, have a safe, and well-packaged tour. The tour guide feels obligated to ensure that the customer is satisfied and enjoying the trip. The latter is someone who scales mountains and is willing to help those who are qualified and committed to the task. It is about organizing a group experience of great aesthetic accomplishment. It is perhaps worth noting that nestled within both of these metaphors is another metaphor: text as physical space. Admittedly, this does help to offset the unfortunate reduction of reading to the act of "information transfer." If we commonly think of texts as containers that are more or less transparent to the ideas they contain and transmit, we can imagine information transfer to be the issue. But what if we take the metaphor "A text is a city"? To travel to a new city, say one where we'll be staying at least a few days perhaps even a few weeks or months, there is a long time of "getting to know the place," also phrased as "learning one's way around." We may come to build up an internal map of the city, having a sense of what is there, where one's favorite restaurants are, where there are places to rest and enjoy the scenery. In general, we come to know a city by spending some time in it: driving through it, walking around within it, getting a sense of what is available, where it is, and how to get there. All of this takes some time, and in fact, at first it is easy to get lost, be confused, and travel up and down the same road. In many ways, then, to study a text is to attempt to become familiar with a city. It is to spend time in there,
walking through its many streets. Any text that someone has a solid command over has grown familiar in the same ways that the city is familiar to a native urbanite. This so helps to explain entailments such as:

“I was lost in that book.”
“The text took many unexpected turns.”
“It was hard to make it through that article.”

8 The chieftain in Antoine Saint-Exupéry’s magnum opus *The Wisdom of the Sands*, writes, “If you would learn to understand men, begin by never listening to them.”

9 There are many fronts of the “stick it to myself” under the auspice of sticking it others. Some people overeat at lunch buffets all the while they believe that they are sticking it to someone. Some students try to “skate through” by doing as little as possible. A primer for this is Dan Greenburg’s humorous book, *How to Make Yourself Miserable*.

10 On another front this should turn us to the importance of solid study of communication theory. As Robert M. Hutchins, in *The Learning Society*, tells us: “The more technological the society is, the more rapidly it will change and the less valuable ad hoc instruction will become. It now seems safe to say that the most practical education is the most theoretical one” (p. 19).

11 William Carlos Williams writes, “It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably everyday for lack of what is found there.”

References

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