



Mindfulness, Contemplative Pedagogy, and the Medieval Now

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*Introduction: The Mindfulness Turn in US Culture as a Point of Departure for Contemplative Pedagogy*¹

This brief essay offers reflections on the integration of contemplative pedagogy in the Medieval Studies classroom with a special emphasis on medieval religious themes. I explored the potential of combining both in two recently introduced university courses. One is a First Year Seminar entitled *Contemplative Traditions: Past and Present*, which I teach annually, and the other an adult learner course offered through a Lifelong Learning Program entitled *Toward a Life Lived Mindfully*. Both classes developed from my core course on Christian mysticism and a team-taught upper level comparative course on Jewish and Christian mysticism with Jewish Studies colleague Andrew Vogel Ettin. The latter resulted in a co-authored reflection essay published by *Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations* in 2009.² My participation in a course in Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in the early nineties and subsequent explorations in the expanding field of contemplative pedagogy through support from the Teaching and Learning Center at Wake Forest University and The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society have expanded my knowledge of contemplative pedagogy and generated new questions about the value of medieval monastic spirituality and pedagogy for today, and, more generally, on our access to “a very capacious [medieval] now” (Dinshaw, 2012, 109).³

This essay begins with a brief discussion of the mindfulness turn in the US, then offer reflections on the potential of mindfulness practices for expanding our understanding of medieval spirituality, and closes with a section on how to bring both to bear on contemplative pedagogy in the Medieval Studies classroom.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, is globally celebrated as the founder of the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) movement. In a decision that created the spark for the rise of MBSR, Kabat-Zinn, a long time student of Buddhist meditation, chose to separate the religious aspects from what he perceived to be the core of Buddhist meditation training: the development of moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness.⁴ He combined the cultivation of such awareness with intentional attentiveness to internal sensations, termed “body scanning,” and gentle yoga stretches with the therapeutic goal to better manage a spectrum of chronic stress symptoms. In MBSR sessions, attention is refocused on sensations and feelings in a calming and safe secular setting in combination with breath work and awareness training. With a commitment to regular MBSR practice, mindful awareness states will eventually shift from episodic experiences during meditation sessions to more permanent personality traits that would pre-empt negative stress responses. MBSR was originally taught in an introductory eight-week program.

Although still engaged with the scientific study of Buddhist meditation, including work with the 14th Dalai Lama, the MBSR movement stands on its own as a secular therapeutic, social, and cultural phenomenon. Since its inception in 1979, MBSR has traveled far and wide across social settings, and eventually made its way into primary and secondary educational realms. The educational promise of MBSR has been three-fold: one, as a well-researched secular intervention to calm and center students rattled by a spectrum of attention “deficits”⁵; two, as an

intriguing portal into contemplative pedagogy⁶; and three, as the cause of a renewed academic interest in contemplative studies and mysticism generally.⁷ It is the latter two which are of particular interest to a medieval religious and cultural studies curriculum; working in a presence-based MBSR classroom setting is an opportunity open to interested faculty across all disciplines. As Komjathy demonstrates so persuasively, the rich medieval religious traditions of not only Hinduism and Buddhism, which are most frequently associated with meditation practices and metaphysics, but also the three largest Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam offer barely tapped resources for both Medieval Studies curriculum development and pedagogical adaptation.⁸ Contemplative pedagogy invites new opportunities for writing, reading, and critical thinking assignments, which can be graded according to standard rubrics used in the humanities. Contemplative pedagogy supplements and enriches more traditional approaches, but does not replace them.

Contemplative pedagogy is an emerging field of study and practice in K-12 and Higher Education, which is receiving growing notice in the US and abroad as demonstrated by the workshops, residencies, conferences, and symposia sponsored by, among others, the *Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education* (ACMHE), and high profile individual initiatives such as Senator Tim Ryan's educational initiative for the state of Ohio and beyond, or actress Goldie Hawn's *MindUp* initiative for schools in economically insecure neighborhoods.⁹ In his book-length review of nationwide initiatives entitled *A Mindful Nation. How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit*, Ryan summarizes the work being done at institutions of higher learning such as the University of Missouri, Penn State, UCLA, Duke University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, to name a few, and nation-wide initiatives for K-12. Besides *MindUp*, these initiatives include

*MindfulSchools.org, Association for Mindfulness in Education, CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, and more.*¹⁰ For example, The Hawn Foundation’s *The MindUP Curriculum: Grades 6–8: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning—and Living* offers fifteen lessons that school teachers can implement into every aspect of the curriculum to support student learning and resilience in the classroom. All lessons are presence-based, body-centered, and integrate breath work and mindful awareness training.¹¹

Definitions of contemplative pedagogy vary. According to the in-depth contemplative pedagogy website at Vanderbilt University, contemplative pedagogy may be explained as “The integration of meditative practices into [higher] education as a complement to critical reasoning with the goal of rebalancing liberal education to include head and heart, mind and body.”¹²

Based on my own work, I identify contemplative pedagogy as the intentional development of open awareness (i.e., a combination of mental and physical relaxation and sustained attention or focus) by the consistent application of first person and second person epistemologies. My definition attempts to foreground the relational and procedural character of contemplative pedagogy with its emphasis on student-centered learning. First person perspectives explore and articulate subjective responses (“I”), second person perspectives foreground and make aware stand-point positions of another in dialogue (“you”), and third person perspectives tease out reflections on other viewpoints outside of direct engagement (“them”). Apart from its reliance on neuro-scientific studies of the impact of MBSR practices on student information retention, improved test performance, and overall improved student resilience and mental health, contemplative pedagogy draws from other roots as well.

As Louis Komjathy has argued in his magisterial review of contemplative practices past and present, non-religiously affiliated contemplative studies in the US today, which includes

contemplative pedagogy, are indebted to humanistic psychology and its core belief in human potential and self-actualization.¹³ Humanistic psychology thus posits that our capacity for growth extends throughout the life cycle, and that it can be stimulated through individual and communal effort. Actively developing our consciousness through the exploration of various meditation and contemplation techniques is therefore part of our innate drive for personal and communal growth. I would argue that other Western antecedents for contemplative pedagogy include feminist pedagogy as defined by Belenky et al in their path-breaking study, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, and the critical pedagogy methodologies by Freire and Giroux, which emphasize student-centered processes of community-oriented ethical growth.¹⁴ Engaged mindfulness is the currently used concept that invites conversation and dialogues between these pedagogical models and the evolving paradigm of socially engaged contemplative pedagogy. No matter how defined, contemplative pedagogy strengthens the traditional educational goals of information retention and critical reasoning through finely-tuned first person and second person epistemologies.

The Feeling of Being a Body in Time: Towards a Medieval Now

Due to MBSR's strong emphasis on building non-judgmental somatic awareness through body scanning and yoga practices, studying contemplative traditions through the assistance of contemplative pedagogies raises the question of the viability of a somatic approach to medieval cultures. Medievalists Carolyn Dinshaw, Karolyn Kinane, and others have described the exploration of such an approach generally as a search for the "feeling of being a body in time."¹⁵ This new kind of Medieval Studies work is intriguing and significant in light of the fact that Eastern and Western spiritual communities with roots in medieval cultures and world views -- from the Benedictines to Buddhist Vihara -- have kept embodied dimensions of medieval and

earlier ways of contemplative knowing finely tuned and accessible both in a liturgical modality and in pedagogies of spiritual and cognitive formation.¹⁶ In contemporary Jewish spirituality, to cite just one creative example of such embodied continuity, Rabbi David Cooper and his community experiment with combining kabbalistic, Sufi, and Buddhist techniques. Some of Rabbi Cooper's chants and meditations implement the medieval mystical exercises of Jewish mystics such as Abraham Abulafia (1240-after 1291).¹⁷

The possibility of access to experiential modes of medieval spiritual knowing and being has been met with benign neglect if not outright dismissal in mainstream academic registers, including a secularized rather than theological Medieval Studies or spiritual formation rooted in medieval prayer practice etc. Exclusively reliant on the Western theory of the objective rational observer, traditional scholarly epistemologies have tended to deny the co-existent entangled identities of "body" and "mind" as a complementary site of academic knowledge production and as a richly productive sensual-intellectual knowledge-as-being system. In a forthcoming essay, medieval literature scholar Gale Sigal has explored some of these issues for Medieval Studies and Medievalism in a US context.¹⁸

An argument can be made in support of an embodied study of medieval contemplative "ways of knowing" and the "medieval now" through dialogue with the emerging field of cultural neuroscience.¹⁹ Due to their dependence upon the design stability of the human nervous system, body/mind ways of knowledge are able to iterate holistically cultural information and distinct emotional understanding in highly predictable fashion side-by-side an otherwise linear and non-iterative time sequencing. Rituals such as the Eucharistic or the circumambulation of the Kaaba are prominent examples of intentional re-creations of a somatic "medieval now" to the best of the believers' collective ability. Such replicable entanglement of body, mind, and culture

through medieval ritual should not be read as erasure of temporal linear singularity, of irreversible historical and cultural “change,” but simply as a heuristically valuable and for some, as an extremely meaningful additional dimension of human time sequencing. When slowed down to a precisely detailed cultural and social staging, the desire for an intentionally created experience of an embodied medieval “now” allows for seemingly unlimited iteration. A religious tradition’s on-going emphasis on ancient sacred technologies such as fasting, breath work, or chanting presents us with the fact that we are indeed living in multiple chronologies simultaneously, some of which can be generated at will and experienced somatically (such as chanting), and others that are unique in that they can neither be reproduced intentionally (an experience of grace) nor experienced somatically (meeting with a medieval mystical master such as Rumi). Why privilege the linear and the unique over the retrievable and somatic rather than allowing for creative co-existence? And if we opt for a creative co-existence, could the religious and the secular be teased apart without compromising either? Mindfulness research suggests that it can be done; religious practitioners rightfully may have their doubts.²⁰

As a heuristically rich alternative to the slowly eroding but still dominant ideology of an exclusively linear and thus singular model of temporality, our embodied human capacity for knowing, moving, and being in temporal multiplicities (“experiencing the sacred,” “reliving the past,” “anticipating the future,” “imagining what it was like”) has been identified by Carolyn Dinshaw as body-mind’s queerness, as rationally unmanageable, and as always superabundantly productive.²¹ I suggest that the medieval religious and ritualistic search for and embrace of the “eternal,” of “sacred time,” of “*Ohr Ein Sof*,” (“endless light”), and “*in ille tempore*” (“in that time”) through contemplative practices offers an intriguing classroom portal to think the “medieval now” and to reflect on our own capacities for living in multiple temporalities.²²

Dinshaw certainly notes the affinity of body-mind's queerness with mysticism, especially so in her study of Margery Kempe.²³

The success story of the mindfulness movement creates both a challenge and an opportunity for such a study of a "medieval now" in contemplative traditions, contemplative studies, and in contemplative pedagogy. Kabat-Zinn's original stance that religious and MBSR domains can be separated not only in the practice of moment-to-moment reflective awareness, but also in historical religious context, is especially relevant. MBSR's methodological separation of techniques from religious context allows for a religiously neutral study of the truth claims that religious traditions may make about the psychological, emotional, and social impact of spiritual techniques such as meditation and prayer. It also allows for new conversations in inter-religious dialogue settings in that spiritual practices rather than theological dogma may become foregrounded and freshly examined with a novel neuro-scientific vocabulary in place. For example, a new inter-religious dialogue may focus on the impact of prayer on well-being, whether it be negative or positive. In the classroom setting, mindfulness scholarship offers safeguards that contemplative pedagogy can be explored and developed without enforcing religious allegiances or insinuating New Age beliefs.

The benefits of the mindfulness movement's scientific and secular stance, however, are complicated by a look at medieval spiritual texts and teachings as much as by the conundrum that human experience is embedded in a social and cultural context from which it seems impossible to disengage, be the context scientific or non-scientific. For example, the Carthusian monastic author Guigo II (d. ca. 1193) identified as the goal of all monastic spiritual practice the receptive experience of resting in Divine presence.²⁴ To this end, he advocated the painstaking procedure of a daily *lectio divina*, a prayerful reading technique proscribed by the Rule of St.

Benedict. It consists of the practice of alternating reading sacred scripture (*lectio*), prayer (*oratio*), and meditation (*meditatio*) to prepare for a state of contemplation (*contemplatio*).

Should such *contemplatio* be attempted in the secular classroom in search of a “medieval now” rather than the relaxed awareness of MBSR? Even the most enthusiastic proponents of contemplative pedagogy would likely answer the question in the negative. So how would it be possible to extract the technique from its religious context without distorting or misrepresenting it along the way? As a contemporary example of the tension between science and religious world views, Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary’s neuro-scientific research and Isabelle Raynauld’s accompanying award winning documentary, *Mystical Brain*, on the mystical experiences of contemporary Carmelite nuns raise possibilities for such dialogue as well as consternation for its sceptics. Dialogue, because it demonstrates that mystical experiences correspond to activation of certain regions in the brain; consternation, because the activation of these regions do not necessarily coalesce in a specific “God-spot” such as the pineal gland. Beauregard and O’Leary’s research therefore suggests that brain and mind are not identical, and that spiritual experiences cannot be reduced to materialist explanations.²⁵ Presented together in the classroom, Guigo’s twelfth-century *The Ladder of Monks* and Raynauld’s twenty-first century documentary does allow students to generate open-ended questions about the “medieval now” even if not through first-hand experimentation, and to formulate their own views about the transferability of medieval spiritual systems into a secularized context.

A second complication is that current mindfulness research, unlike psychotropic drug research in the sixties, tends to minimize the fact that states of mindful awareness occur on a wide spectrum of altered states of consciousness. Medieval contemplative training in Western religions was geared to harness such a spectrum in the service of the felt sense of union with the

Divine; in the East, it could be used to measure and identify a meditator's progress. States such as blissful ecstasy, calm abiding, or the "Dark Night of Soul" have all been valued in one way or another as benchmarks of the contemplative process. One may predict that with regular MBSR practice over a longer period of time, however, moment-to-moment non-judgmental focusing states may naturally progress beyond body scanning and breath awareness into deeper states of relaxation and beyond. MBSR practice might indeed eventually activate non-ordinary visual, aural, and trance states.²⁶ As MBSR research continues to grow, it seems likely that well-trained practitioners will begin to commonly experience and then to ask questions about further reaches of higher consciousness and their existential meaning. Such developments could constitute a step towards crossing the divide between secular and religious discourse.

The next sections of this essay raise questions about the links between an embodied chronological multiverse – the search for a "medieval now" co-existing with a linear chronology -- and contemplative pedagogies in a Medieval Studies classroom. Three aspects are isolated that might serve as a foundation for dialogue: the transformational potential of both religious and secular types of pedagogies, their embodied dimension, and their potential drawbacks.

Introducing the Practice of Contemplative Pedagogy

To create conceptual registers for students to think and work with, my courses introduce MBSR and the core of contemplative pedagogies through four basic mindfulness features:

- one, the centrality of self-reflection and mind-awareness (meta-cognition);
- two, the centrality of the body and non-judgmental attentiveness to the body;
- three, the centrality of a focus on presence (dropping thoughts about the past and future); and

- four, the centrality of process as slow teaching and learning.²⁷

I have found that these four dimensions generate more personally meaningful academic engagement with medieval primary sources and encourage critical thinking. Personal points of view and subjective impressions (first person perspectives) are examined and affirmed as valid features of academic work, yet are also contextualized and challenged through second and third person inquiry. Any one of the four features may be explored at the beginning of a class session or may be interspersed throughout a class, for example, to reflect on a lecture or an assigned reading through meditative journaling intentionally engaging first, second, and third person perspectives. Grading these assignments follows traditional rubrics for reflective judgment.²⁸

At the beginning of a semester, students are also introduced to the current therapeutic dimensions of mindfulness practices, to evidence of their effectiveness, and to the dangers of mindfulness meditation in unsafe or abusive teacher-student relationships or as an unsuitable medical intervention for pre-existing mental health conditions. Contemplative pedagogy is discussed as a variant of MBSR with Eastern and Western roots in ancient religious practices, especially so in medieval Buddhist traditions such as Zen or the Benedictine tradition as outlined in the *Rule of St. Benedict*. As has become standard for the ethical use of contemplative pedagogy, experiential modules to regulate breath, work with movement, and practice mindfulness exercises are presented as invitations with entirely voluntary individual student participation. Students can engage as much and as little as they feel comfortable and safe to explore. For example, although almost all students are grateful for the opportunity to slow down, de-stress, and experience a time of communal silence or guided visualization, contemplative writing, etc., a student might not feel comfortable closing her eyes in a group setting or sharing personal reflections and insights with another person about her MBSR experiences.

To create a foundation for student-centered reflections about the social and historical context of medieval contemplative traditions, feminist pedagogy or the *Sentipensante* model as developed by Laura I. Rendón might be employed as a comparative contemporary practice. Feminist pedagogy has brought to light the power of first person epistemologies for women; the *sentipensante* approach extends first person and second person perspectives to social justice work.²⁹ Questions that arise here might address asceticism with its seeming rejection of embodiment, gender justice for female religious and sexually diverse communities, and the absolute truth claims of hegemonic theological systems that might be woven into contemplative textual traditions.

To bring contemplative studies into conversation with students' lived personal and social experiences, students are also invited to reflect on the opposite of mindfulness – mindlessness -- and its relatively obvious and ubiquitous effects. For example, mindlessness in the classroom and beyond can manifest individually as a student's inability to maintain focus or to get stuck in tunnel vision, often triggered by self-imposed or externally caused stress. Equally damaging is mindlessness expressed socially as dominance behavior where we operate with a greatly diminished presence-based awareness and a lack of empathy and concern, not only for ourselves and the impact of our behavior, but especially so in regard to others. Martin Buber, the great early twentieth century popularizer of medieval mysticism, called the core of such dominance behavior as the move away from I-Thou presence to I-It.³⁰ Mindlessness may cause psychological and physical injury to self and others, and leads, like all trauma, to a dissociation from the body or an unbalanced relationship with the body. Empathy and concern for others expresses a felt sense of others. To feel means for one's awareness to be centered in the body.³¹

In a medieval context, visual meditations such as a focus on the body of Christ by identifying with his wounds, meditation of saints, their stories, and their often violated bodies as depicted in medieval sculpture and painting, the grief encapsulated in the *pietà*, or visualizing cradling a vulnerable Christ child -- all formalized in a host of medieval visual and aural meditations on the wounded and fragile body--, invite trans-historical dialogue as to their somaticized therapeutic wisdom and as a way to acknowledge and undo emotional trauma. Yet it also raises unsettling questions of how such culturally emic healing practices could become embedded in victim narratives that divert legitimate theodicy and social justice questions such as condoning violence against women or Jewish communities. In the classroom, we frequently access the complex mirroring effect of medieval art through museum visits. The late Joanna E. Ziegler has persuasively demonstrated the use of contemplative ritual for medieval art.³² We adapted her insights by developing a two-and-a-half-hour workshop with the Director of Public Programs at the Reynolda Museum of Art, which is situated adjacent to the university campus in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.³³ The workshop includes contemplative walking, writing, looking, and sharing insights in group conversations.³⁴

Thinking more deeply about the learning process as transformation and an act of sacramental imagination and action in a Catholic higher education context, Anita Houck has masterfully described the hermeneutical circle in academic contemplative studies that can build on the four core characteristics mentioned above and can be used independently from a Catholic or religious perspective generally. For Houck, the hermeneutical circle works as a three-part process, beginning with a student's process of self-reflection, then moving on to a student's process of understanding the other, and thirdly, engendering the process of knowledge creation as intentional self-transformation based on part one and part two of the process. The third stage

in turn may begin a new cycle. Self-transformation here is defined as a substantive change in thinking and action.³⁵

The back and forth between mindful centering and transformational learning has medieval antecedents, such as the Benedictine motto of “*ora et labora*” and Buddhist monastic training, where students alternate meditation with lively debate and argumentation. Recent models of interreligious dialogue and circle conversations used in restorative justice models as described in Swidler’s *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding. Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions*, revive the productive polarity between meditative reflexivity and transformational action.³⁶

To foster critical reflection on the potential pitfalls of contemplative pedagogies, students read and reflect about spiritual teachers with reputations for scandalous and/or controversial behavior. Examples that have been used as a basis for critical reflection include readings about Thomas Merton’s early years as a drinking and womanizing student and his later affair with a young nurse and Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche’s use of alcohol and sexual promiscuity as a teaching tool.³⁷ The poignant *Pardes haggadah* of the four Rabbis in *Pardes/Paradise* is another example to invite reflection on the dangers of a simplistic and naïve embrace of contemplative pedagogies. A story in pedagogical use already in the Middle Ages and earlier, the legend tells the story of four renowned Rabbis who mystically enter the realm of Paradise. One Rabbi beholds Paradise and dies; the second beholds Paradise and loses his mind; the third demolishes all plant life that he finds. It is only the fourth Rabbi (the famous Rabbi Akiba) who is capable of being in Paradise and then leaving it to return to his students with all his faculties, judgment, and actions unimpaired and properly balanced.³⁸

Whereas the biographies of renowned teachers demonstrate the difficulties and challenges of maintaining a trusting relationship between student and contemplative teacher, the Pardes haggadah is a metaphor for the dangers inherent in mystical and contemplative training *per se*. It makes clear that as much as an overly rational methodology may truncate and jeopardize emotional and spiritual wholeness, a poorly practiced contemplative methodology might land students and teachers in situations of self-abuse and delusion to the point of serious harm for themselves and others.

The dangers of contemplative pedagogy in the classroom seem less frightening and dramatic than either of the two scenarios above, because the goals and objectives are, after all, academic, not mystical. According to research by Daniel Barbezat and Mirabai Bush and other experts in the field, teachers still need to prepare carefully for the implementation of contemplative pedagogy. Most importantly, there is the obvious need for continuous personal contemplative and meditative practice outside of the classroom for the teacher. This insures professorial authenticity and procedural expertise. Contemplative pedagogy should be implemented gradually and slowly to allow students time for adjustment and agency. Less is always more. Especially in regard to teaching religious traditions, the contemplative studies curriculum needs to demonstrate respect for every student's personal belief system. In the syllabus design, grading rubrics and assessments should clearly reflect new learning styles. For example, to allow freedom in expressing personal reflections, completion rather than letter grades might be used for regular short reflection papers. For more extensive assignments, first person, second person, and third person perspectives need to be integrated according to standard academic requirements. Contemplative pedagogy supplements and enriches, but does not replace rigorous academic research in third person frameworks. Finally, instructors and students should

feel absolutely safe to integrate dimensions that have been too often dismissed as merely personal and subjective and thus off topic.³⁹

St. Thomas Aquinas wisely noted that a community benefits from persons well versed in contemplation. Equally judiciously, he did not recommend that all of society should turn contemplative. Martin Buber resigned himself to stating that at times, I-It relationships were unavoidable and even necessary even if I-Thou relationships seem vastly more satisfying and profound. Those who turn to contemplative pedagogy and a “spacious medieval now” are part of a small but widely-noticed community of teachers and scientists navigating a wave of new possibilities of pedagogical re/discovery, of experimenting with a renewed use of contemplative states of consciousness and their meaningful re/integration into daily life both within and beyond educational frameworks.

¹ I wish to thank the three anonymous reviewers and the editor for their insightful comments and feed-back on an earlier draft of this essay.

² Andrew Vogel Ettin and Ulrike Wiethaus, “Mysticism, Experience, and Pedagogy in Jewish-Christian Dialogue” in *Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations*, volume 4, 2009, 1-13. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/viewFile/1514/1367>.

³ I began my intellectual journey into medieval contemplative pedagogy with a study of Hadewijch’s mystical pedagogy in 1991. See Ulrike Wiethaus, “Learning as Experiencing: Hadewijch’s Model of Spiritual Growth” in *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition*. Edited by George C. Berthold (Manchester, New Hampshire: Saint Anselm College Press, 1991), 89-107.

⁴ John Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living. Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 134-139.

⁵ For examples, see the *Mindful Schools* initiative (<http://www.mindfulschools.org/>).

⁶ For a summary, see the 2013 review article by Tina Barseghian, “Why Mindfulness Benefits Student Learning” <https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/09/12/why-teaching-mindfulness-benefits-students-learning/>.

⁷ Louis Komjathy, editor, *Contemplative Literature. A Comparative Sourcebook on Meditation and Contemplative Prayer* (New York: SUNY, 2015).

⁸ Louis Komjathy, *ibid.*

⁹ MindUp’s website can be found at <http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/>; Tim Ryan, *A Mindful Nation: How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit* (Hay House, 2013).

¹⁰ Tim Ryan, *A Mindful Nation. How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit* (New York: Hay House, 2012.)

¹¹ The Hawn Foundation, *The MindUP Curriculum: Grades 6–8: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning—and Living* (New York: Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2011). Similar books exist for PreK2 and Grades 3-5.

¹² The website offers a plethora of information on well-tested contemplative pedagogy techniques as well and is strongly recommended to anybody interested in learning more about CP. See <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2010/04/contemplative-pedagogy/>.

¹³ Komjathy, op.cit., 22-23.

¹⁴ See Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule, Blythe Mcvicker Clinchy, and Mary Field Belenky, *Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women’s Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Bloomsbury Atlantic, 30th anniversary edition, 2000), Henry A. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Bloomsbury Atlantic, 2011).

¹⁵ The quote is taken from Karolyn Kinane’s essay on contemplative pedagogy at <http://postmedieval-forum.com/forums/forum-iv-pedagogy/contemplative-pedagogy-karolyn-kinane/>; Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham: Duke University, 2012).

¹⁶ The American author Kathleen Norris has explored this transmission of medieval Christian spirituality in many of her works, including its difficulties. See most recently in *Acedia & me. A Marriage, Monks, and A Writer’s Life* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008).

¹⁷ For an overview, see Rabbi Cooper’s website at <http://www.rabbi david cooper.com/>.

¹⁸ Gale Sigal, “At What Price Arthur? Academic Autobiography, Medieval Studies, and the American Medieval” in *American/Medieval. Nature and Mind in Cultural Transfer*. Edited by Gillian R. Overing and Ulrike Wiethaus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht unipress, in press).

¹⁹ Rebecca Seligman and Ryan A. Brown, “Theory and method at the intersection of anthropology and cultural neuroscience” in *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, June-September 5(2-3), 2010, 130-137. doi: [10.1093/scan/nsp032](https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsp032).

²⁰ For a discussion of the divide, see Sam Harris, *Waking Up. A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion* (New York; Simon & Schuster, 2014).

²¹ See Dinshaw, 2012.

²² Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

²³ Dinshaw, *ibid*. It should be noted that although not (yet?) related to medieval spirituality and mindfulness, the rise of deep spatial mapping initiatives in the Digital Humanities, historical (neo)geographical positioning information mapping, and the use of avatars in serious role play gaming (RPG), to just name a few points of digital departure, offers yet another avenue to experientially access a type of “medieval now” in the classroom. Beyond the Digital Humanities and RPGs, cousins on the family tree of a non-

temporal embodied “medieval now” are films, festivals, and feasts. See David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Suffolk UK: D.S. Brewer, 2015), and Sigal, in press.

²⁴ Guigo the Carthusian, *The Ladder of Monks and Twelve Meditations: A Letter on the Contemplative Life*, translated by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, (London: Mowbray, 1978; reprinted Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981).

²⁵ Isabelle Raynauld, director. *Mystical Brain*. Video. National Film Board of Canada, 2007, https://www.nfb.ca/film/mystical_brain; Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Case for the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

²⁶ For Buddhism, see James H. Austin, *Zen and the Brain: Toward an Understanding of Meditation and Consciousness* (Cambridge, NH: The MIT Press, Reprint edition, 1999).

²⁷ Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy, editors, *Becoming Beholders. Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2014); important here is also the thoughtful work by Judith Simmer-Brown and Fran Grace, *Meditation and the Classroom. Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies* (Albany: SUNY, 2011).

²⁸ See the helpful diagram developed by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree). On reflective judgment rubrics, see Patricia M. King and Karen Strohm Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment. Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 44-75.

²⁹ *Sentipensante* model as developed by Laura I. Rendón, *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy. Education for Wholeness, Social Justice, and Liberation* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2009).

³⁰ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Touchstone, 1971).

³¹ Eugene T. Gendlin, *Focusing* (New York: Bantam, 1978).

³² Joanna E. Ziegler, “Practice Makes Reception: The Role of Contemplative Ritual in Approaching Art” in Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy, editors, *Becoming Beholders. Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2014), 41-56.

³³ <http://www.reynoldahouse.org/>

³⁴ We also found Andrée Salom’s approach very useful. See Salom, “The Therapeutic Potentials of a Museum Visit”, in *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, volume 27 (2008), 1-6.

³⁵ Anita Houck, “You Are Here: Engagement, Spirituality, and Slow Teaching”, in Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy, editors, *Becoming Beholders. Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2014), 70-86.

³⁶ Leonard Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding. Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

³⁷ Thomas Merton, *The Intimate Merton. His Life from His Journals* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999); Johanna Demetrakas, *Crazy Wisdom. The Life and Times of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*. DVD (Crazy Wisdom Productions, 2010).

³⁸ Pardes Haggadah. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pardes>.

³⁹ Daniel P. Barbezat and Mirabai Bush, *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), chapter four. See also Simmer-Brown and Grace, note 23.

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