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Poetry: "What Al Young Might Say to the Graduates"

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I thoroughly enjoyed the essay on marginal scribbling, a practice that I have engaged in for four decades! I enjoy returning to books I read in graduate school … and seeing the conversation I was having with the text at that time. I also see how, over time, I have read books more than once and have entered notes in different colors.

Several of the other essays brought back memories. The photo of Foucault was more of a nightmare, because I hated his Discipline and Punish, a work loved by radicals in their critique of prisons. It was brilliant but indecipherable and, to a degree, wrong (the insidious nature of non-physical controls did not explain why prisons became more violent and unruly at the very time he would have predicted greater discipline). I must confess that I also have an aversion to the lover of interdisciplinary enterprises in academia. When such efforts emerge naturally, they can be great. But too many universities try to force interdisciplinary courses/programs when there is no enduring base to sustain them. Oh, but I am a fan of Diane Ravitch. I have read some of her writings (mostly in magazines) and find her refreshingly empirical! She changed her mind because she read the data. Her insights in Finnish education are wonderful. I think that system, which I recall produces among the highest scores internationally, contributed to her change of heart about testing. The Finns recruit high quality students to train [as] teachers and then use a strong professionalism to ensure high quality teaching.

I could go on, but I just wanted to thank you for inspiring some thinking on my part!

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(The writer is Distinguished Research Professor at the Center for Criminal Justice Research, University of Cincinnati)

Just used a copy of the Bridgewater Review to kill an enormous bee in my office.

Keith Lewinstein, History