Recovering Leisure: *Otium* as the Basis of Education

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the educational benefits of what the ancients called *otium*: the time and freedom from overt action that allows people to think about the world and their reasons for being.

While leisure is not a new concept in philosophy of education, it is one to which not enough people pay attention. In the very few instances in which scholars have recently argued that leisure should make its way into our contemporary conversations on education, the argument, in my view, falls short due to the fact that the concept of leisure is still not well understood. This study seeks to demonstrate and illustrate the value of the ancient concept of leisure (*otium*) in an effort to show its significance for education today. It begins by offering a portrait of leisure, anchoring the discussion in the figure of Socrates, especially in Plato's *Phaedo.* This discussion is further expanded by Seneca's account of leisure in *On the Shortness of Life.* An extension of this portraiture follows by making direct liaisons with education, as the themes of the art of living and culture emerge. A full consideration of leisure in education continues by turning to the concepts of philosophy and contemplation. An examination of Yves R. Simon's definition of teaching as an "overflow of contemplation" provides a final consideration that leads to conclude that *otium*, as the ancient ideal of leisure, will benefit students, teachers, and society in general, by allowing us to recover a fundamental experience of human flourishing that finds its source in our time for education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: The Place of Leisure in Education

Traditionally, the philosophical approach to education has placed great value in the human ability to profit from time to think and to be able to engage our world in a reflective manner. Philosophers have sought to develop theories, ideas, and conceptions in an effort to help introduce the value of time to the practice of education. This tradition could be easily traced back to the philosophers of antiquity, who valued thought and philosophy for their demonstrated capacity to positively affect the quality of our actions, and the manner in which we engage each other and the world in which we live. The philosophical pursuit in ancient times was, therefore, as Pierre Hadot rightly points out, not an academic subject (as it is popularly conceived nowadays) but rather *a way of life*.[1] In this sense, philosophy was an activity by which an educated or flourishing conception of the human being could be formed and pursued. The time for philosophy was a time in which the precepts of ethics, morality, and wisdom found themselves as spheres integral to the formation of the individual. Philosophy and education, then, are immensely benefitted from good use of one's time as the condition by which all reflection is made possible. Philosophy and education require time understood in two senses: time in the traditional sense of duration, as well as a more subjective modality of time, sought by the individual, for reflection and thoughtful engagement. It is this last understanding of time the one which will frame the subsequent discussion of time as leisure.

In the following study I propose to examine the educational benefits of what the ancients called *otium*: the time and freedom from overt action that allows people to think about the world and their reasons for being. I conjecture that an inquiry centered on the concept of leisure should

[1] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* Arnold I. Davidson (Ed) (Malden: Blackwell, 1995).

be regarded as the basis of education, and that the recovery of its original significance will prove timely in our present dealings with education.

1. Why a Call for Leisure?

We commonly speak of leisure as free time to do something other than work, and its meaning is often understood as related to class relations and social status. If we look for the etymology of the word, it will refer us to the Latin *licere*, meaning licence, time at one's disposal, or permission to do something. In this case, leisure is time that is not occupied with labor and is, instead, used freely and recreationally. In this respect, we currently adjust the language that points to this aspect of time in questions such as "what do you like to do for leisure?" The answer is usually a hobby or any activity for which one does not get paid.[2] This conception of leisure, traced to the 1300's, however, is not the one bearing the responsibility of having given way to the English common name "school" and its equivalent in a great variety of other languages. The original concept for leisure, responsible for this, is the Greek term *scholé*. For this reason, Josef Pieper points out, "the place where we educate and teach is derived from a word which means 'leisure'. 'School' does not, properly speaking, mean school, but leisure."[3]

Much has been written addressing concerns relating to speed in learning and educating. Various scholars have indicated that in the interest of advancing education, we have turned to strategies and tactics that allow for delivering required lessons in less time, often neglecting aspects in education that, while time-consuming, are impossible to overlook. Such aspects include the need to develop critical reading and thinking, good communication, and responsible

[2] Jeffrey Morgan, "Leisure, Contemplation and Leisure Education," *Ethics and Education* 1, no. 2 (2006): 133-147.

[3] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*, trans. Alexander Dru (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1963), 22.

and ethical agents. Joan Ferrés has diagnosed our times as being characterized by what he calls a "culture of spectacle".[4] The term refers to a culture that has progressively learned to pay more attention and emphasis to that which responds to emotional and sensorial stimuli in the interest of provoking a more immediate response from social agents. This process, Ferrés argues, has inserted education mostly into an *iconosphere* while distancing it from the *logosphere,* which includes not only the world of the scripted word, but also that of thought and reflection. This state of affairs translates into a very delicate situation for schools. In the first place, there is the challenge that the youth that is being educated is already becoming adjusted to a culture that both venerates entertainment and values speed in learning as a result of technological revolutions. Second, a further challenge is encountered by the schools that demand display of evidence, as numbers and accountability are valued in order to demonstrate that schools are doing their job when students pass standardized testing.

The implicit danger found in the culture of spectacle, as Ferrés calls it, is that we will unquestionably accept one way of living and educating, while effacing any other approach that will require more time and effort. The culture of spectacle threatens to distance individuals from full flourishing when education merely cultivates the visible, active, and quantifiable aspects of life; leaving undeveloped the invisible, qualitative, reflective life of the individual. Ferrés argues that while the needs for technological advances today are indisputable, our times do present a challenge for educators. This study offers an occasion to reflect about this challenge. To our busy and active way of life, we must consider adding an equally active but reflective aspect. The cultivation of reflection impels us to turn to the ancient rendition of leisure (*otium*) as a counterpart to business (*neg-otium*).

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[4] Joan Ferrés, *Educar en una cultura del espectáculo* (Barcelona: Editorial Paidós, 2000).

The reason why philosophers across time, like Aristotle and German philosopher Josef Pieper, agree on leisure being the basis of culture is because in leisure we momentarily part from living in the means-to-ends structure, to pause, think, feel, and create as an end in its own right. Leisure turns to be a particular state of being which human beings are capable of attaining. Josef Pieper considers leisure to be an attitude: we are in leisure and, when in leisure, we come to the realization that we are more than just workers and functionaries in a world (in which we hold a *determinate function*). Time for leisure as will be here described does not exist on its own, it is deliberately sought. Leisure allows us to venture into ourselves.

Recovering the classic definition of leisure as *otium* can lead us into a direction that may help center education back in the human being. This definition of leisure is not here being invented, but rather recovered. While leisure is not a new concept in philosophy of education, it is one to which not enough people have paid due attention. In the few cases in which scholars argue that leisure in its ancient form should make its way into the classroom and back into our conversations on education, their way of proposing it is, in my view, vague, and it offers little for anyone to understand why leisure should be an important discussion in education in the first place. For this reason I have decided to work on a longer study that details the particular conception of leisure in time addressing its significance for education today. In what follows I will frame the concept of leisure and the subsequent discussion in an effort to render clearer both the concept and the objectives of this study.

2. The concept of Leisure

Literature on leisure as an educative concept does not abound in our journals. As it will be stated in this work, I was able to find no more than three articles that had a project similar to

the present one. While I was able to find support for my project in these articles –precisely because I was thinking along the same lines as those few authors—I considerably doubted that they were enough to push the idea forward that leisure should be a topic of discussion amongst educators. In this sense, the gap between the ancient conception of leisure (*otium*) and our current educators was far too wide. My project seeks to bridge these two closer together.

A possible shortcoming in a project that tries to recover an ancient concept finds its source in the ambiguity of the concept itself. In the present case, the ambiguity of the concept of leisure owes to the fact that "leisure" today means something different to "leisure" understood as *otium*. Leisure nowadays could be understood as the direct opposite of work (in the context of labor or employment) or, sometimes, as idleness. For this reason a study that seeks to *initiate* teachers and students alike in leisure requires a slower approach that seeks to contextualize and illustrate aspects that render the connection more concrete. This is the approach I have decided to take in this work.

When thinking about leisure in the context of this study, it is important to recognize that leisure is both a time (both potential and actual), and an *approach* to time, yet this time is deliberately created. Leisure cannot be understood apart from a conception of time and, leisure cannot come to be apart from the person who realizes him—or herself in leisure. For this reason, a philosophical discussion of leisure demands an appeal to the figure of Socrates, who was both a philosopher and a teacher. In the figure of Socrates we can see both the philosopher and educator *in leisure*. Socrates understood the type of education that evolved from time: from our appreciation and use of it, and from our being in it.

Otium holds intimate ties with philosophy and they share a conceptual framework. I want to argue, however, that philosophy requires leisure. As such, leisure is a precondition for

philosophy. Philosophy cannot be practiced without the right disposition or attitude, and these dispositions have to be cultivated through education. It is in this way that the philosophical ideals of self-cultivation and cultivation; culture and self-culture; human formation and human flourishing, find their origins in leisure.

This study seeks to render clear that leisure becomes a timely concept for educators to consider, especially in teacher education programs. While a course on philosophical foundations of education is almost always required for teachers, a program that values the ideal of leisure would not only initiate student-teachers into a philosophical tradition of education, but it will also unfold and unveil a new field of vision for them. As I state in my writing, I am not trying to find a way by which to revolutionize education through incorporating new aims, new objectives, or even a new structure of educating. I only seek to start a conversation grounded on the need to recover an intrinsically human constituent of education, namely the deliberate creation of ourselves in time.

I am therefore interested in making a conceptual argument for educators and philosophers to begin thinking and talking about leisure within a particular context. For this reason I have focused on the language of leisure, its particular place in the history of philosophy, aspects for its recognition, and some of its implications. A project interested in recovering an ancient concept, I am aware, is not exempt from difficulties. In the next section I will address three main objections that could be raised.

3. Three Main Objections to the Argument of Leisure

It seems to me that difficulties in accepting a proposal focused on a recovery of an Ancient ideal might follow three different paths. First, there is a question regarding the historical

nature surrounding the argument in support of the ideal. Second, there is a question concerning the metaphysical and cosmological background to ancient notions of leisure. Third, there is an important question regarding the significance of introducing such an ideal to contemporary discussions of education.

When it comes to recovering leisure, the reader who raises the first type of question would like to understand better how to overcome the historical fact that leisure was possible in the Ancient world due to certain social circumstances that today are, not only nonexistent, but unacceptable. This reader may accurately point out that, both in Greece and in Rome, the activity of leisure was restricted to a select group of people in society. The exclusivity of its practice was, in large part, possible because of the institution of slavery, which helped preserve the very strict socio-economic hierarchy that clearly divided the rich from the poor, thereby guaranteeing only the first group time for education through leisure.[5]

The reader addressing the second type of question, would be right in inquiring about the role of metaphysics and cosmology that served as platforms for ancient thought on leisure. The question would demand to know if we are, in fact, able to abandon the background—as we must in light of the scientific enlightenment—yet retain and carry into our time the concept of leisure.

Finally, the skeptical reader concerned with the significance of leisure in contemporary discussions may ask for an explanation as to how and for what reason we would introduce leisure into our present dealings with education. Are we to think that leisure should be introduced in the form of a curriculum, a program, a select set of activities systematically carried throughout the academic year? I think it is important to consider these questions before going any further in the building up of an argument addressing the importance of recovering leisure in our current conversations in education.

[5] J.P. Toner, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 12.

The first question is one that is expected to arise given that the context for leisure that I have here taken care to present is one that thrived in a particular time, with particular people, and in specific conditions that cannot be reproduced today. To this concern I would offer as reply that my proposal does not seek to argue in favor of a need to revert to the times of the Greeks or Romans. By the same token, it need be made clear that I am not striving to present a romanticized view of the Ancient world. Far from this, the present work aims to accentuate and focus on the value of leisure as a fundamental element of what was considered a person's good education and good life. Specific conditions such as the social stratum of the person who was to enjoy leisure or even the "right" gender of such person, should, for this discussion, remain irrelevant. The value of leisure or, put differently, leisure as an ideal, is the topic of interest in the present discussion. For this reason, the only sets of questions that are allowed to come to us undisturbed across time are the ones concerned with its conceptual value: How can leisure be considered the mark of an educated individual? What are the fundamental notions of self-cultivation associated with leisure that could still be of relevance today? In what ways would the exercise of "authentic" leisure be of benefit to our education and to our overall quality of life?[6] Irrespective of the kind of world or technological advances, the fundamentally philosophical questions of Antiquity concerning our development as human beings and the type of life we should lead, I think, should reach us intact. I am, in other words, only inheriting the questions that led to leisure and trying to incorporate them into our current circumstance. The main objective is not to replicate a point in time but to recover its valuable questions.

The response to the second objection could take a form similar to the one that has just

[6] Bernard N. Schumacher, *A Cosmopolitan Hermit: Modernity and Tradition in the Philosophy of Josef Pieper* (Washington D.C.: The catholic University Press, 2009), 312. Schumacher distinguishes the authentic leisure, as the philosophical kind, from the popular notion of entertainment. This same distinction also calls to mind Seneca, as he detailed to Lucillus the kind of activities worthy of being leisure.

been discussed. It must be acknowledged that, indeed, important conceptions of metaphysics and cosmology gave shape and force to the way of life of the ancients. However, some philosophers like Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault show that we can bring the practice of spiritual exercises into the present without having to import, for instance, the Stoics' metaphysical background. Alexander Nahamas writes: "In ancient ethical practice, Foucault found a wide range of different techniques, ranging from exercises of self-examination to the extensive writing of daily diaries, all aiming to make oneself into a kind of person of which one could be proud. These techniques constituted what he called, following his ancient authorities, 'the care of the self'".[7] Marcus Aurelius is an example of someone who engaged in such spiritual practices following his beliefs that there was a rational order containing all of nature and all *logos*, of which we form part.[8] From this understanding, it follows that the cosmic consciousness, discussed at the end of chapter 3, proved to be crucial in the ancient world. The practice itself, independent from its cosmological or metaphysical background, proves to be fundamental for the tradition of caring for oneself, which has here been linked to one's education.

Lastly, concerning the issue of practical significance implied in reintroducing such a concept, I would suspect, a critical reader might be trying to anticipate the ways in which the ideal of leisure fits in contemporary discussions on education. Are we supposed to be thinking about introducing leisure to elementary education, secondary education, higher education, and/or to notions of self-education? Where exactly and how does this discussion of leisure become relevant? The nature of these questions, which I classify as being of practical significance, is

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[7] Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 177.

[8] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. Martin Hammond (New York: Penguin, 2006).

extremely important and impossible to ignore. It will be soon made explicit that serious and thoughtful consideration of the question of practical significance will be, in fact, that which will support and give fuel to the argument leading to a recovery of the ideal of leisure in education. These questions are the subject matter of the study in its entirety, but before we can even assert that teachers and schools would be right in caring for leisure, there are a few arguments that need to be considered. The first step into the recovery of leisure begins with an ability to recognize it. In what follows, I will offer an overview of the conceptual journey into leisure.

4. Overview of the Chapters

The second chapter of this study will offer a portrait of leisure that serves to anchor all subsequent discussions. Leisure, it will be argued, is embodied in the figure of Socrates as presented in Plato's *Phaedo.* While further connections are made to the Socrates featured in other Platonic dialogues, it is the purpose of that chapter to accentuate the activities in which Socrates engages in *Phaedo*, as well as the lesson or teaching that guides this dialogue. It will be argued that Socrates is *initiating* us into the life of leisure, philosophy, and education. This discussion is further expanded and carried on through Seneca's account of leisure in "On the Shortness of Life."

The concept of "initiation" used throughout this study is obtained from Socrates himself. In *Meno*, Socrates is dialoguing with young Meno, who eagerly comes to flaunter his newly acquired knowledge of the concept of virtue, having studied it with the sophist Gorgias. Socrates, knowing all too well that Meno is merely speaking as taught by Gorgias, will attempt to show Meno an account of education that he has not yet experienced. Socrates' goal is to invite Meno to think about education and to question the one he has received. Socrates, then, proceeds to demonstrate two forms of answering a question: one way is one that Meno does not

find valid; the other, one that is similar to Gorgias' style of speaking, and therefore the style Meno prefers. While Meno is partial to the way of answering the question that most sounds like his teacher Gorgias, Socrates is trying to show Meno that the way of argumentation to which he is accustomed is not better than the new way he is trying to show. In *Meno* 76e, Socrates says about the answer that resembled Gorgias': "It is not better, son of Alexidemus, but I am convinced that the other is, and I think you would agree, if you did not have to go away before the mysteries as you told me yesterday, but could remain and be initiated." Socrates is here offering Meno an initiation into philosophy and into a new way of understanding education. Initiation, in this sense, bears the connotation of a presentation, of showing, of introducing. Put differently, initiating is to be understood as educating, as opening oneself to new possibilities. This account of initiation also bears the capacity of beginning anew. It could be said that Socrates' project consists in initiating people into philosophy and into the philosophical life. In the second chapter of this study I directly argue that Socrates is initiating his interlocutors in *Phaedo* into the life of self-cultivation and into the condition that makes it possible, namely the life of leisure. As readers, it is expected that we, too, become initiated into this kind of life.

In an effort to offer an instance in which we are able to recognize leisure, and not just identify it, I focus on the activities of Socrates and how he makes use of his time. The main idea is that, in the language of Pieper, Socrates is "working his leisure".[9] Leisure, then, is not to be conceived merely as a time that is not occupied by labor, but as a time that requires intellectual application and direction in the service of self-cultivation. In this portraiture we are able to see Socrates questioning his life and reflecting on the value of the activities in which he had previously engaged himself, as well as on the value of the activities he had previously discarded. For this reason he begins to explore the art of poetry, in case this was an art he should have

[9] Pieper, 63

placed an effort to pursue. The question is what to do with one's time and how an educated conception of time will frame it.

This illustration, as well as the discussion on Seneca, demonstrates how productive time can be to those who employ it well. The rendition of Socrates in prison calls to mind various others who have found themselves in the same situation and, like Socrates, used the time of incarceration to further their understanding of themselves and life, and to share with others. Exemplary figures such as Boethius, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Gandhi, and others are instances of people who work their leisure and use their time in a way that leisure, in its original account as *otium*, describes.[10] Seneca's own discussion shows that the aim of leisure is to self-cultivate. Both the teaching of Socrates and that of Seneca make it clear that this understanding of leisure is available to those who are aware of it and to those who have acquired an education.

The third chapter is an extension of this initial portraiture, and it begins tracing liaisons between leisure and education, as themes of the art of living and culture and self-culture are introduced. Notions pertaining to the art of living find strong support in the accounts that are portrayed in the previous chapter. In trying to develop how leisure and education shape the ideals of culture and self-culture, I transition into German philosopher Josef Pieper's account of "culture of total work." While "work" is here used in the sense of labor as the action by which we are able to satisfy basic needs to secure a dignified quality of living, Pieper's use of "culture of total work" refers to the thought that work and labor extend to satisfy newly created needs that stem from popular culture. This definition bears striking similarities to Ferrés' use of the concept "culture of spectacle" discussed previously. Pieper discusses that human beings focus on work as a means of exchange to procure immediate satisfaction of wants that secure a more

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[10] My thanks to Randall Allsup for having shown the connection of this account to that of various others of great influence.

pleasurable and comfortable life. Pieper's use of the term indicates that when people come to make pleasure and comfort the end of living, or as the main condition for living well, then life has to fully concern itself with the means by which these acquisitions are made possible: work.

"Culture of total work", therefore, relates to people's over-valuation of the concept of work. Pieper therefore argues that a misconstrued valuation, such as the previously mentioned, necessarily distorts and divides the life of the human being. Instead of a life nurtured of both the external and internal worlds, we unquestionably tend to satisfy the external world of objects, which is visible and tangible. The internal world, which consists of our intellect, our sentiments, our self-knowledge and what Pieper refers to as spirituality, becomes suppressed and overlooked; our gaze being turned outward. The discussion of work in this study is directed not to the socio-economical and political literature that examines the impact of work, but to the conception and over-valuation of work that affects our lives and education. The concept of work has been traditionally linked to the concept of leisure in modern philosophical texts in such a way that they further argue that work alienates workers from their humanity and dignity. Such an instance we can find in Karl Marx who, in the likes of Pieper suggests that "work" has estranged man from himself. While this account resonates with that of Pieper, the scope of this analysis goes well beyond the idea of work that features in this study. Entertaining such an account would inevitably change the concept to that of employment and social classes, which is not presently the matter of discussion.

The culture of total work, as presented by Pieper, serves the function of helping us become aware of an interior and external world: a world of thought and reflection made available through "working our leisure" on the one hand and, on the other, the world of material acquisition and visible results made available through work as means of material exchange. I end this third

chapter with a visual account that sums up the discussion of what it means to work one's leisure in the context of education.

The fourth chapter develops the conceptual work of the previous chapters in a full discussion of education. Leisure will here be discussed along with the concepts of philosophy, education, and contemplation. Following this exposition, the question concerning the relevance of Yves R. Simon's definition of teaching as an "overflow of contemplation" will be addressed and proposed as a way by which to revaluate teaching in light of the concept of leisure. By accepting and illustrating the force of Simon's definition, the overall proposal of this study is to bring to the fore a contemporary discussion on the relevance that the concept of leisure has to offer to education. The value of leisure in this study takes the form of a conceptual discussion, but a discussion that –as it will be illustrated through means of ancient and contemporary literatures— is relevant to consider and introduce to our educational practices in our days.

The fifth chapter will offer a few concluding remarks following the examination of the relationship between leisure and education. It will be argued that leisure as a condition for philosophy and thought becomes a way of educating that finds its origins in the teacher, a teacher who has, in turn, been educated to understand his or her role in the education of others. This teacher will be able to situate him—or herself within a tradition that values time in education, and regards it both as a process and as a practice. The tradition serves to show that the ancient questions that led to the practice of leisure and its relationship to education are still relevant today and worth recovering.

Despite advances in the various forms of technology in our lives, the fundamental form and questions relating to the human being (what it means to be human, to live well, and to be educated) remain forever pertinent and forever in need of exercise. The main argument is that

we should care in being able to make time to entertain these questions. When we accept the task of questioning time in this way, we find ourselves speaking of leisure within the realm of philosophy and education.

Chapter 2: Recognizing Leisure: Grounding the Concept in Plato's *Phaedo*

1. Introduction

It can be interpreted that Plato invited us through his Dialogues to entertain the idea that concepts that we use in everyday conversation are not meant to rest on a definition that will preserve them for all eternity. It is, precisely, in such attempts, that many of Socrates' interlocutors find themselves mentally strangled in their own words as they try to provide an all-encompassing definition for a concept that they think they fully understand. Understanding that a full definition of a concept is neither definitive nor educationally decisive is, by contrast, the actual attempt of thoughtfully engaging it. Being able to arrive at this realization is, what Plato suggests through Socrates' example, the distinctive mark of wisdom. On this subject, I am reminded that Megan Laverty has very recently raised the point that it is counterproductive to hold concepts to have either a strictly rational value or a purely practical use for us to just inherit without question.[11] Laverty suggests that being able to use concepts all the while thinking about the way we are using them accounts for a "progressive nature of conceptual understanding", which becomes indisputably important for human beings in daily interactions with one another, but, above all, extremely valuable in the field of education, as it may "provide educators with an occasion to reflect on what they mean by teaching and learning, and where they find teaching and learning in their lives." It seems, then, that we come to understand a concept whenever we are fully able to not just identify, but recognize it.

In a work that aims to explore and recover the ancient concept of leisure in order to reconstitute its value for education and its overall relation with human flourishing, I propose here to overlook all attempts at expanding on a definition and engage, instead, in recognizing its conditions, its practice, and its benefits for education. Examining the concept in a concrete

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[11] Megan Laverty, "Learning our Concepts," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 43, no. 1 (2009): 27-40.

situation, being enacted, may help us understand the concept itself as we question its significance in the practice of education. For a characterization of leisure, I propose we revert to the Ancient Greeks and Romans, for it is in this period that its most valuable conceptualization for education emerges.

Socrates is, perhaps, the most popular figure in the history of Philosophy. Even people not familiar with philosophy are sometimes able to appeal to the figure of Socrates when trying to describe someone as being either very wise or, at the very least, intelligent, methodic, or thoughtful. Individual philosophers and schools of philosophy find in Socrates the ideal of the wise person, and some writers have even designated him as the hero of philosophy.[12] We should take care not to lose sight of the fact that, while Socrates' heroism lies in his being a symbol of wisdom and protector of the philosophical life, through both his words and actions, he is also the ideal of a great teacher. Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard writes the following: "let us briefly consider Socrates, who was indeed also a teacher. He was born in a specific situation, was educated among his own people; and when at a more mature age he felt a call and a prompting, he began to teach others in his own way. Having lived for some time as Socrates, he presented himself when the time seemed suitable as the teacher Socrates."[13] Kierkegaard here conveys to us the message that Socrates, as he himself professed, was a man like any other, receiving the education that everybody else was receiving, and living in no privileged situation when compared to everyone else's. The distinguishing factor between Socrates and everybody else seems to lie in his paying attention to "a call and a prompting."

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[12] Jon N. Torgerson, "The Philosopher as Teacher: Socrates: Outwardly a Monster, all Beauty Within (A Journey with Those Who See the Beauty Within)," *Metaphilosophy* 22, no. 3 (1991): 239-250.

[13] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, eds. Howard v. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 23.

From Socrates' own account in the *Apology* we know that since childhood he had a divine sign (*daimon*) that deterred him from doing things (at the wrong times) but never instructing him on how or when to act. This, he had to figure out. Since childhood, then, Socrates was enjoying a kind of inquisitiveness, which no one else seemed to practice. This carefulness, attentiveness, and inwardness initiated Socrates into another type of education, which he viewed as superior to the education based on knowledge of things outside: the education related to the care of the self, namely, examining and knowing one's self. Socrates regarded this education as superior because he came to see that before one can become educated in the workings of the world and politics one should first become acquainted with oneself. This realization impelled him to initiate others in it as well, when the time was right.

Socrates' attention to the appropriateness of time for particular actions, made me think that, in philosophy, time proves to be a central factor. Not only should we understand 'centrality of time in our lives' as being able to determine the right time for a particular activity, but also to recognize that we need time to become initiated into the practice of knowing ourselves and caring for our souls. I would like to raise the point that leisure is not only a highly philosophical concept that deserves to be recovered from Antiquity and discussed in our present days, but that there is a certain urgency in doing so. In this chapter I will regard leisure as the time for an educative initiation. I hope to see in this conceptual study if we can begin to construct a philosophy of education with leisure as its basis.

In what follows I will begin the elucidation on recognizing leisure by anchoring my discussion in the example of Socrates, the great philosopher and the great teacher. Torgeson claims that it is the Socrates "who speaks in the *Apology, Crito,* and *Phaedo* who is one of the

heroes of our civilization."[14] It seems to me that this heroism lies in the depiction of his dying for the philosophical life, teaching, and educating others by example until his very end. While Ilham Dilham does not go as far as calling Socrates a hero, he does claim the following: "Socrates does not come out in the *Phaedo* as an idealized figure for me, either as a man or a philosopher, but as someone from whom one has much to learn on both accounts."[15] In agreement with both Torgeson and Dilham, I will concentrate on the *Phaedo* in order to offer a reading that will highlight both the heroism and the lessons in Socrates to which Dilham refers in the above quote. Additionally, I will focus my reading on the condition of leisure as that which prompts us to regard Socrates to become an exemplar and hero for education.

It is not my purpose to offer here a full-blown reading or exegesis of the *Phaedo*, nor do I seek to offer yet another study of Socrates as an educator. In this chapter I would like to push forward the thought that Plato might be employing the concept of time in the crafting of this dialogue and that, furthermore, there is a particular quality of time that he seeks to present through the character of Socrates during his final discussion. I read this quality of time as being that of leisure. Anchoring my discussion on the *Phaedo*, I will try to offer a concrete account of the dialogue, which, from my perspective, will help us recognize leisure and recover its Ancient educational value for today's world.

2. Plato's *Phaedo* as Initiation into the Philosophical Life

In a very provocative article, Laurel A. Madison suggests that Socrates' last discussion with friends, prior to his execution, as presented in *Phaedo*, had all to do with his life-long teaching of the care of the self and very little to do with any metaphysical argument concerning

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[14] Torgeson, 247

[15] Ilham Dilham, *Philosophy and the Philosophic Life* (London: McMillan, 1992), xii.

the soul or its immortality.[16] *Phaedo* is usually followed by the subtitle "or on the soul" or "on the immortality of the soul." The reason for the subtitle rests on the grounds that this last discussion becomes framed by the emotional baggage brought on by all those gathered around Socrates moments before his death, in trying to grapple with –what they call—the misfortune befallen upon their friend's fruitful and exemplary life: What will happen to Socrates after he dies? What is the fate of his soul? What will happen to us once he leaves this world? Madison argues that despite the fact that tradition has focused on arguing for metaphysical, cosmological, or causal themes in this dialogue, among others, we would have a different perspective if we pay due attention to Socrates' last words: "Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius; make this offering to him and do not forget."[17] The traditional interpretation suggests that, as Asclepius is the god of healing, Socrates owes him a sacrifice on the assumption that death represents healing from this life.[18] Madison turns to the original Greek text and suggests that a new exercise in translation can, in turn, support a new reading of this dialogue. She writes: "Virtually every English translation has obscured the significance of these words by translating the sentence as 'pay the debt and don't neglect it,' 'make this offering and do not forget,' or worse still, 'see to it, and don't forget,' as if Socrates' dying words expressed nothing more than a trivial concern with Crito's unreliable memory. However, Socrates' last words are 'me amelesete' which can also

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[16] Laurel A. Madison, "Have We Been Careless with Socrates' Last Words?: A Rereading of the *Phaedo,*" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (2002): 421-436.

[17] We find in *Plato. Complete Works*. Eds. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000) the following footnote: "A cock was sacrificed to Asclepius by the sick people who slept in his temples, hoping for a cure. Socrates apparently means that death is a cure for the ills of life."

[18] While this is an interpretation that is commonplace, I am not saying is the only interpretation available. Alexander Nehamas examines this quote and attributes to Nietzsche the reading of life as a disease. Michel Foucault, however, says that it is, in fact, a disease that which is being cured in this context, but it is not that of living. It is, rather, a *collective* disease of holding false opinions, which is cured through the "process of taking care of oneself" (163).

mean ‘do not be careless.’”[19]

If we read with Aristotle that we can adjudicate as happy or blessed a life only at its end, then, as Madison suggests, we should not be careless with these words at the end of Socrates’ life because they are integral to the way we know his character. If we read “do not be careless” as “do not be careless with your soul,” then Socrates’ last words will give coherence to his life and his life will have ended with the message he had always carried. Lest we regard Plato as “a sloppy writer” or Socrates’ last words as carrying no impending force, so goes Madison’s argument, intellectual rigor impels us to go back to the dialogue and see whether there is anything of more important consequence than a mere elucidation over the immortality of the soul, which is not even consistent or proved anywhere in the dialogue. Given that Socrates’ life mission was to help others care for their souls—not only for death’s sake but for that of life, as it is the *conditio sine qua non* we become good—our hero’s last words urging Crito to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius must somehow address his one purpose in life and the things that mattered most to him.[20] Madison writes: “The answer to the question hinted at in the passage 115b, quoted above, where Socrates tells Crito that they will be doing themselves a favor by caring for themselves, i.e., by living ‘in the footsteps of the things said now and in the time before,’ interpreted here as living a philosophical life. The favor that Socrates acknowledges as having been granted as he takes his last breath is precisely this conversion to philosophy –otherwise put, the overcoming of carelessness. Thus Socrates has perceived, by the time he drinks the poison,

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[19] This same translation is also mentioned and supported in Jacob Howland, *The Paradox of Political Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998) but is not pursued in the context of Socrates’ last words in the *Phaedo*. It is mentioned solely to show that this translation offers a connecting thread with the beginning of Plato’s *Theaeteetus*.

[20] Abundant literature examining the meaning of the sacrifice range from religious observances, an act of gratitude to the god, an offering for Plato’s health (who was supposedly ill), to even a final ironic act of Socrates directed at the Pythagoreans.

that his friends have been healed from their carelessness."[21]

I agree with Madison that the *Phaedo* is in dire need of a new interpretation that seriously considers Socrates' last words as necessarily connected to his life's journey, commitment to education, and the care of the soul that inspired so many other philosophers since then. For this reason, I would like to suggest that if we read the *Phaedo* in light of Madison's translation and observations, and if, further, we incorporate the spirit of Kierkegaard's reflection concerning the identity of Socrates as a teacher, we will find ourselves not in the territory of metaphysics, but rather in that of philosophy of education.

It seems to me that before we admit that the *Phaedo* refers to Socrates' last attempt at initiating his friends into the philosophical life, we need to attentively consider the following question: Why was the occasion presented in this dialogue appropriate for Socrates to present himself, as Kierkegaard says, as the teacher Socrates? This question can still be broken down into a few others: Why would this particular occasion be any different from any of the previous ones? What conditions are different in the *Phaedo* that aid Socrates in determining this moment as the right time for the delivery and reception of the teaching?

Kierkegaard asserts that, from the standpoint of education, "between one human being and another the Socratic relationship is indeed the highest, the truest."[22] This viewpoint will assist us in answering the previously stated question and lead the way to conclude that Plato might have intended for the *Phaedo* to be the ultimate Socratic teaching and portray him as, like Torgeson writes, the hero of philosophy.

One interpretation regards that the friends' emotional distress in the dialogue concerning

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[21] Madison, 432

[22] Kierkegaard, 55.

Socrates' imminent death impelled the philosopher to console them through the argument that the soul is not only immortal but that, at least in his case, having lived the life of philosophy, his soul will share in the eternal company of better men. However, looking at the heart of the argument throughout the dialogue, expressed by Socrates himself, we find the following: "I want to make my argument before you, my judges, as to why I think that a man who has truly spent his life in philosophy is probably right to be of good cheer in the face of death and to be very hopeful that after death he will attain the greatest blessings yonder" (*Phaedo* 64). The dialogue, then, will be a defense of the life of philosophy as superior to any other, so that those gathering around Socrates will all become initiated into this way of life.[23]

From the bulk of Socratic dialogues we are able to call to mind some traits of the life of philosophy as that which ponders, wonders, and examines the contents of one's own mind. In short, it is the life of philosophy that provides the appropriate conditions to care for one's soul. As an expert in recognizing the right time to present himself as a teacher carrying an important lesson, Socrates regards this precise occasion as propitious to discuss the immediate valuable impact of the philosophical life on life itself and, later, on death. Much like many Socratic teachings, the lesson is already laid out in Socrates' mind but nowhere in the dialogue stated; it is rather made to appear to his interlocutors as proceeding from present circumstances.[24] Thus, the discussion on the value of the philosophical life is justified (or more properly, masked) in the

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[23] This conversation began with Socrates' exhortation that Evenus, as well as any other who claims to be a philosopher, should follow on his footsteps to death. This claim left all those who were present flustered and so demanded a reason that would prove to them the philosophical way of life as superior to any other.

[24] It could be argued, with reason, that Socrates is also sometimes "at risk" in these dialogues, thereby also cultivating himself along with others, through the examination of his own thoughts and opinions. In this context, however, I refer to the lesson that initiates people into the importance of examining the content of their minds. Pierre Hadot refers to Otto Apelt in his claim that a mechanism of Socratic irony is that of *Spaltung and Verdoppelung*. "Socrates splits himself into two, so that there are two Socrates: The Socrates who knows in advance how the discussion is going to end, and the Socrates who travels the entire dialectical path along with his interlocutor." Hadot, 153.

following way: "it is perhaps most appropriate for one who is about to depart yonder to tell and examine tales about what we believe that journey to be like. What else could one do in the time we have until sunset?" (*Phaedo*, 61e).[25] We can deduce from the previous discussion that, in support of Madison's argument, a more careful reading of the *Phaedo* suggests that the central theme revolves around the importance of living the philosophical life. We can further admit that the circumstance for having this discussion was planned ahead and that Socrates deliberately chose his final hours not for drinking, or eating, or enjoying pleasures of the flesh, but to deliver one more time, and more forcefully, his usual teaching: take care of your soul.

Socrates claims in *Republic*: "It is clear, at any rate, I think, that if one misses the right moment in anything, the work is spoiled" (370b). Just as in *Alcibiades I* he had to wait for the right time to approach young Alcibiades with a lesson, I argue that he has recognized in the *Phaedo* another right time to approach his friends. This "right time," I want to make the claim, he was able to recognize in leisure, and he remains in the state of leisure throughout the entire dialogue. Following this claim, leisure becomes the appropriate time and condition for philosophy. It is my argument that leisure is the one condition that makes this last Socratic dialogue a truly educational one for those present and for us thinking philosophically about education. In the reading that I seek to propose, Socrates is the one who is in leisure and who tries to show that leisure is key to the philosophical life. Like a good teacher, his lesson is led by example. I will like to examine more carefully throughout this chapter the claim that the ultimate Socratic teaching, as presented in the *Phaedo*, is that the most valuable education requires leisure.

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[25] Martha C. Beck, "Virtue Without Fragility: Nussbaum's Account of Detachment in the *Republic*, the *Crito*, and the *Phaedo*," *Sophia* 40, no. 1 (2001) agrees that Socrates is trying to engage his friends in the discussion on the importance of the philosophical life: "There are many reasons to believe that positions Socrates presents and seems to espouse in the *Phaedo* are not Socrates' views, but views he must appear to espouse in order to address the interlocutor's emotional condition" (54-55).

In Plato's dialogues we see Socrates mostly spending his days engaging other people in dialogue with the purpose of a joint educational journey into self-understanding. The reason for this, we know in *Apology*, is that Socrates is trying to find wisdom in other men in order to prove wrong the oracle at Delphi, claiming that no man was wiser than he. It has been his life mission to look into this with more intent as he confesses the following in front of his accusers: "So even now I continue this investigation as the god bade me—and I go around seeking out anyone, citizen or stranger whom I think wise. Then if I do not think he is, I come to the assistance of the god and show him that he is not wise. Because of this occupation, I do not have the leisure to engage in public affairs to any extent, nor indeed to look after my own, but I live in great poverty because of my service to the god" (*Apology* 23b).[26] That Socrates leads an active life in which he helps others determine, on their own, that they must examine their opinions and, thus, know themselves, can be seen in all of the dialogues. Even when we see Socrates as a highly reflective philosopher in his engagement with others, it seems that his life required more leisure and this, I think, is achieved in *Phaedo*.

In his discussion on the figure of Socrates, Pierre Hadot explains that upon careful examination we can devise in Socrates an intermediate location, that is, being "in between." Hadot expands his discussion in three sections entitled "Silenus", "Eros", and "Dyonisus" to prove the point that Socrates stands somewhere in between the divine and the human. Similarly, and perhaps in a more practical matter, we would be correct in situating Socrates in yet another kind of "in between." Sharing, as he does, in a public life, Socrates is actively doing something. We encounter him going to places or coming from places, usually surrounded by people in conversation. Other times, we find him by himself, immersed in thought only to later share with

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[26] The use of leisure in this quote is used in a different sense than the one I am here examining. Leisure to engage in public affairs is different from the leisure to devote to one's own self cultivation.

others and ask them questions about that same topic or another. We could accordingly make the assumption that, in the likes of all of us, Socrates leads a life modeled by a certain regularity and structure. Socrates spends his life conversing with people and inquiring after concepts we take for granted and, thus, we seldom examine. The philosopher profits from leisure for his or her own cultivation. In *Apology* 36d he asks his accusers: “What is suitable for a poor benefactor who needs leisure to exhort you?” Socrates can then be placed in an intermediate place of partaking in the regular lives of men in the present time, by being busy, as well as that which partakes in the life of the divine, by enjoying the life of contemplation, in time unfolded, where the past is annexed to the present: a sheer balance of *neg-otium* and *otium*.[27]

In *Phaedo* Plato presents us, perhaps more striking than ever, the figure of Socrates thinking in leisure about his time of leisure. In his initial conversation with Echecrates (the character inquiring after the events taken place during Socrates’ last day), Phaedo (the narrator of the dialogue) reveals that the reason why Socrates’ execution had been delayed was because the Athenians had sent their yearly ship to Delos, in gratitude to Apollo for having saved Theseus and the two lots of seven victims that he had taken with him to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. Rather than an immediate execution following the trial as expected, this chance delay meant more time for Socrates in his prison cell: time that he used in a different kind of reflection. Plato has Socrates explain his circumstance in the following way: “I tried to find out the meaning of certain dreams and to satisfy my conscience in case it was this kind of art they were frequently bidding me to practice. The dreams were something like this: the same dream often came to me in the past, now in one shape now in another, but saying the same thing: ‘Socrates’, it said, ‘practice and cultivate the arts’” (*Phaedo*, 60e).

[27] Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life*, ed. C.D.N. Costa (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 23.

Socrates explains that he has always listened and paid attention to the particular message of this recurring dream but that "I imagined that it was instructing me and advising me to do what I was doing, such as those who encourage runners in a race, that the dream was thus bidding me do the very thing I was doing, namely, to practice the art of philosophy, this being the highest kind of art, and I was doing that" (*Phaedo,* 61).

Decades of habitual conversing and philosophizing are suddenly put into question, as Socrates wonders if he has been, in fact, practicing and cultivating the arts, just as the dream instructed.[28] This occasion, which Socrates spends in solitude, is what provides him with the opportunity to examine the course of action he had taken before. Socrates explains that he had been composing verses and songs, not to rival Evenus in his poetic art, but as an "attempt to discover the meaning of certain dreams and to clear my conscience, in case this was the art which I had been told to practice" (*Phaedo*, 60e).

In this declaration we can develop a ground for the idea that, much like what Pierre Hadot proposes with the intermediate positioning, Socrates struggles to partake in both a world of man and action, and a god-like world of pure contemplation. We see this in the fact that even as a philosopher, in touch with his own self, caring for what the dream had to say, he was immersed in action by doing philosophy. In his comparison with runners responding to the cheers from those on the sidelines, Socrates acknowledged that it may be the case that he mistakenly took the prompt to practice and cultivate the arts as a cheerful assent to the way he was occupied in his life: a pat on the back to continue doing what he was doing. It seems that he was listening from within his busy life. It is only when he finds himself in the prison cell, being away from the life of busyness and constant interaction, that we see him with the disposition to

[28] A great number of scholars have written in their books and articles that the idea of cultivation of the arts is a way of cultivation of the self. This idea is crucial in the discussions pertaining to human flourishing and philosophy of education in general.

rethink his dream and practice poetry, instead of philosophy, "in case my dream was bidding me to practice this popular art" (*Phaedo,* 61).

This instance, namely Socrates' consideration of another possible explanation for the exhortation to practice the arts, suggests to be a moment that requires thought as well as particular conditions. Socrates' whole life had been lived in accordance to the demands of examination and meaning of one's actions, one's words, and one's understanding of things. It is this moment the one I claim to be that of leisure: the time in which he decides that he must cultivate himself in whatever little time he might have left, since he has to do something other than his normal activity in the outside world.

The idea of leisure thus exposed comprises various elements: disengagement from regular activities, time to think and to create meaning, time for self-examination and self-cultivation. Aristotle explains in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that we work so that we can have leisure (1177^{b}1). The purpose of work and the exigencies of our life of busyness is, according to Aristotle, a means to provide for our necessities. Once those necessities are met, we are left with the opportunity of leisure for ourselves, for education, and for self-cultivation. Along these same lines, Socrates says in *Apology* to his accusers: "Nothing is more suitable, gentlemen, than for ['a poor benefactor who requires leisure'] to be fed in the Prytaneum, much more suitable for him than for anyone of you who has won a victory at Olympia with a pair or a team of horses. The Olympian victor makes you think yourself happy; I make you happy. Besides, he does not need food, but I do. So if I must make a just assessment of what I deserve, I assess it as this: free meals in the Prytaneum" (*Apology*, 36d). In the *Phaedo* Socrates is not in the Prytaneum, but he

is in a situation in which, in a manner of speaking, he finds his basic needs met as well as the leisure he needs for that last discussion with his friends.[29]

I am aware that it is not at all evident that the circumstance depicted in *Phaedo* can be an instance of what the Ancients called *otium*. I imagine that arguments like Martha C. Beck's, which support the reading that Socrates' friends were emotionally consumed with "anger, then, self-pity, and then fear of death," would raise an objection against the claim that they are in leisure, but that, rather, they are tense, emotionally distressed, or even afraid. Moreover, it might be argued that Socrates is a prisoner and that he had not, for himself, chosen this time and designated it to be *otium*. If leisure cannot be forced and cannot be enjoyed in an environment as the one a prison represents, how can the case that Socrates is in *otium* be supported? I can think of three arguments that can very well support this interpretation concerning the state of Socrates in *otium*.

First, Socrates is not depicted as a rowdy prisoner, insisting on the fact that he was a victim of an unfair trial, or otherwise depicted as being held in prison against his will. We know from the *Crito* that Socrates turned down an offer to escape on the grounds that he would be going not only against the law but against his own moral mandates. Also, we gather from Phaedo's narration that his initial impression upon seeing Socrates in prison was that he "appeared happy in both manner and words" (*Phaedo*, 58e). Furthermore, at the end of the dialogue the officer in the prison, who, according to Socrates, "has come in and conversed with me from time to time" (*Phaedo*, 116d), proves the point that Socrates was not feeling anger or

[29] Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt writes in "Plato on Leisure, Play, and Learning" *Leisure Sciences* 12 (1990): 211-227: "Plato was critical of citizens who continued to work and be unduly concerned with "necessities" after they had gotten enough to meet their basic needs or had done their share of public service. Even though freedom was within their grasp, they refused to take it. Still, he did not feel that such people were bad. They kept on building up wealth, power, reputation, and influence and being wrapped up in what they mistook as "important," serious," or "necessary" work only because they did not know better; having forgotten other more important pursuits. Nevertheless, the price of ignorance was great; it was voluntary slavery to incessant "necessity" and loss of the blessing of leisure; it was work without end." http://www.uiowa.edu/~lsa/bkh/200/platoarticle.htm

spite during the time he was incarcerated. The officer says: “I shall not reproach you as I do the others, Socrates. They are angry with me and curse me when, obeying the orders of my superiors, I tell them to drink the poison. During the time you have been here I have come to know you in other ways as the noblest, the gentlest and the best man who has ever come here. So now too I know that you will not make trouble for me (*Phaedo*, 116c).” The officer’s testimony suggests that Socrates’ character did not change with his circumstances, but rather he remained the same man he has always been. The difference now is that he has no necessities to worry about, such as food and shelter. It can be argued that, in his cell, Socrates has no worries but his own, given that “the body keeps us busy in a thousand ways because of its need for nurture’ (*Phaedo*, 66b). In his prison cell, he has been relieved of his everyday work as emulating a “horsefly” or a “torpedo fish” for humanity (*Meno,* 80b). I will subsequently make the claim that in the *Phaedo* he is rather emulating a swan.

Second, and in concert with what was stated previously, it can be asserted that another person, in a similar circumstance, could have easily given himself during this empty time to idleness: simply waiting for the time to pass or, as Crito asserts, “others drink the poison quite a long time after they have received the order, eating and drinking quite a bit, and some of them enjoy intimacy with their loved ones” (*Phaedo*, 116e). Socrates does neither; instead, as it has been stated before, he reflects and cultivates himself in the arts.

Finally, we can interpret that Socrates does not think his situation to be all that different from that of all men and women outside of prison given that we “are in a kind of prison, and that one must not free oneself or run away” (*Phaedo*, 62b). Our souls, according to this, are imprisoned in our bodies. We should follow Socrates’ example and not try to run away. The lesson, as I see it in this dialogue, is that one needs to cultivate one’s soul as to try to make it as

independent from the prison of the body as much as possible. Socrates is seen practicing cultivation of self so as to set his soul free.

These three counterarguments I offer to the critic in order to make the case that the *Phaedo* provides us with a concrete visual account of what true leisure looks like. Seneca's rich description of what happens in leisure can be corroborated in Plato's crafting of this dialogue, thus giving us an opportunity to be able to recognize leisure in the dialogue. I will now turn to make this liaison more concrete.

The Greek and Roman philosophers esteemed leisure as an important component of the philosophical life and education in general. We find this in the life of Socrates and in some of Plato's dialogues, but there is not a careful explanation of what leisure looks like or how we are able to recognize it. The appreciation of leisure endured throughout antiquity and I find the most illustrative and rich depiction of the concept of leisure in Seneca's treatment of leisure in his essay "On the Shortness of Life." As Seneca wished to extend the Socratic endeavor in his philosophy, my method in being able to recognize leisure in the *Phaedo* is by reading Seneca's account of the concept and turning to the Ancient conception of 'leisure' as *otium*. I will subsequently turn back to *Phaedo* to show how the Platonic dialogue reveals itself as an ideal guide to help us recognize leisure in order to determine its value in education.

3. Seneca, *Otium*, and Socrates

Gretchen Reydams-Schils ends a discussion of *otium* by referencing a double herm on display in a museum in Berlin "that on the one side shows the head of Seneca and, on the other, Socrates. It is an apt image: the Roman Stoics saw themselves as continuing Socrates' legacy;

nonetheless, they were looking in a different direction."[30] It is incontestable the enormous influence of Socrates in stoic philosophy and its way of life. The urgency of examining one's life is central to Socratic and stoic philosophy. Seneca acknowledges that the condition that supports the life of philosophy and, thus, the Socratic education of the care for one's soul is *otium.*

In his essay "On the Shortness of Life" Seneca argues that toil, work, and trivial affairs consume a large portion of our waking hours and make us feel as though our lives are short. Seneca states that this appears to be so due to the fact that when we live for the sake of things, people, and duties outside of ourselves, we live distracted just like travelers who "beguiled by conversation or reading or some profound meditation, find they have arrived at their destination before they knew they were approaching it; so it is with this unceasing and extremely fast-moving journey of life, which waking or sleeping we make at the same pace –the preoccupied become aware of it only when it is over."[31]

Seneca writes in this essay that only a life that recognizes the importance of leisure will find life meaningful and rich, and its duration, enough. A further benefit to recognizing leisure as a central activity in our lives is that, because our lives will therefore not be disseminated among people, duties, favors, work, and like activities, we will actually be in its control. Put another way, contrary to the lives of 'the preoccupied', whose lives are constantly full of demands –to things and to others—the lives that share in *otium* value life itself because it values education and the life of philosophy, as taught by Socrates. Seneca writes: "Of all people only those are at leisure who make time for philosophy, only those are really alive. For they not only

[30] Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 113.

[31] Seneca, 14

keep a good watch over their own lifetimes, but they annex every age to theirs. All the years that have passed them are added to their own."[32] In Seneca's view, leisure allows for a unifying view of the past, present, and future by virtue of both reflection and of acquaintance with others through reading of books. When we listen to the various authors' words in the books of philosophy and literature, our minds and our lives necessarily expand and we become more attentive to our own lives, thereby making our time worthwhile.

Seneca's concept of *otium* is closely related to the idea of education and self-cultivation. He paints for us an illustration in which the busy individual (or, rather, the individual who chooses to keep himself busy) with matters of state, or even with menial necessities of others, has no time for thinking about him/herself thus becoming exploited by someone else. The gaze of the individual directed outwards is a lost opportunity for self-cultivation: "X cultivates Y and Y cultivates Z—no one bothers about himself."[33] Along this line of discussion Seneca offers the example of various historical figures known for their military diligence and political importance, who, devoting their own time to aspects outside of themselves, lived their whole lives longing for time to care for their own lives. They may enjoy popular recognition and, to some extent, admiration and even envy for a life full of activity and political enterprise, but Seneca wishes to convince his reader that despite what appearances may suggest, these men did not lead happy, fulfilled lives, for their lives were for others: the crowd. The concluding advice, then, is to acknowledge our own life and get to know it: "And so, my dear Paulinus, extract yourself from the crowd, and as you have been storm-tossed more than your age deserves, you must at last

[32] Seneca, 23

[33] Seneca, 3

retire into a peaceful harbour."[34] The exhortation, then, to allow time for leisure in our lives is, for Seneca, what is necessary to live a life fully and to avoid succumbing to the desperate cry over the shortness of our lives.

It still remains to determine which activities are appropriate of leisure. Seneca clearly states that it is philosophy. But how does one determine that one is in leisure, how does one know that one is, indeed, engaged in a philosophical activity, given that "[s]ome men are preoccupied even in their leisure: in their country house, on their couch, in the midst of solitude, even when quite alone, they are their own worst company."[35]

The suggestion that leisure is not, what we call today 'free time' or a license to do something other than work is confirmed by specifically stating that even while we are relaxing, our thoughts may still lie elsewhere, thus maintaining our preoccupied status.[36] The threat to achieving leisure lies in breaking the balance between our social life and our personal life: if we revert to the first one, we become one with the crowd in constant activity; if to the second, we become isolated, indolent, and unproductive. The balance is achieved when we are capable of determining a time in which to retreat into ourselves and another time to come back to act among others. If leisure is incompatible with inactivity, then leisure is activity that demands effort and consciousness. Leisure is a replenishing condition that allows for an active, reflective distance from the world.

Reydam-Schils points out that the French translate "leisure" as *disponibilité* (to be

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[34] Seneca, 29

[35] Seneca, 17

[36] A relaxed state might also signify that our thoughts are nowhere: "I would not count as leisured those who are carried around in a sedan chair and a litter, and turn up punctually for their drives as if it was forbidden to give them up; who have to be told when to bathe or to swim or to dine: they are so enervated by the excessive torpor of a self-indulgent mind that they cannot trust themselves to know if they are hungry" Seneca, p.19.

available).[37] Leisure, then, is to be understood as being available to oneself. The same way that we may be available to listen to a friend in distress and offer counsel, or that we are available to run errands, or to make cupcakes for a school activity, we need to make sure that we will also be available to listen to ourselves and to reflect on our actions. Seneca regards this availability to oneself as the highest mark of the person who is able to recognize it. “Believe me,” he writes, “it is the sign of a great man, and one who is above human error, not to allow his time to be frittered away: he has the longest possible life simply because whatever time was available he devoted entirely to himself.”[38]

I take Socrates to be such a man as Seneca describes in the above quote. In *Phaedo* alone we see two instances in which Socrates tells his friends that they should use their available time in philosophical dialogue, “this being the highest art” (*Phaedo*, 61). In addition, the following quote from Seneca describes Socrates’ life and readiness to die, such as were described through Phaedo’s account of Socrates’ last day: “But for those whose life is far removed from all business it must be amply long. None of it is frittered away, none of it scattered here and there, none of it committed to fortune, none of it lost through carelessness, none of it wasted on largesse, none of it superfluous: the whole of it, so to speak, is well invested. So, however short, it is fully sufficient, and therefore whenever his last day comes, the wise man will not hesitate to meet death with a firm step.”[39]

Seneca is a great admirer of Socrates and it should be no surprise the fact that we may be able to draw clear connections between his own text and the figure of Socrates. He even urges Paulinus to read books with the purpose of sharing the world with the great minds of the past,

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[37] Reydam-Schils, 102

[38] Seneca, 10

[39] Seneca, 17

and he specifically exhorts him to "argue with Socrates."[40] This advice comes as an example of activities deserving of being occupations in leisure. As he goes on in his elaboration of which activities are proper of leisure, Seneca specifies areas of thought that one who is in leisure will be sure to enjoy:

> Do you think it is the same thing whether you are overseeing the transfer of corn into granaries, unspoilt by the dishonesty and carelessness of the shippers, and taking care that it does not get damp and then ruined through heat, and that it tallies in measure and weight; or whether you take up these sacred and lofty studies, from which you will learn the substance of god, and his will, his mode of life, his shape; what fate awaits your soul; where nature lays us to rest when released from our bodies; what is the force which supports all the heaviest elements of this world at the centre, suspends the light elements above, carries fire to the highest part, and sets the stars in motion with their proper changes –and learn other things in succession which are full of tremendous marvels?[41]

It will be curious to remark that the metaphysical and cosmological reflections, as Seneca instructs we will be wise to inquire after, are precisely the nature of the arguments Socrates discusses with his friends.[42] Arguments on the immortality of the soul and arguments on the composition and nature of the earth are featured in Socrates' last dialogue with friends. It has been stated earlier that some scholars have argued that perhaps these arguments were not intended to be truly pursued in themselves but, rather, that they are to be used as resource or aid for Socrates' last teaching (and demonstration of the importance) of caring for one's soul.[43] Once the discussion over the various journeys on which the souls embark after the release from their respective bodies had come to an end, and the time for Socrates to drink the cup of hemlock was near, Crito asked Socrates for final instructions "to me and to others about your children or

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[40] Seneca, 23

[41] Seneca, 31

[42] Not only it is obvious from the reading of the dialogue itself, but from the copious secondary literature it has produced concerning these topics.

[43] Even Socrates' story of how he was soon disillusioned with his failed attempt at learning from Anaxagoras might suggest that in his passionate desire to learn from another, he soon realized that he was better off reflecting and working things out on his own (*Phaedo*, 98b).

anything else? What can we do that would please you most?" To this, Socrates replies: "Nothing new, Crito, but what I am always saying, that you will please me and mine and yourselves by taking good care of your own selves in whatever you do, even if you do not agree with me now, but if you neglect your own selves, and are unwilling to live following the tracks, as it were, of what we have said now and on previous occasions, you will achieve nothing even if you strongly agree with me at this moment" (*Phaedo*, 115b). The reason why we have admired Socrates throughout the centuries is because he was an exemplar of the philosophical life, and his whole life had been dedicated to invite others to form part of it. If we hold as true the interpretation that both the argument concerning the immortality of the soul and the cosmological argument were not presented to pursue their truth, then we can posit the idea that by engaging them, Socrates was being an example of one who, in their leisure, like Seneca writes, makes time for philosophy.

Socrates' agenda in this dialogue does not seem to be similar to the agenda in other dialogues. While elsewhere Plato presents to us Socrates engaging others in dialogue with the sole purpose of guiding them to acknowledge ignorance, and to admit that they need to pay more attention to themselves, scrutinizing what they know and what they do not, the case seems to be more nuanced in the *Phaedo.* There is still the intention to convey a lesson, but it seems to be more guided by example than by argument. The structure of the dialogue, the rhythm and tone of the narration, the flow of the arguments, and the interaction of Socrates and his interlocutors convey the idea that this dialogue has a purpose different from all others. For this reason, I will pursue the argument that time is deliberately slowed down and how Plato's architectonic in the *Phaedo* help support the idea that leisure is the medium through which the last –and most important—lesson of Socrates' life is delivered.

4. Slowing Down of Time in *Phaedo*: A Reading of Leisure

Various accounts in the literature in our philosophy journals value the fact that throughout history philosophers have understood the value of slowing down. Joseph Sen reminds us that Socrates was a great example of the philosopher who takes time to think and takes his time to speak.[44] Sen and others have done well to remind us about Wittgenstein's opinion on how philosophers should greet each other when meeting on the streets: "Take your time." Much of the emotional desperation afflicting Socrates' interlocutors in the various dialogues is not only caused due to extreme confusion, but also because of Socrates' appearance as undisturbed. Socrates' calmness and allowance of time to think –and, thus, lack of concern for rushing an answer to a problem—tends to disturb others even more to the extent that they judge that it must be part of the philosopher's bewitching rituals and trickery that he performs on others.

Slowing down and shunning rash discussions and actions was something Socrates was known for. In the *Symposium* alone we have two instances of Socrates slowing down and giving himself time to think: in the beginning, after having invited Aristodemus to Agathon's dinner, Socrates instructs him to go on without him and that he will meet him there in a while. Socrates stayed outside for a long time and Agathon, growing impatient, asks his servers to look for him, but these are simultaneously instructed by Aristodemus not to disturb him. By the end of the dialogue, Alcibiades, in his drunken praise of Socrates, describes a given occasion in which he spent time alone by himself thinking: "One day, at dawn, he started thinking about some problem or other; he just stood outside, trying to figure it out. He couldn't resolve it, but he wouldn't give up. He simply stood there, glued to the same spot. By midday, many soldiers had seen him, and, quite mystified, they told everyone that Socrates had been standing there all day, thinking about

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[44] Joseph Sen.,"On Slowness in Philosophy," *The Monist* 83, no. 4: 607-615.

something" (*Symposium*, 220e). Moreover, in the *Protagoras*, Hippocrates arrives in a hurry to Socrates' door saying that they should go right away to see Protagoras. Socrates realizes that Hippocrates needed to slow down and think about the reason as to why exactly he wanted to go over: what did he know about himself that longed for Protagoras' assistance? And so, reassuring him that Protagoras was not going anywhere, he and Hippocrates stayed behind to discuss the situation better.

The lesson portrayed through the example of Socrates seems to be that a life consumed in action cannot reason or reflect on why we are doing something or what consequences are likely to ensue (and affect us) from such actions. We need, thus, to find time to think about ourselves in the midst of things. Much like Seneca suggests, even the power and genius of Augustus, who "could grant the prayers of mankind", could not find a way to grant himself the leisure he desired because his life demanded constant political activity. While Socrates had enjoyed *otium* before, in the *Phaedo* he is in *otium* throughout and sets an example of its centrality in the life of the philosopher.

Douglas Stewart begins his essay with the following sentence: "The purpose of this note is to celebrate the discovery –if that is not too strong a term—of one of those delightful if minor aspects of Plato's art that proves all over again that genius is known as much by small pains as by magnificent architectonics."[45] I interpret Stewart's words to mean that Plato's artful writing, like all art, invites us to have an experience of reading and discover new ideas if only one ventures to read outside of a set tradition. Sharing in Stewart's celebration, I would like to now offer not a discovery, but a particular standpoint from which to read the *Phaedo*, suggesting that Plato is deliberately slowing time throughout the dialogue, from beginning to end. Following this, if it is true that Plato was fashioning an architectonics, we need to inquire as to why slowing

[45] Douglas Stewart, "Socrates' Last Bath," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 3 (1972): 253-259.

down time would be a necessary recourse. I see this as further support for the argument of leisure in the *Phaedo*.

Various details are given to us in just the first couple of pages of *Phaedo*. We know, for instance, that there has been a delay in Socrates' execution, that Echecrates and his companions have time to listen to a detailed account of what happened during Socrates' last day, and that Phaedo is not pressed for time. In fact, he says, "nothing gives me more pleasure than to call Socrates to mind, whether talking about him myself, or listening to someone else do so" (*Phaedo*, 58d). This occasion presents itself to Phaedo, as he recounts it, as an opportunity to recall that day and revisit it, almost to try to make sense of it, given the confusion and strangeness of that day.[46] These first accounts set the tone for what comes next in Phaedo's subsequent narration of the events.

In the dialogue, I would like to point out, there is a relaxed tone not only in Phaedo's speech (recounting the events after they had happened) but in Socrates' words as well as the main interlocutors, Simmias and Cebes. Crito, the other speaking character in the dialogue, seems overwhelmed and nervous most of the time.[47] The first scene Phaedo describes is that of Socrates' wife, Xanthippe, leaving "lamenting and beating her breast" as she realized this would be the last time Socrates would be talking with his friends (*Phaedo*, 60b). At the same time, Socrates instructs Crito to have his people lead her away, and subsequently, while rubbing his

[46] Phaedo says in 59b: "I had a strange feeling, an unaccustomed mixture of pleasure and pain at the same time as I reflected that he was just about to die. All of us present were affected in much the same way, sometimes laughing, then weeping…" Then he said: "I was myself disturbed, and so were the others."

[47] Martha C. Beck writes that "emotions are particularly acute because there is a time factor involved" (46). She wants to convey the reading that Socrates' friends are emotional throughout the whole dialogue in order to argue against Martha Nussbaum, who claims that the *Phaedo*'s message aims at complete disengagement of emotions. While I share in Beck's views that *Phaedo* is full of good and necessary emotions, Socrates friends are able to surpass the tension and emotional distress and fully engage in the discussion, thus keeping out of sight that Socrates will die as soon as the conversation is over. Like Seneca's travelers, who immersed in readings or conversation arrive at their destination without keeping it in view, Socrates' friends are participating in Socrates' leisure and only shed tears and become emotionally distressed at the end only because it felt as if they were losing a father, not because he was dying or because they feared where his soul would go to.

leg with his hand (having just been released form his chains), he engages in a philosophical reflection on the relationship between pleasure and pain. At the outset of the actual story, then, Plato has removed excitement and irrational emotions, leaving us with the conditions for calmed reflection, or *otium*.

This sense of calmness and relaxation is perpetuated throughout the dialogue in the form of friendly laughter and tender smiles. Simmias, Cebes, and Socrates are shown, at least six times, laughing and smiling while discussing the soul, and while we have seen smiles and laughs before in other dialogues, the difference here is that in *Phaedo* we find honest and friendly smiles and laughs that are not followed with an ironic or a deriding remark.[48] Furthermore, while in other dialogues Socrates is called ugly, a horsefly, a torpedo fish, a silenus, and a satyr, in this dialogue there is a subtle comparison of himself with a swan: "Really, Simmias, it would be hard for me to persuade other people that I do not consider my present fate a misfortune if I cannot persuade even you, and you are afraid that it is more difficult to deal with me than before. You seem to think me inferior to the swans in prophecy. They sing before too, but when they realize that they must die they sing most and most beautifully, as they rejoice that they are about to depart to join the god whose servants they are" (84e). Socrates has sung, too, his whole life, but perhaps Plato is telling us that in this dialogue, his song will be the most beautiful he has ever sung. The same song: caring for oneself, living a good life, examining one's life and the contents of one's minds is being taken up once again but with outward signs of tenderness and friendship. This practice is the one that will deliver him into the happiness that he expects to find after his death. How are these characterizations of affection different from other dialogues and how is this supposed to point to Plato's artful architectonic?

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[48] Smiles and laughter in the following sections of *Phaedo*: 102d (Socrates), 64b (Simmias), 77e (Cebes), 101b (Cebes), 115d (Socrates), 84e (Socrates).

A common scene in all dialogues is the confusion stirred up as a result of a given discussion. The confusion scenes in the dialogues are mostly followed by the interlocutors trying to redeem themselves by justifying their own knowledge (as in Meno's paradox) or by accusing Socrates of trying to trick them. In *Phaedo* we see such moments of confusion among those present, but no one is desperate and no one is trying to justify anything.[49]

In addition, there are two long silences in the dialogue, allowing for all of them, including Socrates himself, to digest what had been discussed. Because of the commitment and the respectful serenity permeating the scene, once an objection to the argument was finally raised, Socrates responds with a similar expression of perplexity, acknowledging the difficulty of the question, all the while tenderly stroking Phaedo's hair. While recounting this event to Echecrates, Phaedo interrupts his own narration to insert an intimate confession to Echecrates (and to us readers):

> I have certainly admired Socrates, but never more than on this occasion. That he had a reply was perhaps not strange. What I wondered at most in him was the pleasant, kind and admiring way he received the young men's argument, and how sharply he was aware of the effect the discussion had on us, and then how well he healed our distress and, as it were, recalled us from our flight and defeat and turned us around to join him in the examination of their argument.

My reading of Phaedo is centered on this statement. Boyce-Stones rightly points out that the question as to why Plato placed this dialogue in Phaedo's hands is an important one given that he played such a small role in its development. In addition, he claims that in his task as a narrator "we would not expect [Phaedo] to intrude himself into the conversation more than necessary."[50] I am in complete agreement with this view, but while Boyce-Stones goes on to focus on the part

[49] Beck suggests that the dramatic situation in this dialogue has rendered the interlocutors "not strong enough" to pursue the truth about the immortality of the soul forcefully. She does, however, early in her article, stress the fact that they are all friends who have cultivated a deep relationship with Socrates. This fact can take to mean that a friendly, respectful, unemotional discussion is appropriate.

[50] George Boyce-Stones, "Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the Soul," *Phronesis* 49, no. 1 (2004): 1-23.

in which Socrates calls himself Iolaus while calling Phaedo an Heracles (as their appointed characterizations in trying to save the argument of the immortality of the soul) I go on to focus on Phaedo's account of Socrates as he had never seen him before, namely that of a tender healer of their distress: just as a caring teacher would be.[51] Far from being a tease, it seems to me that Socrates' gentle stroke of Phaedo's long hair is Plato's way of inserting a pause, or an interlude – literally between play[52]—a time in which Socrates rests, gathers his thoughts, and resumes the discussion with the intention of joining together the previous arguments with a final conclusion.

Phaedo's unexpected confession relating to his appreciation of Socrates healing their distress is what gives way to this playful interlude. This narration of a pause in a stressful moment (that even has Echecrates, as he listens to the story, exasperated and wondering how was it that Socrates reacted) and the admiration of it is, I think, Phaedo's important contribution to the dialogue and the reason why the dialogue is named after him.[53] These instances of calmness, reflection, trial and error, and care for doubts, as seen in the *Phaedo* help me paint a picture or a vivid illustration of what no doubt Seneca would call "leisurely activity." To be in leisure, it is

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[51] Boyce-Stones argues that Platos' use of Phaedo can be explained by Plato wanting to provide what he calls the Phaedonian perspective to prove the immortality of the soul. In addition, he claims that what he places as crucial in Phaedo's exchange of words with Socrates (Iolaus and Heracles comparison) gives us insight into Phaedo's own thoughts about the immortality of the soul. While this supports a reading concerned with Plato's struggle to prove this (highly problematic) argument which, it is acknowledged, "seems so different in important respects from his discussions elsewhere", the question remains to me, why, then, would a "Phaedonian perspective" be important for Plato to present in Socrates' last discussion with friends?

[52] Phaedo says in 89b: "I happened to be sitting on his right by the couch on a low stool, so that he was sitting well above me. He stroked my head and pressed the hair on the back of my neck, for he was in the habit of playing with my hair at times."

[53] It is beyond the scope of this section to treat the problem over the centrality of Phaedo or to argue over the reasons as to why Plato chose Phaedo to narrate. One thing that I find interesting is that, in his research on the historical Phaedo of Elis, Boyce-Stones mentions that Seneca is one to offer "distinguished sources of testimonia for Phaedo." In Epistle XCIV, Seneca writes: "Phaedo says: 'Certain tiny animals do not leave any pain when they sting us; so subtle is their power, so deceptive for purposes of harm. The bite is disclosed by a swelling, and even in the swelling there is no visible wound.' That will also be your experience when dealing with wise people, you will not discover how or when the benefit comes to you, but you will discover that you have received it." If we examine Phaedo's words carefully, this moment of which he speaks in the dialogue, must have had enormous influence on him, so one plausible answer to why Plato chose Phaedo, could be precisely because in this last day, Phaedo was bitten by Socrates. It is expected that we will be bitten as well.

not required to be in remote isolation and be strictly alone with oneself: we need only to be in serious disposition to make adequate pauses and think, reflect, and examine our lives. When we do this, Socrates seems to imply, we joyfully celebrate life, and Seneca would add "and we live to the fullest."

5. Conclusion: Plato's *Phaedo*: A Visual Account for Recognizing Leisure

I have, in what preceded this section, emphasized a reading of *Phaedo* that follows along the footsteps of some scholars who claim that we need to read it against the backdrop representing the life, philosophy, and character of Socrates. There was also the suggestion that Plato's writing itself, his architectonic, becomes more valuable if we allow ourselves to take it in freely. I have, therefore, in this chapter, offered a reading of *Phaedo* that concerns itself with time and, more specifically, with leisure as an aspect of time that provides a condition for education. I tried to do this in three ways: First, I began reading in accordance to the unhurried narration and tone of the dialogue. Second, I focused my attention in two passages of the dialogue: initially, the depiction of Socrates in his prison cell cultivating himself and practicing the arts and, consequently, Phaedo's reflection of his admiration for Socrates as a teacher and healer of their confusion. Finally, I traced a liaison between Phaedo's description of the whole dialogue (in terms of time) and Seneca's description of leisure in order to offer a more visual account of the situation.

In the likes of Socrates, who in the *Republic* thought it to be a more effective method to offer a visual account of justice through means of a city, I thought we might be able to walk with a more confident step towards a recovery of the Ancient concept of leisure through means of a visual recognition of it. If we follow Pierre Hadot's advice and look for the Greek word (given

that, he writes, "the development of a Latin philosophical language required the adaptation of Greek models, so that to each term of this technical Latin language corresponded a quite specific Greek term […]") we find that the word for *otium* is *scholé*.[54] In his article "Plato on Leisure, Play, and Learning" Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt mentions that Plato's understanding of *scholé* was intimately related to the idea of freedom, claiming that this concept was linked to questions such as: "what does it mean to do something freely?" or "where does freedom lead to, ultimately?"[55] Leisure, then, cannot be demarcated by its opposite, work, as a concept designating relaxation or distraction. Leisure is an activity and, as such, demands work and effort: "Plato's higher freedom/leisure was activity, not passiveness; a mind and body in action, not frozen contemplation."[56] The Ancients revered leisure as a condition for social and personal engagements as political activity, virtuous acts, and self-cultivation. For Plato, as well as for the rest of the Greek and Roman Ancient world, this meant that education was an integral part of acquiring this leisure, since only the uneducated lead life in the pursuit of external goods. Leisure becomes a choice nurtured through education.[57]

Leisure comes as a result of having slowed down and as having been liberated from worrying activities that demanded one to direct one's gaze outwards. The practice demands that one take time to listen to oneself to be better able to engage others and the world. Through the example of Socrates it was my intention to show that knowing oneself or caring for oneself is an exercise that demands the condition of leisure. If we go through life, as Plato says, like runners

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[54] Hadot, 3

[55] Benjamin Kline Hunnicut. "Plato on Leisure, Play, and Learning." Reprinted from *Leisure Studies*. http://www.uiowa.edu/~lsa/bkh/200/platoarticle.htm

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hunnicutt develops his argument in this article on the grounds that Plato's conception of scholé was intricately intertwined with the concept of paidia, or play.

cheered on by others on the sidelines, we run the risk of acting automatically and forgetting ourselves along the way. In order to lead an educated life, Plato seems to suggest, we need to jog, sometimes do a brisk walk, or, better yet, just stroll.

Josef Pieper writes that the human being is the only live creature capable of leisure. I take this to mean, with Plato, that leisure is a choice, and as such, it is rational. We choose to be at leisure. This condition is what Socrates chose numerous times, and its practice, what he chose to demonstrate during his last day of life. Both through the example of Socrates and through the writings of Seneca, we can begin sketching an initial characterization of leisure.

Leisure or *otium* can be recognized in a person's appreciation of his/her concept of time. Whether time is an objective reality independent of us or if, on the contrary, time is in us and depends on us, is not a question I seek to engage here in detail. Some authors, like Pieper, think that leisure is not necessarily time, but an attitude. Analyzing the concept with Plato and Seneca, it seems to me that leisure is, indeed, an intellectual attitude but this attitude conceals within itself a very distinct conception of time. The person in leisure needs to temporarily step outside of his or her normal routine and activities, in order to pause and think. Moreover the person in leisure needs not be isolated or solitary, but in solitude.[58] The first couple of words refer to physical detachment, while the second refers to a capacity of the mind to disengage and enjoy quietness while being amidst an active, contributing society.

I previously tried to make the case that Plato's artful writing in this dialogue was intended to be read differently than all others and that its aim was, not to leave us with an argument of the immortality of the soul, but that we need to create the opportunities in each of our lives to care for our souls. We cannot care for our souls while actively doing something else.

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[58] Angelo Caranfa, "Silence as the Foundation of Learning," *Educational Theory* 54, no. 2 (2004): 211-230, and Christopher Long and James R. Averill, "Solitude: An Exploration of Benefits of Being Alone," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 33, no. 1 (2003): 21-44.

Caring for our souls requires time, patience, effort, quietness, and education. Contrary to what today leisure is taken to mean, namely free time (mostly at the hands of a wealthy social class) the Ancient concept of leisure was at the reach of whoever procured it. Plato and Aristotle speak of engaging in leisure whenever our basic needs have been met. Seneca is aware of this conception and criticized the misinterpretation attributed to it by most people, meaning that one's basic needs will have been met once one retires from public office. This conception is for Seneca a waste of one's life, given that the person who thinks this way will have spent his time living strictly in public for gains related to social standing or honors. Not procuring leisure, these authors suggest, is nothing other than an error in judgment.

Hunnicutt writes: "That the Greek word for leisure, *scholé,* is the origin of many modern languages' words for "school," "scholar, " etc. is also emphasized, but little effort has been made to explain why the strong etymological tie between "leisure" and education developed or why it is significant today."[59] I believe that beginning a discussion with a visual account of what leisure looks like, in addition to written description of the word, provides a good start to an actual discussion of this tie of which Hunnicutt speaks. We find evidence in the writings of the Ancients that leisure has everything to do with education. Only those "who know better" will be predisposed to leisure and use it well. In the next chapter I will try to make this connection clearer.

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[59] Benjamin Kline Hunnicut. "Plato on Leisure, Play, and Learning." Reprinted from *Leisure Studies*. http://www.uiowa.edu/~lsa/bkh/200/platoarticle.htm

Chapter 3: Recognizing Leisure: An Extended Portrait of the Concept Through the Art of Living

1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented an initial portraiture of the ancient rendition of the concept of leisure, seen through a particular scene in the corpus of the Platonic dialogues, supported by the later appreciation of leisure through the Roman stoics. In both these traditions *otium* stands for the time for one's own cultivation of self: the appropriation of time for one's growth and development of self. The account of cultivation of the self as exposed in this Ancient tradition serves two purposes that we can readily admit: a flourishing individual life on the one hand and, on the other hand (still extending on that first purpose), a flourishing life in service of others in the form of culture.[60] It is in this sense that Socrates, in response to Crito's question regarding any last wishes that he may have regarding the care of his wife and sons, simply urged Crito and the rest of all those present to take care of themselves. In this sense, not only will each individual take advantage of a better self, but all others in their proximity will be sure to reap the fruits of this individual cultivation as well. The Ancient texts to which I alluded earlier, thus, exhort us to take our time to think about ourselves individually, in our own context, and take care of our lives while still in the midst of being with others. *Otium*, then, is a necessary form of time of which we need to be conscious and educated enough to make good use.

While this first approximation to the concept of leisure through means of a Platonic scene provides a context from which it is possible to recognize *otium* through a characterization of it, additional elucidation is required. It becomes necessary to expand this discussion, given that a critic will be right in demanding further argumentation on the call to recover the ancient concept

[60] A more detailed discussion of culture will follow in page 13 of this chapter. Despite the fact that neither Plato nor the Stoics use openly the concept of "culture", I will try to make the argument that our reading of these texts admits the correlation of leisure and culture as important for education in today's society.

of *otium*. The argument may take shape in the likes of the following question: "All this is very well, but what is the importance of Socrates' embodiment of leisure or of his advice to cultivate leisure to, in turn, care for ourselves?" In other words, what is the meaning of this context? Why should we care today about recovering the ancient meaning of leisure? I hope to develop in this chapter the thought that Socrates' recommendation for using one's leisure is intricately related to living well. This discussion will lead us to unveil a clearer relationship between leisure, culture, and education that should be of interest for today's educators. We will subsequently be prepared to set the grounds for a more comprehensive discussion of leisure and its intrinsic value for education, which is the main purpose of this work.

2. Leisure, Education, and the Art of Living

> Good God, Alcibiades, what a sorry state you're in! I hesitate to call it by its name, but still, since we're alone, it must be said. You are wedded to stupidity, my good fellow, stupidity in the highest degree—our discussion and your words convict you of it. This is why you're rushing into politics before you've got an education (*Alcibiades I,* 118c).

Despite the arguments that can be made for or against the inclusion of *Alcibiades I* among the Platonic dialogues, the moral and ethical concerns of Socrates are still rightly represented in it. We see in all dialogues that, for Socrates, the sign of wisdom lies in one's ability to recognize one's limited capacity for knowledge. "Stupidity", on the contrary, is part of the character of he who has never taken the time to question himself and his presumed knowledge. But those who examine the content of their assumptions will be able to determine the extent of their actual knowledge.

In the above quotation serving to introduce this section, Socrates has taken young Alcibiades to a point in which he has recognized that he cannot go forward with his political

career due to lack of a worthy education.[61] To Alcibiades' newly acquired state of *aporia* Socrates asks: "What do you propose for yourself? Do you intend to remain in your present condition, or practice some self-cultivation?" (*Alcibiades I*, 119) After some further discussion on the topic, Alcibiades responds: "I'll start to cultivate myself right now" (*Alcibiades I*, 135). Socrates is content to have made the young aspiring politician recognize that he needs an education that demands specific work that requires time, dedication, and intense practice in thinking about his own self before thinking of serving others. Alcibiades needs to transform himself through means of a new kind of education. This is the sort of education that Alcibiades had not received and of which he was not even aware; this is the sort of education that will make him "as good as possible" and useful to fellow Athenians through means of the arts of politics. This account of caring for oneself is what Socrates thought he had achieved with his friends during their last conversation right before his appointed death. For this reason, as discussed before, and in accordance with a particular reading of *Phaedo*, Socrates' last words were: "we owe a cock to Asclepius," signaling a gesture of gratitude to the god of healing for allowing his friends to begin a new life through self-cultivation.

In this section we will be concerned with the type of education of which Socrates, right up until his last day, was always conscious and of which he felt responsible to make all others aware. Taking care of one's life (both in terms of knowledge, wisdom, and of virtue) is an activity that, I argue, can only be rightly exercised in *otium*.

The ancient understanding of the concept, thus, looks to a time for recognition of the patterns of one's life in which one examines and strives to be a better self, to achieve what some have referred to in terms of a higher degree of personhood. Therefore, when we speak of our

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[61] Socrates reminds Alcibiades that the sons of the Persian kings receive an education strictly in virtues from the "'royal tutors.' These are four Persians of mature age who have been selected as the best: the wisest, the most just, the most self-controlled, and the bravest" (122).

time of leisure we are concerned with our form of being. From Socrates' time to our own, literature, philosophy, and various forms of art have presented a concern with making time to engage our world and ourselves in *our own time*: to establish a private life, separate from our public life, and to realize that we have an individual self for which to care, in addition to our social self. A concern with life and with the way of being in the world necessarily implies a specific consideration of time and space, since these are conditions of our existence: we exist here and now.

The particular relevance of such critical consideration is that when we realize that, to an extent, time and space can be manipulated, we are responsible for the time that we have for our use. Additionally, the use to which we put our time defines our character and our being. Put in another way, and in compliance with the ancient conception of *otium*, we are able to take full care of ourselves in our time of leisure. It is for this reason that the teaching of Socrates, particularly in *Phaedo* and in *Alcibiades I*, becomes helpful in a discussion of leisure: it is a time for our own education with important repercussions in our being, our social relationships and our political engagement, as it points to an educated life, or to what I will now refer as the art of living.

Much has been written about the art of living as a goal of educational practice. It is commonly understood as a philosophical attitude towards life, in such a way that we become "responsive to the demands of justice towards others (morality) and the desire for self-improvement (what the tradition characterizes as ethics)".[62] Living artfully, in this sense, corresponds to getting as close as we can to a virtuous life guided more by the precepts of wisdom than by those consisting only in factual knowledge.

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[62] David Hansen, "Education Viewed Through a Cosmopolitan Prism," in *Philosophy of Education* (Urbana, Ill: Philosophy of Education Society, 2008).

There are two sides to consider when we speak of "the art of living". Jerold J. Abrams discusses two main factions in this debate: the self-fashionists (private sphere of the art of living) and the democratic philosophers (public sphere of the art of living). The first group, writes Abrams, face a strong critique that revolves around charges of elitism and narcissism, as the critics observe that he who self-fashions is concerned with himself only and nothing else. This person, so the argument goes, will most likely be a wealthy person, with spare time to engage in such practices, so "the poor of India do not factor into that discussion."[63] Abrams writes that the two sides to this argument are not opposed but their opposition stems from their inability to see that they are closer than what they think as he concludes that "experimenting with vocabularies and somatic experiences in the private sphere is precisely the tool which will keep political discourse from going stale, and will keep citizens fresh for articulating new social concerns and new areas of human need."[64]

If we admit that Hansen's remarks and Abrams' thesis suggest that the art of living refers to a constant interaction between the private (ethical) and the public (moral) sphere, in which a human being is therefore an active participant –or as Socrates would have it, an active examiner of his/her own life—then we live artfully when we do not just take life for granted and merely occupy a space in the world. Is this particular preoccupation with the art of living exclusive of a single stratum of society, be it the wealthy person (with all his needs met) or the philosopher (with time for contemplation)? Are the ethical and the moral questions not inclusive of the "poor of India"? Both questions can be answered "No". We cannot possibly conceive that anyone who is intellectually able to think about –and concern him or herself with—the art of living is not

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[63] Jerold J. Abrams, "Aesthetics of Self-Fashioning and Cosmopolitanism: Foucault and Rorty on the Art of Living," *Philosophy Today* 46, no. 2 (2002): 185.

[64] Abrams, 188

an educated person. The qualifier "educated" in the previous sentence refers to the type of education with which Socrates was concerned throughout his whole life; that is, the practice of wisdom, not the acquisition of knowledge as such, much less academic degrees. Education steered by wisdom requires leisure (time to think, time to internalize, time to critically process information).

Leisure, as Davies argues, provides us with an alternative to our ordinary way of being, "it enables us to conjecture a way we would like to be, another way of being, but a way in which we can never totally be."[65] The hesitancy imbedded in the last quote bears a resonance to Socrates' teaching, as Infinito writes: "In admitting his own inability to have true knowledge, Socrates seems to deny the possibility of ever knowing what virtue, justice and the good are, let alone living in strict accordance with them. The process of looking at the knowledge and culture that one has been given, rationally questioning that knowledge/culture, refusing what does not appear reasonable and searching for an alternative is Socrates' way of life."[66] The art of living, then, refers to the life that will try to be lived as good as possible. In trying to seek this, we first need to consider the life that is the best for us, given our particular circumstances. Precondition to the art of living is the leisure to consider it in the first place.

It is for this reason, then, that I would like to highlight Davies' take when he writes that "if we wish to know what our existence is like and where we actually live, we should turn to leisure which, in coming to us in a time and space of our own, gives us another perspective on being."[67] This reconsideration of our being can never be the exclusive provenance of the

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[65] Martin Davies. "Another Way of Being: Leisure and the Possibility of Privacy," in *The Philosophy of Leisure,* eds. Tom Winnifrith and Cyril Barrett (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 124.

[66] Justen Infinito, "Education, Philosophy, and the Art of Living," *Philosophical Studies in Education* 33 (2003): 76.

[67] Davies, 108

philosopher or of the wealthy person, but rather of the educated person. For Davies, leisure needs to be understood in terms of the world in which we live, what he calls our historical situation, in order to make the best use of it. Note that in Davies' conception of the term he accentuates the part that relates to "another way of being". This implies that there needs to be an evaluation of the present state, and a comparison with an alternative, taking into consideration myself, as well as those who surround me. I think this is an important contribution to what I would now like to discuss, namely possibilities of being and how leisure contributes to reaching them.

In his discussion of the place of ideals in teaching, Hansen uses interchangeably the terms "personhood" and "character", in fact both terms always appear together throughout the text. Our character is what defines our way of being in the world: it refers to our virtues and vices, our shortcomings, our fears, our way of speaking, our way of addressing others or handling situations, etc. We are not born with a character, but rather, our character is fashioned through means of experience, formal and informal education, and social laws. The important aspect of this fashioning is that the self being fashioned is not a passive being; we are being fashioned but also fashioning ourselves. For this reason it cannot be a constant action of the world upon us, but it is part of our education to take our time to reassess possibilities and whatever presents itself as available to us.[68] This practice, as mentioned above, contributes to living artfully. Now, Infinito writes that the art of living as such is not only desirable but necessary: "It is valuable to our democracy and it is crucial to individual liberty that students be taught how to approach

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[68] John Dewey writes in *Democracy and Education*: "It is the office of the school environment to balance the various elements in the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment." p. 20

questions pertaining to the formation of themselves and the world and how to assess various answers to them."[69]

Despite the fact that the art of living is a necessary educational practice that will aid us in fashioning our character this does not mean that it is our sole occupation in life. The possibility is not even available to us. Socrates was well aware of this when he suggested, as referenced earlier, that a "poor benefactor who needs leisure", such as himself, should receive free meals in the Prytaneum (*Apology*, 36d). The art of living requires leisure and the whole of our time is not leisure, but rather it is often divided with work and other responsibilities. For this reason, Davies is right in defining leisure as "a divergent form of being, a precarious location in time for our own vulnerable preoccupations."[70]

The art of living, or caring for oneself, is not something that happens in an uninterrupted fashion or that the whole of our lives should be solely devoted towards arriving to this art.[71] I consider that the important part to stress is the fact that we need to provide for the time to think and consider our lives while living it. Infinito, as many, many philosophers of education, writes that we need to educate critical thinkers; imaginative, creative students; democratic classrooms; students who will own and appropriate their learning, etc. It seems to me that no teacher can fashion that type of student, but simply provide for that student to fashion him/herself accordingly. For this reason, we need to understand that in a society like today's, in which the

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[69] Infinito, 76

[70] Davies, 111

[71] Martha Nussbaum, "The Cult of Personality" (review of Alexander Nehamas, The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault), *New Republic* January 4, (1999): 32-37, writes that the discussion on the art of living might be too one-sided, too private, too narcissistic. She writes: "Had Kant spent his career writing about the vicissitudes of his unique mental life (a project he scorned), he probably would not have written works on morality and peace and respect for humanity that continue to exert a lasting influence on our culture, however vast the obstacles to their influence may be."

public sphere is taking hold of our private sphere, there is still the time of leisure as an educative resource.[72] This time is where the art of living is conceived and from which we begin the development of our personhood.[73]

John Dewey writes in *Art as Experience* that the work of art should be *an* experience for it to truly mean something for us. Similarly, we can argue that our experience should be artful. By experience being artful is how the art of living comes into play here: according to Dewey, life can be aesthetic or anaesthetic. Life becomes aesthetic when we allow time to think, time to be moved, time to allow life to penetrate us and transform itself into an experience and ourselves into better beings. Conversely, life becomes stale and anaesthetic, when it fails to provoke any thought or action on our part. In an anaesthetic life, we simply are. It comes to mind Seneca's words, when he writes to Paulinus: "So you must not think a man has lived long because he has white hair and wrinkles: he has not lived long, just existed long. For suppose you should think that a man had had a long voyage who had been caught in a raging storm as he left harbour, and carried hither and driven round and round in a circle by the rage of opposing winds? He did not have a long voyage, just a long tossing about."[74]

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[72] Speaking of contemplative practices in education, Caranfa writes: "Well aware that to teach or to practice this method is very difficult, we should nevertheless make ourselves familiar with it and offer it as an alternative to the 'prevailing noise of learning and teaching chained to narrow, destructive and degrading utilitarian economic models of schooling and education.' Failure to do this is indeed a prescription for the decadence both of human life and of society." Angelo Caranfa, "Contemplative Instruction and the Gifts of Beauty, Love, and Silence," *Educational Theory* 60, no. 5 (2010): 561-585.

[73] Arendt suggests that education cannot be thought of as an "art of living", for this view of progressive education, in her view, is precisely what is causing a crisis. But Socrates clearly meant to say that philosophy, as education and care of the self, was to inform us of an art of living.

[74] Seneca, 11

To exemplify the aesthetic effects of leisure in a life profoundly affected by it (art of living), Davies uses as analogy Rainer Maria Rilke's poem "The Reader".[75] In it, Rilke presents to us a reader so invested in his time of reading that his own self is being transformed as he reads. The reader's mother, Rilke writes, would not even recognize her own son in his time set aside for reading. We will never know, he continues, to what extent the reader was invested in his act until we realize his being transformed, while his "features, ordered as they were, remain now forever rearranged." Davies argues that leisure has a similar effect on he or she who takes leisure seriously: it has a power to bestow upon life (private and public) the aesthetic experience.[76]

The concept of leisure here portrayed in the likes of the Ancient tradition, both of Plato's Socrates and of the Roman Stoics, refers to a time one creates to pay attention to oneself to live an artful, fruitful, cultivated life. Socrates' last request to his friends, therefore, demanded that they take care of their private lives in order to positively impact the public life. Gretchen Reydams-Schils observes that while Socrates recommended a shared inquiry in the form of dialogue with another and the Stoics preferred the internal dialogue with oneself, both Socrates and many Stoics, nonetheless, avowed for self-examination and intellectual scrutiny. In this sense, they were both recommending their contemporaries to take the time to care and know themselves. As we saw through Socrates' example in the prison cell and in Seneca's writing, we require a specific time for such education: the time of leisure.

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[75] Davies argues that reading is a popular leisure activity, and therefore, the effects of invested reading are equal to the effects of a life committed to leisure. Many writers have written on the art of reading and on the ethics of reading, meaning that the act of reading necessitates a particular disposition or application for it to truly be artful, aesthetic and transformative.

[76] Davies, 122

When thinking about leisure in relation to the art of living, we need to differentiate the idea from the ideal. The first aspect that we need to consider is that the concept of leisure itself, today, does not amount to what was understood, by default, in Ancient times. Cyril Barrett distinguishes the *idea* from the *ideal* of leisure. The idea of leisure comprises all things related to "free time": its opposition to work, its purposelessness, its freedom from constraint; its equivalency to idleness and distraction. The ideal of leisure, on the other hand, reverts to Aristotle's mixed notion of contemplation and activity found in the *Nicomachean Ethics.* The best character and the best life, for Aristotle, will be the one that best accords with what is most appropriate to the human being –thought and action—and what best helps him or her develop and flourish. Barrett warns us, however, that today this conception needs to be better framed. He writes: "It would be a mistake, however, to accept the Aristotelian picture as it stood. It is not simply that leisure in his day, given the social structure, and the absence of factories and offices, was the preserve of the few, but that it was seen in the conceptual scheme bred of his social structure: the rigid distinction between the liberal and the mechanical arts. This blinded the ancients and medievals to the cultural and emancipatory value of non-leisured activities."[77]

What is common in popular parlance is its preference to readily accept the idea of leisure over the ideal of it. Speaking of François Henry's ideas as exposed in his 1937 article "Leisure and the Human Person", Brian Rigby writes: "Finding the word 'leisure' to be tainted with connotations of distraction and entertainment, Henry prefers the word 'culture', which evidently provides the desired connotations of education and self-development." The concept of leisure in the aforementioned article possesses clear resonance to the account shared by the ancients, but to

[77] Cyril Barrett. "The Concept of Leisure" in *The Philosophy of Leisure.* Eds. Tom Winnifrith and Cyril Barrett (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 19. He adds: "Meditation, artistic production, creative thought, invention, imaginative play would be seen as leisure activities par excellence and *per se*. *Per accidens* they may be activities of necessity, just as activities of necessity may *per accidens* be leisure activities."

avoid the confusion in terms to which Henry points, Rigby writes, this educative idea of leisure becomes clearer when we equate it to "culture". This account will be rendered in a clearer light in what follows.

I began this chapter with the suggestion that the idea of self-cultivation imbedded in the original conception of *otium*, in terms of its individual and collective effects, has a connection to culture and self-culture. John T. Lysaker, reading Ralph Waldo Emerson, speaks of "self-culture" to denominate an active pursuit of cultivation of the self, "an ensemble of events and activities that enable what I will call an 'eloquent life', one that I have in some sense fashioned myself and that expresses who I am in my diversity and, to the degree that they exist, my coherencies."[78] It can be said that the extent to which we work individually on our self-culture we are all the more able to contribute substantially to our general culture.

German philosopher Josef Pieper argues that "culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship."[79] Pieper was convinced of the importance of leisure in our lives, but it remains to see if his position coheres with what has been proposed up to this point and if it helps expand our understanding of the term. In other words, would the equivalency in terms of leisure and culture be helpful in conceiving an argument for the recovery of leisure, while at the same time clearly defining its necessity in education? I now will go on to discuss this in further detail.

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[78] John T. Lysaker, *Emerson and Self*-Culture (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 1.

[79] Pieper, 15

3. Leisure, Culture, and Education

I realize that the quote I chose from Josef Pieper's work to transition from the previous section to the present one may be puzzling. "From whence divine worship?" one might ask. Mary Parr writes the following:

> Pieper argues that the contemporary concept of leisure itself bears little resemblance to the leisure of Ancient Greece, but it is also likely that translating "kult" as culture, and "musse" as leisure, may have led to some misconceptions of Pieper's meaning. The German word "kult" is associated with divine worship and forms of the word may be translated as "civilizable" and "to cultivate," or "to culture" (The New Schoffler-Weis German and English Dictionary). "The German word *kult* is taken from the latin *colere*" (Translator's note, p. 51) and *colere* means "to till, cultivate, worship" (http://open-dictionary.com/Colere). This is somewhat different than translating "kult" as culture, or "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought" (http://dictionary.reference.com). And certainly does not imply a direct connection between leisure and the program category of arts and cultural activities.[80]

This note on translation and word etymology proves to be very helpful for us trying to figure out the connection between leisure and culture, especially in Pieper's work. Pieper nowhere defines "culture" but rather clearly states that nowadays "the nature of culture is no longer understood."[81] In the context of his writing, however, Pieper's meaning of the term seems to go hand in hand with the notion of cultivation, as we have come to see in the example of Socrates. His claim that we no longer understand 'culture' gives way to a new conception of the nature of man in that it has come to be solely understood in terms of 'work' and 'worker', utility, and materialism, all the while neglecting our superior disposition that allows us to transcend our material life of work in order to affirm our humanity and self.[82] In this sense, while Pieper is not

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[80] Mary G. Parr, "Repositioning the Position: Revisiting Pieper's Argument for a Leisure Ethic," *Leisure/ Loisir.* 33, no.1 (2009): 79-94, doi: 10.1080/14927713.2009.9651431.

[81] Pieper, 70

[82] The first part of Pieper's work is devoted to lay out the difference between the classical distinction between *artes serviles* and *artes liberales*. The first points to manual, mechanical, trained work; the second, intellectual work. His

explicitly speaking about the amassing and treasuring of determined traditions or customs that defines a particular group or people, his use of the term 'culture' supports and enriches the portrait of leisure that has been up to now developing in this text.

Pieper writes: "Leisure is only possible when a man is at one with himself, when he acquiesces in his own being, whereas the essence of *acedia* is the refusal to acquiesce in one's own being. Idleness and the incapacity for leisure correspond with one another. Leisure is the contrary of both."[83] The affirmation of one's own humanity, a kind of spiritual activity that one does in his or her time of leisure amounts to a celebration, according to Pieper. This celebration takes place through one's own appraisal of life and care for oneself in terms of claiming one's dignity as a human being: both as a spiritual and as a working being. The realization of our being in such a way can only be achieved in leisure, Pieper argues. The conditions for such an affirmation demands a spiritual attitude, as well as an attitude in which we are prepared to listen and keep silence. "Leisure is a form of silence", Pieper goes on to say, "of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear."[84] Leisure, then, on this account, facilitates an attitude of affirmation, of openness, of increased awareness that permits a relationship with the self and with one another. It now remains to make sense of Pieper's account of divine worship and its significance to the argument that leisure is an affirmation of self.

Josef Pieper's understanding of leisure as related to worship seems parallel to Socrates' own account of what self-cultivation implies. Socrates' need for silence, solitude, and inner

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critique builds to argue that nowadays the first group, which denotes work, effort, productivity, and results, is what is valued. The second group, being, in a way, unproductive, is not well viewed.

[83] Pieper, 46

[84] Pieper, 46

dialogue allows him to listen to "the voice of the god" (*Apology,* 31d). It is during occasions such as these (which Socrates himself takes care to create for himself) when he does his most profound and serious thinking. This form of self-cultivation which conceals a divine aspect in itself, carries the human being away from a strictly material and utilitarian life to a higher realm of which he is also capable of taking part. This higher realm of being is what leisure is capable of making available to us. As Pieper notes, the world of work (effort, suffering, activity) is readily given to us in daily life; the world of thought and reflection (the world of leisure) needs to be sought.

Aristotle's section on contemplation in Book X of his *Nicomachean Ethics* discusses this divine realm of thoughtful activity, which humans are able to enjoy, however briefly and temporarily. But the human capacity for the intellectual activity of contemplation is the one aspect that humans share with the divinity, according to Aristotle. Pieper seems to be thinking and nodding to him when he writes:

> In leisure—not of course exclusively in leisure, but always in leisure—the truly human values are saved and preserved *because* leisure is the means whereby the sphere of the "specifically human" can, over and again, be left behind—not as a result of any violent effort to reach out, but as in an ecstasy[…]; the full enjoyment of leisure is hedged in by paradoxes of this kind, and it is itself a state at once very human and superhuman. Aristotle says of leisure: "A man will live thus, not to the extent that he is a man, but to the extent that a divine principle dwells within him."[85]

In what way, then, can Pieper's initial claim that leisure and culture are mutually dependent help us determine its importance for today's society? Parr was right to point out that taking Pieper's account of religion and worship, without further reflection or grammatical consideration, could potentially turn into taboo research, especially in a diverse society such as America's. However, when we are able to look deep and determine that leisure, in this sense, is

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[85] Pieper, 51

nothing other that discovering our potentiality of overcoming a society that pushes us into becoming merely a “worker” or a “functionary” of the state, we get a sense that lack of leisure is what has precisely caused these “great subterranean changes in our scale of values, and in the meaning of value.”[86] If ‘culture’ refers not only to concrete traditions and customs, but also values treasured and safeguarded by a particular group or people, then we begin seeing how leisure can, in fact, be a ground for culture. A culture of total work, writes Pieper, is what has increasingly taken over, making us blind to alternative forms of being and of living. When this happens we unconsciously end up in *acedia*: a negation of our capacities, of our selves, and, most importantly, of our time of leisure proper. In this way, we can see our working notion of culture and self-culture develop further in Pieper’s thought. In his writing we can see the relationship between leisure and culture becoming stronger, but it still remains to see how education fits within this conceptual development.

Pieper argues that there are three main ways by which we can change the culture of total work (servile work) and make way for leisure (liberal arts): “by giving the wage earner the opportunity to save and acquire property, by limiting the power of the state, and by overcoming the inner impoverishment of the individual.”[87] The first two ways are conditions that depend on others, on political agreements, and on economic conditions, among other circumstances. The third option, however, Pieper regards not only as being the most important but as being the true condition for leisure, irrespective of the first two. He writes: “The provision of an external opportunity for leisure is not enough; it can only be fruitful if the man himself is capable of leisure and can, as we say, ‘occupy his leisure’, or (as the Greeks still more clearly say) *skolen*

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[86] Pieper, 23

[87] Pieper, 59

agein, 'work his leisure' (this usage brings out very clearly the by no means "leisurely" character of leisure)."[88] The crucial aspect is that human beings need to understand "the power of knowing leisure."[89] In a way, then, our inner capacity of leisure is what facilitates the development and cultivation of individuals and societies. Not that leisure is the repository of all forms of culture, like Barrett points out, but it is the absolute necessary condition for it and its overall flourishing. I will now propose that this "power of knowing leisure" and that the awareness of creating a time of our own by which we understand ourselves and our respective worlds falls within the realm of education.

Current literature in the theory of leisure becomes mostly a topic of interest for social, political, and economic theory. Its relevance in education mostly comprises topics in the discussion of recreation and physical education. Leisure, then, is a broad concept that has attracted the attention of many scholars in various disciplines for purposes of theoretical study. Most of this research focuses on leisure as an additional consumer good: a derivative of capitalist society and what has been called "concupiscent leisure."[90] In this case, leisure is a commodity but also, and for the most part, an industry. This discussion becomes valuable for the argument being developed in these pages because the particular focus of leisure as an objective phenomenon and as a product of capitalist society helps give shape and understand the current debates on "mass culture". The direction that the current conversation on leisure has taken, then, provides me with an opportunity to begin defining the terms in which I would like to focus when we speak about leisure, culture, and education.

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[88] Pieper, 63

[89] Pieper, 50

[90] Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1912).

We are most likely to encounter in many texts that the concept of leisure is opposed to work. In order to begin understanding what leisure is, in other words, we need to begin with associating it with all that is opposed to work, the workday, and all work-related aspects. In this case, then, we end with the broad idea of 'free time' as well as the idea of time available to be used freely. The peculiar thing about beginning a conceptualization in this way is that we are first positing work as the center of life and even its regulator. As Pieper showed in his text, this is the way members in a 'culture of total work' think. This is certainly the way most of us have grown familiar with the concept of leisure.

The *idea* of leisure, as we saw before, associated when considered against this background is the one that David Trend described as structured, objective, and as a phenomenon of social control in the late capitalist society of bureaucratically controlled consumption.[91] This circumstance is what has given rise to the very environment responsible for mass entertainment, mass society, and mass culture. Further inquiry into this particular line of thought takes us to historical accounts of the development of industry and modernization all the while offering fewer hours of work, more time of 'leisure'. In this historical account we find the germ of at least two distorting factors that have propelled a misunderstanding of the "authentic" form of leisure.[92] In the first case, we have become accustomed to place "work" as the center of life and, thus, we have "work" and all else that is "not work". The second spring to a misunderstanding is precisely the thought that leisure is all that is not work, and thus leisure can be pretty much anything: from idleness to hedonistic activities. The problem with this, according to Marrus, is that forms of socialization (a game of cards, drinking with co-workers, gossiping with friends,

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[91] David Trend, *Cultural Pedagogy: Art, Education, Politics,* eds. Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire. (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1992).

[92] Michael R. Marrus (Ed.) *The Emergence of Leisure* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974).

relaxing and watching a silly movie, acquiring the latest video game, etc) have all been grouped to designate forms of leisure.

There is, however, a different background against which we can begin studying leisure. This second meaning corresponds to the *ideal* of leisure. As Davies suggests, it is the background of the historical world, understood as a subjective context of time and place. When we consider this background we are locating our subjective selves in a particular life context that not only allows, but propitiates questions, thoughts, and possibilities. This alternative background for leisure is in accordance with Aristotle's notion of placing leisure as center of life (*scholé*) and distinguishing it from all that is not leisure (*ascholia*), the term used to designate work.

A concept of life that centers on time for self-development, growth, and culture becomes the essence of leisure when understood as time for questions relevant to our times and to our world. If we situate leisure against an existential, critical backdrop as opposed to the backdrop of work we are speaking of leisure in terms of the very essence of which the Ancients spoke and understood it, just as we can also speak about leisure in the language of education and culture. This way, a retrieval of the ancient concept of leisure as *otium* does not become impossible, unfashionable, or anachronistic.

Relating the concepts of leisure, culture, and education, however, does not come without any difficulties. All three concepts, as has been previously mentioned, can be understood in a variety of ways. We have seen that leisure can be understood in terms of the idea (and often confused with socialization), and it can be understood as the ideal (*otium*); culture can be understood in terms of the transmission and reception of unique traits of a particular group of people, and it can also be understood as the creative process and conditions whereby these traits

come to be, or simply said, become actively cultivated and produced. Lastly, education, too, poses a dilemma in itself: it can be understood in terms of structured acquisition of information and knowledge (schooling), and it can also be understood as the development of character, thought, knowledge, and wisdom (art of living).

Up to this point, several clarifications have been offered in terms of distinguishing the way our terms are being used here. Initially, the examples of Socrates in the *Phaedo* and, later on, Socrates and Alcibiades, were presented to indicate that leisure and education corresponded with and complemented each other, in terms of what we call education as human flourishing and as the art of living. Subsequently, Josef Pieper's invaluable work on leisure suggested that leisure and culture, again, were concepts that can only be understood in each other's presence. While connections among the three concepts can be intuited from these initial observations, a closer examination of this relationship will be of benefit.

4. Conclusion: Recognizing and Visualizing Leisure as Integral to Education

As many philosophers have indicated throughout the centuries, living philosophically is a mark of not only a well-educated person, in terms of character (good character, wisdom and prudence in his or her choices, etc.) While indicative of all this is the way the person acts in the world, action is only secondary to the thought that guided the choice to act. The time we set aside to critically ponder, structure and organize our thoughts, circumstances, and possible actions can determine who we are and what we do. Individually, one's time of leisure helps shape one's character and one's personal life. The collective side of leisure is that, when cultivated well, it helps strengthen relationships with others, just as it helps develop the state of culture. It is for this reason that, as presented in the previous pages, an individual needs to be

educated into habits of setting time for him or herself and to becoming educated enough to make good use of this time.

The way a teacher is educated to, in turn, educate others becomes increasingly important when we qualify education as responsible for the creation of self-culture and of culture. The type of education that has been discussed here is most akin to notions of liberal education.[93] More important, however, than subscribing to a brand of education is the realization of what education is in itself and what its aims are. The teacher, far from organizing a revolution in education needs to educate through example, like Socrates. If the teacher chooses to follow the model of Socrates, then he or she would show passion for education and show what living well and being educated really means. Moreover, both the school and teacher would need to ground a theory of education on life, living well, and on strengthening the continuance for individual and collective well-being. The concept of leisure may enrich the conceptualization of a new vision of schools and school education, by which its original significance be at last reconstituted. To conclude the section, I will consider a recent artistic approach on what this vision of school and school education would look like.

Scottish artist Kenny Hunter had been commissioned an art piece to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the first students coming in to King's College, University of Aberdeen.[94] The unveiling of the sculpture, entitled "Youth with Split Apple", during the University's celebration on September 16, 2005 presents, more than a piece of art, a clamor to redefine

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[93] See, for instance, Mark A. Holowchak, "Education as Training for Life: Stoic Teachers as Physicians of the Soul," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2009): 166-184; Jeffrey Morgan, "Leisure, Contemplation and Leisure Education," *Ethics and Education* 1, no. 2 (2006):133-147; Kevin Gary, "Leisure, Freedom, and Liberal Education," *Educational Theory* 56, no. 2 (2006): 121-136; D.G. Mulcahy, "What Should it Mean to Have a Liberal Education in the 21st Century? *Curriculum Inquiry* 39, no. 3 (2009): 465-483; Michalinos Zembylas and Pavlos Michaelides, "The Sound of Silence in Pedagogy," *Educational Theory* 54, no. 2, (2004): 193-210; Angelo Caranfa, "Silence as the Foundation of Learning," *Educational Theory* 54, no. 2 (2004): 211-230.

[94] I am grateful to Dr. Miguel A. Badía Cabrera for suggesting this work as illustrative of my research project.

education. The sculpture depicts a young man, lying on the grass, supported by both elbows, leisurely contemplating the façade of the building of King's College. The text adjacent to the sculpture reads as follows:

> Kenny Hunter's art offers a contemporary take on traditional figurative sculpture. Unlike the commanding figure of many triumphal monuments, here a student reclines among us, sharing our space.
> He is holding an apple, a traditional symbol of intellectual awakening, which is split in two to suggest the dualistic nature of knowledge, good and bad.
> In this work, Kenny Hunter questions the assumption that knowledge is acquired through action; instead suggesting that openness and contemplation play their part and that the aim of life is not to change the world but to understand it.

Furthermore, the university website describes the meaning of the piece thus: "Kenny Hunter presents an image of classical history modeled from contemporary reality, a study of inner reflection on a lawn of transitory encounters, a work of art absorbed into the life of the University. Lying on the lawn overlooking King's college, Kenny hopes that the sculpture will further enhance the hub of the university as a place of rest, peace, contemplation and discourse."[95]

The youth, graciously embraced by the University as "King's College new student", models for the academic community the true spirit of education. Kenny Hunter, who describes the motive behind his work as an examination "of the darker aspects of the classical tradition, attempting to remind us that the legacy of the historical past is still alive and shaping some of our current mentalities", is attempting a reinterpretation of the meaning of an education.[96] In my view, Hunter is proposing a model from which emulation is desired. A faithful emulation of the youth with split apple requires that the student arrives to the classrooms of King's College with a

[95] "Celebrating 500 years of Teaching and Learning". Accessed June 10, 2011, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/celebrating500/celebrations.shtml

[96] "Staff Research Profiles: Kenny Hunter." Accessed June 10, 2011, http://www.eca.ac.uk/staff_profiles/view/kenny-hunter/

leisurely disposition and an improved sense of what education is. Upon leaving the classrooms, the student must carry with him or her the thoughts and discussions shared in class, while taking his or her time to consider them in the outside world, and determine how this new knowledge fits or helps make sense of his or her own life.

It seems adequate to me to close our discussion on recognizing leisure in education by referencing Hunter's sculpture. While it has been suggested that leisure can be understood as "one's own time", leisure is something more than time: it is a way of life. Cultivating the character to the extent that we will be naturally inclined towards an attitude of leisure is that about which philosophers since antiquity have been mostly concerned. The philosophical attitude towards life permitted a more coherent conception of life and, thus, an attitude of wisdom. Philosophy as a way of life, in other words, allowed for a *cosmic consciousness*, or an awareness of our life amid the lives of others.[97] The philosophical way of life requires a thoughtful commitment of a series of spiritual exercises geared towards the examination of one's own life and place in the world. As we have seen with Socrates and Seneca, a philosophical way of life is ultimately dependent on one's capacity for leisure. While we are, according to Pieper, distinguished from other forms of life due to our capacity for leisure, it is not enough to possess it in potentiality but in actuality. The actuality of leisure depends on its active cultivation through education.

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[97] Hadot, 266. He writes: "By 'cosmic consciousness,' we mean the consciousness that we are a part of the cosmos, and the consequent dilation of our self throughout the infinity of universal nature. In the words of Epicurus' disciple Metrodorus: "Remember that, although you are mortal and have only a limited life-span, yet you have risen, through the contemplation of nature, to the infinity of space and time, and you have seen all the past and all the future.' According to Marcus Aurelius: 'The rational soul…travels through the whole universe and the void that surrounds it…it reaches out into the boundless extent of infinity, and it examines and contemplates the periodic rebirth of all things.' At each instant, the ancient sage was conscious of living in the cosmos, and he placed himself in harmony with the cosmos."

There is still much ground to cover in terms of leisure's actual place in today's discussion of education and how to better educate. Is leisure representative of a problem for pedagogy nowadays? I concur with Barrett when he says that "leisure *itself* is not a problem."[98] It only becomes a problem whenever we fail to recognize the different layers of leisure and, when instead, focus on the time-passing connotation of the concept, and as pure relief from work. If we succeed in recovering the meaning of leisure as it was originally conceived, we may realize that it is not only relief, but an educative force of life. When added to our notions of education *per se*, leisure bestows upon it a conscious celebration of wisdom.

[98]Barrett, 2

Chapter 4: Revaluing Leisure in Philosophy and Education

1. Introduction

The Ancient ideal of leisure has thus far been portrayed as a fundamental element in the education of the human being. It was initially exemplified in this study through the figure of Socrates in the form of leisure as a way of life, as an opportunity to care for one's self and for others. Next, stoic wisdom, inheriting Socrates' example, held leisure to be an opportunity to ameliorate one's quality of life, as an educative tool in it being time for reflection. Finally, it was argued that the portrayal of leisure, in these ways, made possible the premise that the education promoted by the ideal of leisure is of a kind that emphasizes human flourishing as well as an ethical and moral consciousness. When leisure is taken to be an integral part of the formative process, it then promotes an education that leads to an art of living, emphasizing knowledge leading to wisdom: an education that is centered on the human being *qua* human being. The way of life that the Ancient ideal of leisure promotes from Socrates on is intricately related to education, depicted in this way.

The present discussion on leisure and its representation has, up to this point, been modeled by its appraisal in the Ancient world. It is not until the end of the previous chapter that I begin tracing a connection that highlights the importance of its recovery for today's world, for the sake of culture as well as for individual and collective well-being. I will now turn in this chapter to craft a full argument for the recovery of leisure in our theory and practice of education. Few articles have been written on the practical significance of leisure in education, but some scholars have tried to make their way into establishing an argument for its philosophical importance, based on Ancient ideals. One such article, for instance, is Jeffrey

Morgan's "Leisure, contemplation and leisure education."[99] In this article he argues that leisure education should be a staple of schooling and that there is a pressing demand to introduce philosophy and contemplation as part of the educative experience of children. While I share Morgan's views and conclusions, it seems to me that the author finishes the article without providing further thought for teachers, or suggestions leading to ways of actually realizing this ideal in classrooms. The discussion that would help us as readers imagine how leisure would look in teaching and learning in the schools remains outstanding. Rather than answering such a question, Morgan's argument for introducing philosophy and contemplation reawakens a historical-type of question that somehow manages to infiltrate into and complicate the question of the practical significance of leisure today. This new difficulty is based on the fact that the Ancients themselves –the ones after whom I am grounding my discussion—did not think leisure was part of the education of children. Given that I will not be far from Morgan's conclusion, I have to show that neither the Ancients Greeks nor the Ancient Romans would disagree with the arguments here proposed. How, then, could an argument in favor of recovering the ideal of leisure in education be pursued if it seems to not be adequate for the education of the young, even in the estimation of the Ancients?

In chapter 1 of this study, I had highlighted what may amount to be the three main obstacles against a contemporary theory of leisure, namely the pertinence of setting as model a specific historical time and context that in no way resembles our own; second, the role of metaphysical and cosmological accounts that gave rise to the practice of leisure and, third, the practical significance of the ideal of leisure. The question demanding historical clarification of leisure had been addressed earlier, stating that it is only the validity of the philosophical questions, which reaches us across time, not the historical time *per se*. Thus formulated, I

[99] Jeffrey Morgan, "Leisure, contemplation and leisure education," *Ethics and Education* 1, no. 2 (2006): 133-147.

contend, this question no longer impedes the progress of the general argument. The second objection regarding the metaphysical and cosmological accounts of the ancients has also been dismissed, on accounts similar to the historical question. The pertinence and relevance of the thought and practice is what is of value as models of morality and wisdom that stand alone, irrespective of any metaphysics or cosmology. For this reason, in the rest of this chapter I will fully concern myself with the difficulty on practicality of leisure in education. In what follows, then, I will engage and expand the unfinished project of Morgan by showing that philosophy and contemplation are integral parts of both a theory of leisure and of a fully conscious educative experience. I will first examine the concepts of philosophy, the philosopher, and contemplation. Following this, I will propose that leisure is a necessary *condition* for philosophy and that we cannot begin to talk about philosophy without preparing the ground for it. I shall then put forth the argument that the practical application of a theory of leisure depends not in a set curriculum or particular practice, but solely on the teacher's own education and contemplative practice. Lastly, in an effort to bring together philosophy and contemplation with leisure, I will consider the act of teaching as "an overflow of contemplation", following Yves R. Simon's definition. From this I will offer as conclusion that, if we support the philosophical view of education as constituting an inward transformation of the individual, from which he or she can better regard the world and his or her place in it, then a serious theory of education rooted on leisure is a timely and valuable idea to consider.

2. The Philosopher, Philosophy, and Leisure

Both the activity of philosophy as well as the figure of the philosopher, have figured in the literature as perplexing ideas, due to their ambiguity. Plato is explicit about the comical

allure that the philosopher projects to the eyes of all those who live their lives far from philosophy. This misunderstanding of the philosopher and the philosophical life is perhaps best portrayed in *Phaedo* and in *Theaetetus*. In the first dialogue Plato has Simmias laugh after Socrates said that philosophy is a practice for dying and death (*Phaedo*, 64) adding that "the majority, on hearing this, will think that it describes the philosophers very well, and our people in Thebes would thoroughly agree that philosophers are nearly dead and that the majority of men are well aware that they deserve to be" (*Phaedo*, 64b). Socrates responds to this remark saying that they would be correct in thinking this, but that it is false that the Thebans are well aware, for they understand not the reason as to why the philosopher practices dying (*Phaedo*, 64b). He later explains that "the body keeps us busy in a thousand ways because of its need for nurture" and that it is precisely to the body "and the care of it, to which we are enslaved, which compel us to acquire wealth, and all this makes us too busy to practice philosophy" (*Phaedo*, 66d). The practice of dying, therefore, refers to a transcendence of the life of the body to that of the mind. Put differently, the philosophical life requires going beyond what our senses reveal to us immediately, or any other way of instant gratification, and seeks to attain understanding. This same point is again illustrated in *Theaetetus*. Here, as before, the misunderstanding of the figure of the philosopher is evoked through mocking laughter. On this occasion, the ridicule comes from a "witty and amusing" Thracian servant-girl who, upon witnessing Thales fall into a well, said that "he was wild to know about what was up in the sky but failed to see what was in front of him and under his feet" (*Theaetetus*, 174). Here, once again, Socrates concedes the point to the Thracian maid understanding that she, too, is ignorant of the philosophical life. He adds: "It is true that the philosopher fails to see his next-door neighbor; he not only doesn't notice what he is doing; he scarcely knows whether he is a man or some other kind of creature. The question he

asks is, What is Man? What actions and passions properly belong to human nature and distinguish it from all other beings? This is what he wants to know and concerns himself to investigate" (*Theaetetus*, 174b).

Pierre Hadot explains that, today, philosophy is still very much misunderstood, albeit for different reasons. In Plato we see that misunderstanding from non-philosophers is due to ignorance of the kind of activities or concerns that occupy philosophers. Nowadays, explains Hadot, philosophers themselves seem to have lost the focus of their activity. From "philosophy as a way of life" we have come to a point in which philosophy has turned to "discourse about philosophy" and philosophers have become "historians of philosophy."[100] The blurred idea surrounding the figure of the philosopher as well as the concerns of the philosophical activity has led to a marginalization both of its study and of its presence in everyday life. The confusion that surrounds these concepts impedes grasping well its relevance for education and the educated individual.

Earlier, in the first chapter, I suggested that the life of leisure, as lived and led by Socrates, and modeled by the Roman Stoics, is the philosophical life. Philosophy, it was there established, was the main activity of *otium*. This conclusion, however, still requires further discussion given that, as demonstrated before, the philosophical activity is not at all clear. The lack of clarity in this respect can be further illustrated if we consider in detail Jeffrey Morgan's article on leisure, contemplation and leisure education. Here, the author concludes with the thought that "children ought to be brought up to acquire the capacity to engage in contemplation and the inclination to do so," and he follows up with some "brief comments on this task."[101] His

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[100] Pierre Hadot, 269

[101] Morgan, 145

comments are two in number: the first is that an education in leisure is primarily an education in ethics, that is, to be able to develop a perspective that enables the student to have a unitary and coherent form of life. The second comment is that this goal is best achieved through contemplation and this, in turn, through philosophy.[102] While I fully agree with Morgan's conclusions, the frailty of the meaning of the concepts involved lead me to think that the pressing task of recovering the ideal of leisure in education is far from being well supported or even understood. Some lingering questions include: What is the role of philosophy in education? How do we introduce philosophy and contemplation into the overall educative experience of the young? Once we figure this out, how do we even make the connection with leisure? Are philosophy, contemplation, and leisure synonymous terms? Perhaps we can, once again, look back to the Ancients and consider what they have to say in this respect.

Plato, once again, gives us some insight into this matter. In *Gorgias* he has Callicles play the part of the person who makes a raillery of philosophy. He says to Socrates: "To partake of as much philosophy as your education requires is an admirable thing, and it's not shameful to practice philosophy while you're a boy, but when you still do it after you've grown older and become a man, the thing gets to be ridiculous, Socrates!" (*Gorgias*, 485). Callicles seems here to be putting forth the view that philosophy entertains a variety of questions, riddles, and puzzles that are apt for children, but that become ridiculous and perturbing for the life of adults given that it makes them "inexperienced" in a variety of phases of human life, including "the laws of their city or in the kind of speech one must use to deal with people in the matter of business, whether in public or private, inexperienced also in human pleasures and appetites and, in short, inexperienced in the ways of human beings altogether" (*Gorgias*, 484d). Callicles views philosophy as a threat to human experience instead of as a way to enrich it and comprehend it

[102] Morgan, 145

better. In this view, however, we see that philosophy is being mistreated. Clearly, he is entertaining the view that philosophy is pertinent to children: philosophy as pointless questioning that serves no purpose other than that of passing time. For this reason, it seems that in his view, given that it is utterly useless, the appropriate time for philosophy is during childhood. To the life of adults, being that of business, utility, and continuous action, philosophy has nothing to contribute. Callicles' opinion should sound familiar to the reader of the twenty-first century.

Socrates, on the other hand, recognizes that philosophy is too powerful and, contrary to what Callicles thinks, philosophy cannot be handled by children in its full force. Children and young people are not fully developed for entertaining philosophy or to appreciate its eye-opening powers. In *Alcibiades I* Socrates tells Alcibiades: "When you were younger, before you were full of such ambitions, I think the god didn't let me talk to you because the conversation would have been pointless. But now he's told me to, because now you will listen to me" (*Alcibiades I*, 106). Furthermore, in *Apology*, Socrates addressing the men of Athens says: "[my accusers] spoke to you at an age when you would most readily believe them, some of you being children and adolescents, and they won their case by default, as there was no defense" (*Apology*, 18c). Thus, children, according to Socrates, are not yet capable of handling true philosophy but are, nevertheless, instructed, prepared and initiated through stages. In *Republic* Socrates describes in detail the education of children as that consisting in music, poetry, and gymnastics. Poetry is heavily altered and suffers censorship in order to begin forming the young souls in the appreciation of good forms, good models, and, ultimately, good habits. It is in childhood when we begin preparing the way for philosophy: "You know, don't you, that the beginning of any process is most important, especially for anything young and tender? It's at that time that it is

most malleable and takes on any pattern one wishes to impress on it" (377b). This view is also extended in Aristotle, who argues that an education into good habits makes all the difference (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103^{b}1). Seneca, too, in "On the Shortness of Life" is addressing a young man and inviting him, precisely at this point, to live and wholeheartedly take part of the life of philosophy and leisure. How, then, do these views help us understand better the role of leisure, philosophy, and contemplation in the education of the young?

Both Plato and Aristotle claim that the education of children is most valuable when instructed into good habits. The education of the very young, thus, according to Ancient wisdom, is centered in habits of good conduct and of good adult models. The few articles on leisure, education, and leisure education mostly study the ideal of leisure in its form of authentic human flourishing and of cultivation of the contemplative self, yet other than providing a strong background for leisure in the literature as well as powerful and persuasive arguments for its inclusion in education, these articles offer little opportunities to envision it in our times. Kevin Gary, for instance, writes that a teacher educating for leisure would not employ outcomes or objectives as part of his or her pedagogy. Rather, the teacher would "model and invite" to an experience of leisure by holding up examples of figures who have excelled in the arts of leisure, such as Ghandi and Etty Hillesum.[103] In addition, Gary contends that schools are the perfect environment for this practice given that leisure thrives in communities, not so much in an individual setting.[104]

Gary, we can deduce from this reference, agrees with the Ancient ideal of education as formation and initiation into leisure. Fully acknowledging both Gary's and Morgan's work, I would like to add to these studies on leisure a slightly different direction to arrive at promoting

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[103] Kevin Gary, "Leisure, Freedom, and Liberal Education," *Educational Theory* 56, no. 2 (2006): 121-136.

[104] Gary, 135.

leisure in education. Rather than concentrating on finding a curriculum or appropriate activities that may foster leisure in schools, I think that what is increasingly needed, is teachers with a good philosophical foundation in leisure in order for them to present the ideal as part of their teaching, as part of who these teachers are and what they value. In order for the philosophical way of life to be part of our education, a teacher needs to genuinely live and endorse the philosophical life. The modeling of philosophy and contemplation cannot be achieved solely through a set of indications, biographies, a checklist, or specific activities that guarantee children to be exposed or initiated into philosophy. In other words, these specific steps might be good and effective, but only if guided and informed by a sense of meaning and necessity. The philosophical life and contemplative attitude that are intricately related to the Ancient concept of leisure would be better introduced to the lives of students when, paraphrasing Plato in *Republic*, philosophers become teachers or teachers genuinely and adequately philosophize.[105] I suggest, therefore, that the recovery of the Ancient ideal of leisure, and its subsequent introduction into the education of children and into our lives, becomes possible through the education of teachers who can model and reconstitute leisure as the human ideal of flourishing and good life to our concept of education.

3. The Philosophical Ideal of Leisure in Educational Theory

It is not a matter of unanimous agreement that ideals should have a place in education. It is not even decided whether they offer a degree of helpfulness or if, instead, they distort our educational focus. It appears to some that ideals mostly relate to hope, in such a way that ideals

[105] The original Plato citation reads: "Until philosophers rule as kings in cities or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize […] cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think, will the human race" (473d).

may easily vanish in thin air due to their apparent impossibility of realization. While ideals may, in fact, refer to lofty goals, it is by no means imbedded rigorously in them the concept of impossibility. The force behind an educational ideal may prove fruitful when the ideal is adequately thought out and moderately proposed.[106] Hansen, for instance, writes that ideals "provide a wellspring, or source of inspiration".[107] The role of ideals in education has been a topic of study for various philosophers of education.[108] While diverse in their perspectives, scholars agree that it is important to reserve a place for ideals in education. No one shies away from discussing that ideals are potentially dangerous, as is when, for instance, people come to prefer the ideal to the real or when ideals are carried out in thoughtlessness, that is, without the benefit of foresight.[109] Conscientious regard of ideals helps ensure that all incumbent members in education, from the administration and policy makers to the school community at large, are working to infuse education with life.

Today's association of leisure to entertainment is so pervading, that creating a defense of it—not to mention putting forth an argument for its incorporation in the education of our teachers and students as an ideal—is no easy task. Bernard N. Schumacher writes the following:

> The philosopher who applies himself to defending leisure is accused of inciting people to laziness, to an escape from the important labors required for building a more just and more human society in the future; or else, paradoxically, the philosopher is blamed for urging them to practice austerity instead of indulging in the conventional amusements that re-energize the individual to continue his work or help him to escape from reality. Such accusations were not devised yesterday. We have only to recall the many and

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[106] Doret De Ruyter, "Ideals, Education, and Happy Flourishing," *Educational Theory* 57, no. 1 (2007): 23–35.

[107] David Hansen, *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Towards a Teacher's Creed* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), 160.

[108] See, for instance, Deborah Kerdeman, "Why the Best Isn't So Bad: Ideals and Moderation in Educational Reform," *Educational Theory* 59, no. 5 (2009): 511-531 and Michael J. Feuer, "Rationality and Idealism: A Moderate Response to Robertson, Kerdeman, and Bredo," *Educational Theory* 59, no. 5 (2009): 549-558.

[109] Hansen, *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Towards a Teacher's Creed,* 161-162.

virulent attacks on Socrates made by a certain number of his fellow citizens […][110]

Schumacher rightly introduces a further difficulty that is certain to be added to the two possible objections offered at the beginning of this chapter, namely a question that could take the following form: "Are we supposed to advance *as an ideal* that doing no work is advancing our children's lives and education?" It might be possible that some will think that leisure in education may mean that students get to enjoy (licentious) freedom, or to use their "school" time in unproductive or otherwise unfruitful ways as opposed to structured learning time. From previous discussions we have come to build the concept of leisure as one strictly educative and of strong philosophical ties. For this reason, an ideal of leisure cannot be related to idleness or unproductiveness. Contrary to this false formulation of leisure as idleness, I will now go on to examine two main things: In the first place, I will lay out an argument by which we can say that the ideal of leisure is intricately related to philosophy. Secondly, support the thought that the ideal of leisure should be pursued, not as an ideal with which to replace all others when it comes to teaching, but as an important part of teaching.

Leisure is our time for philosophy, and the leisurely person is necessarily a *philosophos*, a lover of wisdom. Classical philosophy has understood the philosopher as engaging in a particular activity: Contemplation. Plato's philosopher-king is he who has contemplated the Forms (519b), while Aristotle's happy and virtuous man is he who engages in contemplation, which he regards as the highest of activities (1177^{a1}). Plato and Aristotle come to understand contemplation as philosophy's highest activity because contemplation is the act of the rational part of the soul, which, in turn, is that which we share with the gods. Contemplation, then, takes us to a higher level of being, a new altitude that allows our minds to regard undisturbed the details of our thoughts and ways of life; but given that we are, by nature political, contemplation

[110] Schumacher, 18.

functions as an opportunity for action.[111] The activity of contemplation as pertaining exclusively to the life of the philosopher has been accepted in the tradition of Western thought. One such contemporary and distinguished philosopher who follows this tradition is the German philosopher Joseph Pieper.

Following Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, Pieper understands contemplation as a divine activity. For this reason, and exclusively through the activity of contemplation, he concludes that philosophy addresses both the world of man and the world of God. Contemplation in the world of man is achieved when we arrive at a celebratory activity, by which we affirm our existence and our affirmation through our rational capabilities. Contemplation in the world of the divine is achieved when, transcending the world of man, we discover our spiritual dimension, which makes philosophy culminate in theology.[112] This new dimension, he argues, we are able to attain through leisure. My main point of contention in this project is that leisure is a *conditio sine qua non* for philosophy. It is, in other words, inadequate to think about becoming philosophers, or doing philosophy, if we do not cultivate its means: Leisure. It is because philosophy demands a specific condition that Ludwig Wittgenstein proposed, as I mentioned previously, that philosophers should greet each other with these three words: "Take your time". I read this proposition as a clear nod for leisure as pre-requisite for philosophizing.

I think that at this point, it now becomes clear why Jeffrey Morgan, a philosopher of education, concludes that if students are to enjoy leisure, they should be introduced to philosophy

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[111] Plato argues in *Republic* that a philosopher who, after having contemplated the forms, remains in contemplation, and refuses "to act, thinking that they had settled while still alive in the faraway Isles of the Blessed", runs the danger of becoming completely useless (519c). Similarly, Aristotle thinks that while the philosopher is self-sufficient, contemplation is action, not a state, "[f]or the state may exist without producing any good result, as in a man who is asleep or in some other way quite inactive, but the activity cannot; for one who has the activity will of necessity be acting, and acting well" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099[a]1).

[112] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998).

and contemplation. Also clear at the moment is that the absence of a discussion in his article relating to the relationship between contemplation, philosophy, and education is a notable shortcoming. The concepts are all there, but the interrelatedness and intricacies of the concepts rather than being examined, are merely presupposed. For this reason, the conclusion reduced to an exaltation of philosophy and contemplation making its way into education remained not only rushed and incomplete, but understandably questionable for those who have never entertained the idea of leisure in the classroom. Similarly, Kevin Gary also presupposes the connection among the concepts, and while carried out into a more complete conclusion that shows a way by which we can concretely introduce to the classroom the ideal of leisure in education, namely by offering our students examples of thinkers and people whose lives have been characterized by a philosophical and contemplative attitude, the centrality of leisure is still missing. One aspect that is clear is that, in both Morgan's and Gary's rationale, leisure in education begins with the acts of the teacher. Morgan has the teacher introduce philosophy, and Gary explains that the teacher works from a qualitative standpoint –no aims or quantifiable outcomes in a set time—and the teacher offers as exemplars the lives of contemplative people.

While Gary proposes ways by which to bring the ideal of leisure into education by means of philosophy, it seems to me that we are still in a level of showing (from without) and not transforming (from within). Gary's suggestion of educating through the lives of others (the lives of Gandhi and Etty Hillesum) becomes problematic in a different sense. As long as leisure remains in the outside, it is not truly an ideal. For leisure to be an ideal in education, it has to exist in the way of life of the teacher. His proposal, as is, brings us back to where we began this chapter: philosophy cannot be grasped wholesale –let alone incorporated—through means of the limited experience of a child. A child will not understand the reason as to why imitating the life

of someone so estranged to his or her own life is of any value. An older person, to the contrary, will know how to choose the lives of persons worthy of imitation and understand why this should be so (*Republic*, 539c).

It is for this reason that I think leisure needs to make its way into education through the form of the attitude of the teacher. Rather than straining to look for what Diane Ravitch refers to as "shortcuts, utopias, or silver bullets", I think that educative ideals must come from education itself, not from outside.[113] In the following section I will put forth the thought that leisure can truly and most authentically form a part of education if and only if it is an integral part of the education of the teacher. If the teacher understands and recognizes the value of the ideal of leisure, and lives and teaches through leisure, then it becomes a way of life that enters our classrooms in a genuine way, not as a curriculum for which we need to set time aside. In what follows, then, I will turn to explore the idea that teachers should be representatives of the attitude of leisure.

4. The Significance of the Teacher in Cultivating the Attitude of Leisure

It is found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* the following lines: "And happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace" (1177^{b}1). The concept of leisure is better understood when it is juxtaposed to work and busyness. The ideal way of conceiving of leisure is when it gives way to work and not the other way around. The pace of life in which we live today, however, seems to have difficulty in grappling with this position. Pieper writes: "More and more, at the present time, 'common good' and 'common need' are identified; and (what comes to the same thing) the world of work is becoming our entire world; it threatens to engulf us completely, and the demands of the world

[113] Diane Ravitch. *The Life and Death of the Great American School System* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 3

of work become greater and greater, till at last they make a 'total' claim upon the whole of human nature."[114] This way of life is infiltrating into all aspects of contemporary life, including school and what we consider "school-work".[115] The world of total work, infiltrated in school, has caused what Chris Higgins refers to "a true crisis in values", whereby education is seen in strictly instrumental terms "turning educators into accountants".[116] The way of life of teachers is also critically affected, as Patrick Slattery points out: "Educators are overwhelmed and frustrated as they try to implement ambitious goals, complete expanding curriculum requirements, and accomplish more complex objectives with 'less and less time,' while also trying to be sensitive to the national educational reform movement and the public's demand for accountability."[117]

Pieper's argument responds to the problem of a "world of total work" by pointing to a force that can counteract it, namely philosophy. He states that as long as we continue inhabiting a world that places value in all things that promise instant gratification and that are somehow immediately useful, we are strangling philosophy to death.[118] The death of philosophy, therefore, occurs when we reject the conditions that make philosophy possible. The turn to philosophy will be incomplete or inauthentic if it is not accompanied by the condition that makes its activity possible, namely leisure. Constant activity and work bring about fatigue, which

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[114] Pieper, *The Philosophical Act*, 78.

[115] J.White, "Education, Work and Well-being," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 31, no. 2 (1997): 233-247.

[116] Chris Higgins, "The Possibility of Public Education In an Instrumentalist Age" *Educational Theory* 61, no. 4 (2011): 451-466.

[117] Patrick Slattery, "A Postmodern Vision of Time and Learning: A Response to the National Education Commission Report *Prisoners of Time*," *Harvard Educational Review* 65, no. 4 (1995): 612- 633.

[118] Pieper, 89. Pieper also mentions in "The Condition of Philosophy in the Modern World" that another cause of death of philosophy is the desire to make it 'practical'. This effort, he writes, began with Francis Bacon and later on with René Descartes, as this last one tried to use practical philosophy to enable us to "become owners and masters of nature" (12).

leaves us with no energy by which to marvel at anything.[119] Pieper writes: "For leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion but also the capacity for stepping oneself in the whole of creation."[120] Being able to achieve human greatness, which Pieper describes as *capax universi*, states as its condition that we live our lives with the knowledge that it is not all about work and business, conventionally understood.[121] Pieper explains that the philosophical act comes to life when, in the midst of everyday life experience, we come to not take anything for granted and marvel at it: It is a way of being wide awake.[122] Contemplation, as part of the philosophical act, correlates to what Hansen refers to as standing *back* from a situation, not *apart* from it.[123] It can be concluded from this discussion that leisure is a condition by which the philosophical act is possible. Thus, speaking about genuine acts of philosophy and of contemplation apart from cultivation of leisure renders a distorted account of the educational aims. For this reason, it would seem forced and misguided to speak about philosophy in the classroom if the teacher him- or herself does not partake in the philosophical life; that is, if regular stepping back from the world of total work is not something he or she values, trying to bring philosophy into the classroom in the form of questions and discussion will be doomed to failure.

Let us take for example, the popular program of Philosophy for Children (P4C). While not entirely immune to criticism from some philosophers who claim that philosophy is inappropriate for children, still powerful arguments support the idea that children can be initiated

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[119] Pieper, "The Philosophical Act" in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 80.

[120] Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture,* 46-47

[121] Pieper, 92

[122] Pieper, "The Philosophical Act" in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 111

[123] Hansen, 33

into the philosophical practice.[124] Whatever the arguments for children's initiation into philosophy, it is clear that teacher preparation is what can make or break the goal. Joanna Haynes and Karin Murris write the following:

> It is our experience that the rigour of philosophically building on ideas causes anxiety to some [Philosophy with Children] educators with little philosophy in their educational background. The democratic practice and respect for child that the theory presupposes often generates discomfort and disturbance with all educators, including many philosophically trained PwC educators. In other words, knowledge of the history of philosophical ideas is not the only matter to be explored in relation to the role of the teacher in PwC. There is something else going on that has much wider relevance to adult/ child relations in the context of education. […] Teacher education needs to provide a much stronger foundation in philosophical methods that can inform professional practical judgments, by embedding them in the ongoing investigation of classroom practice and the lives of teachers and students in educational communities. Philosophy in education gives urgency to the philosophy of education.[125]

While a specialized program dedicated to introduce philosophy into the classroom through philosophical training of teachers is described by Ann Gazzard as being "at present a superior program for teaching philosophy to children by virtue of its strict pedagogical requirements, its systematic curriculum, and the depth and breadth with which it spans the traditional philosophical material," it is still a program that is not fully available for all schools, and certainly not to all teachers.[126] It is precisely in moments of such consideration when we should wonder if it is not in teacher education programs' best interest to provide a more robust philosophical education for teachers in the importance of making leisure time for revisiting and questioning the values of education.

As long as the foundational aspect of leisure remains missing from teacher education programs, or underemphasized, the crisis in values that Higgins talks about will remain intact

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[124] Karin Murris, "Can children do philosophy?" *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 34, no. 3 (2000): 261-280.

[125] Joanna Haynes and Karin Murris, "The Provocation of an Epistemological Shift in Teacher Education through Philosophy with Children," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 45, no. 2 (2011): 285-303.

[126] Ann Gazzard, "Philosophy for Children and the Discipline of Philosophy," *Thinking* 12, no. 4 (1996): 9-16.

and we will still be waiting for "the latest panaceas and miracle cures" for education.[127] My proposal is that we need not wait (or wish) for miracles or shortcuts when it comes to envisaging good education. We need to look at and revalue the act of teaching.

5. Revaluing the Act of Teaching: Teaching as an "Overflow of Contemplation"

To revalue the act of teaching it is necessary to compare our current ideas and notions of teaching with new ideas, or possibly new ways of understanding teaching. The revaluing of teaching is an activity by which one is able to affirm that teaching is not a mechanical 'job', or one that is best fulfilled through formulas that "work" and render results, but rather one arrives at seeing it as a humanistic endeavor destined to bring to fruition human flourishing. This way, teaching is an activity fulfilled by persons relating to other persons. We have seen that there have been some scholars who have argued in favor of bringing back to education philosophical and contemplative practices through their discussion of leisure. In this section I would like to offer a new way of relating the act of teaching to the previous discussion on leisure and philosophy. I will be placing emphasis on the figure of the teacher, as the teacher is one of the most important agents in introducing leisure into the classrooms. By focusing on the teacher we are also making sure that changes in education will not translate as being 'revolutionary' or something being implemented from outside, but rather changes that arise from education itself. Congruent with the style and tone of the previous chapters, once again I will here turn to the aid of portraiture and definition.

Yves R. Simon (1903-1961) was a French political philosopher and former Professor of philosophy at Catholic University of Lille, University of Notre Dame, and University of Chicago. His lectures and papers, being numerous, and the areas of research and specialization

[127] Ravitch, 3

being various, he was often invited to teach at other universities in Mexico, the United States, France, and Canada.[128] This information could immediately render to us the idea of a successful scholar who continuously contributes to his field of political science and philosophy. While, according to various online pages, this idea seems to be accurate, there is also a further note that helps us complete the image of this particular professor.[129] In the third sentence to the first paragraph of the preface to *Work, Society, and Culture*, Vukan Kuic writes: "He is one of the great thinkers and teachers of our time."[130]

Kuic compiled Simon's lectures and edited them into a short book on political philosophy, and while Kuic writes that "[t]he purpose of this preface is to give those readers who do not know Simon some indication of his mastery of philosophical subjects and his grasp of contemporary social problems", I think that Kuic's purpose cannot only be this one because he is trying to render us the voice of the teacher through his preface and through his editing of Simon's works. This twofold purpose of the preface is clear to me, not just because the first thing we know is that Simon was one "of the greatest teachers of our time" but because he includes Simon's own definition of teaching in the same preface: "Teaching, [Simon] used to say, is an overflow of contemplation. This definition, as his former students well know, applies especially to Simon's own teaching. It will not take too many pages for the new reader to get its meaning."[131] The fact that Kuic decided to incorporate in the preface Simon's own take of what teaching was to him, makes it clear that he wants the reader to know that Simon was not simply

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[128] "Jacques Maritain Center". Accessed November 10, 2011. http://www2.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/ys.htm, and Yves R. Simon, *Work, Society, and Culture* (Ed. Vukan Kuic) (New York: Fordham UP, 1971), ix.

[129] "The Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture." Accessed November 1, 2011. https://sites.google.com/a/nd.edu/the-notre-dame-center-for-ethics-and-culture/about/inspires/yves-simon

[130] Simon, xi

[131] Simon, p. xi

lecturing, but actually teaching and *thinking* about what good teaching should be about.

Immensely overwhelmed by Simon's definition, I want to take apart and seriously consider this idea of teaching. We are definitely not working with a conventional definition of teaching. This definition of teaching is not the kind that allows us to read it, make a quick connection in our minds, and move on. Rather, it is the kind of definition that throws us into confusion and demands our serious consideration. There might just be something valuable in entertaining such definition for two main reasons. In the first place, given the theme that occupies the present inquiry, it is not only an extraordinary mental exercise, but a valuable philosophical endeavor to begin to sketch the image of a teacher 'overflowing with contemplation'. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that such a promising definition of teaching is carefully (and lovingly) placed in the preface of this short book of political philosophy –and not in a book of educational theory or philosophy—makes me think that Kuic wants us to get acquainted not only with Simon's ideas, but with the quality of the teacher he was: his way of teaching, sharing, and communicating his scholarly ideas with his students. Third, and closely related to this, it is a laudable dedication of this professor, who keeps present the fact that he is not only a scholar, researcher, and writer of political philosophy, but he is first and foremost a teacher. Third, I have decided to extract from this book the definition of teaching as an overflow of contemplation and dedicate some time to it because most of us in Teacher Education or Philosophy of Education Programs are unlikely to ever encounter it, given the subject matter of the book in which it is written. Additionally, I intend to look at Simon's definition as a way of supporting and illustrating the teacher as a model of leisure through which contemplation and philosophy can make their way into the classroom.

The first thing we ought to notice is that we are, in this definition, considering the way

the act of teaching is understood. What is being considered, then, is an action. What does it mean to overflow with contemplation? In order to better appreciate this definition, I suggest focusing on a possible meaning of overflowing with contemplation.

A flow is commonly understood as a steady movement of something in a regular and uniform pattern. It refers, moreover, to an adequate quantity of material moving from one place to another in a controlled and moderated way. An overflow, on the other hand, is an excess of flow, overcome with force and intense motion. An overflow may very well designate the overcoming of borders and, perhaps, a forceful spill of the flowing substance over bodies or matter adjacent to its position. Given this interpretation of ‘flow’ and ‘overflow’, if we refer back to our definition of teaching as an overflow of contemplation, then, we should begin with the figure of the teacher.

Professor Yves Simon’s definition for teaching carries the idea that teaching cannot be about knowing a subject and teach it to others as a disconnected lesson. Contrary to this, it seems that the teacher should, when contemplating, take his or her time to think about the different ideas, themes, consequences, further reflections, etc. that a particular lesson carries in itself. A teacher overflowing with contemplation would aspire to allow these reflections to spill on to his or her students, sharing and communicating, in this way, the value of his or her thought and contemplation. It would be in this detail that the guidance of the teacher takes place. Therefore, when the teacher contemplates, it should not be interpreted that he or she contemplates privately while the students become an audience to an intellectual spectacle. It seems to me that if this were to be the case, then it would suffice for the teacher to merely contemplate in solitude. But this would not be teaching. Perhaps it is the ‘overflowing’ part what proves to be vital in this definition. The image of ‘overflowing’ invites us to regard

contemplation as outpouring from one part to the next. The teacher overflows, then, when his or her own contemplation is ready to be shared. When the teacher does this, then he or she is communicating with the students the value of time for thought and time for cultivation, both of the mind and of the self. When the teacher overflows with contemplation in this specific way, in other words, he or she is necessarily incorporating the value of leisure in education. The teacher is modeling, not just thought and reflection, but he or she will be showing that it is desirable to take one's time in order to act in a thoughtful way.

A consequence of understanding Simon's definition in the proposed manner, is that the person who is not yet a teacher, but is preparing to be one, would be compelled to begin preparing his or her own stream of contemplation. This means that student teachers must be initiated into the philosophical life as part of their responsibility of being teachers. As discussed before, philosophy is an activity of an already initiated mind, which finds itself in a privileged position to inquire over things, while at the same time able to set him- or herself *back* from those things and derive further thoughts. Every student who finds him- or herself in a Teacher Education program is already initiated into thought. Margaret Buchmann writes that there is no such thing as an "expert thinker", but that "if some people make thinking their business, they will become professionals without thereby becoming experts in the sense of people being proficient, say, at the law of torts or at radiology. Part of the point here is that we can ask someone, "When did you decide to become a lawyer or a laboratory technician?" while the question, "When did you decide to become a thinker?" is more like asking a woman born in Ohio when she decided to become an American; that is the latter kind of question is incomprehensible except for special cases."[132] Student teachers, therefore, only need to be initiated in the

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[132] Margaret Buchmann, "The Careful Vision: How Practical is Contemplation in Teaching?" *American Journal of Education* 98, no. 1 (1989): 35-61.

importance of contemplative thinking in their teaching so that teaching becomes an artful rather than mechanistic.

As stated before, the condition for contemplative thinking in education is for the teacher to allow him- or herself some time to do so. Kemp's definition of philosophy of education corresponds adequately to this allowance of time. He defines philosophy of education as "the art of understanding, developing and formulating the art of education in relation to its own times."[133] According to Kemp's definition, then, a student teacher should not only receive an education in the training to be a teacher: learning about assessment, curriculum implementation, or learning about human development. Student teachers should also be invited to think philosophically about the meaning of all these aspects of schooling, about the art of teaching itself, and about the people whose education will be in their hands. Furthermore, teacher education programs guided by this philosophy would make sure that the teachers who graduate from them will be able to start a flow of thought on their own. According to Simon's definition, a teacher is not yet fulfilling his or her activity of teaching until an overflowing is reached.

A flow of thought, as flow, is not static, but is rather defined by movement. The contemplative thoughts move from the figure of the teacher to that of the students, not in the form of transmission but in the form of a sharing or communicating of an attitude. An overflow communicates a sense of effervescence or energy. It is for these reasons that it can be said that a teacher overflowing with contemplation brings a philosophical attitude that is ready to offer itself for others to become affected, and eventually transformed. It would be a mistake to think that the ideal of a contemplative teacher is that of one who merely thinks and detaches him or herself from life and/or what is practical. This common mistake takes us back to the misconceived idea,

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[133] Peter Kemp, "Mimesis in Educational Hermeneutics," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38, no. 2 (2006): 174.

pronounced by the Thracian girl in *Theaetetus*, of the philosopher as having his head up in the sky, careless to know what was happening by his feet.

Michael J. White offers a good analysis of Aristotle's concept of *theoria* (contemplation) that can help us regard the image of an "overflow of contemplation" in a way that helps dissipate the misconception of a contemplative teacher as being aloof. In his article titled "Aristotle's Concept of 'Theoria' and the 'Energeia-Kinesis' Distinction", White questions whether the Greek *theoria* (contemplation) refers to Aristotle's conception of *kinesis* (movement of an act towards a goal), or if it rather refers to that of *energeia* (a complete state in which the end inheres in the activity). He points out that the ambiguity of the concept of *theoria* in itself gives way to a variety of interpretations: sometimes as spectacle or contemplation (*energeia)*, other times as research (*kinesis*). Ultimately, while the author's personal preference was to hold *theoria* as a state, he explains that the texts of Aristotle themselves do not provide for an appropriate way by which to separate *kinesis* from *energeia* when it comes to *theoria*. He writes that, if *theoria*, following Amélie Rorty, equals "truth-seeking" then the end can be found in the act of contemplation itself (as movement). On the other hand, he reminds us that "truth-seeking" can be a distinguishable end from the act of contemplation, namely knowledge of truth (as static).[134] It can be said, then, that the "overflow of contemplation" brings to mind the same difficulty treated in White's article. It seems that an "overflow of contemplation" carries both *energeia*, in the form of the state of the teacher (contemplating truth), and also *kinesis* (sharing private contemplation with students in form of guided inquiry). Contemplation, then, must be understood as both state and movement towards an end that lies outside of itself.

Along this line of reasoning, let us regard the agent portrayed in the present discussion by

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[134] Michael J. White, "Aristotle's Concept of 'Theoria' and the 'Energeia-Kinesis' Distinction," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 18, no. 3 (1980): 253-263.

the figure of the teacher-philosopher. A teacher who has become a philosopher has inquired after the ends of a flourishing life through his or her own education. She or he has, therefore, understood that the process of education is primordially one of formation.[135] This understanding implies that the teacher-philosopher cares for his or her own cultivation of personhood, as well as that of those in his or her care. The teacher-philosopher is, first and foremost, a *person*. David Hansen writes about the personhood of a teacher in terms of the teacher's humanity: a teacher is not a machine, but a social being in a social context, that feels, foresees, and communicates to others his or her conduct, moral sensibilities, and ways of life. To teach well, it seems to be the conclusion of Hansen's discussion, is to live well.[136] For this reason, teaching should not be regarded as a mode of engineering or as a straightforward method of proceeding. A philosophical attitude to teaching is, therefore, indispensable. I find in David Carr and Don Skinner further support to this view when they write the following: "[W]e might expect significant continuity between personal and professional values in good teaching—at least to the extent that it is less easy to see how a person of thoroughly bad character might be an effective teacher than it is to see how some such person might still be (say) a good builder or architect. On this view, good teachers need not only to be effective followers of rules or possessors of skills, but also certain kinds of *persons*."[137]

Carr and Skinner write that "teaching as an occupation calls for some grounding in

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[135] Education as formation is supported by the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, especially found in Rousseau's *Émile*. Michel de Montaigne also referenced this conception of formation in his famous statement concerning the educator whose mind should be well-formed rather than merely well-filled in "On Educating Children".

[136] Hansen, 40

[137] David Carr and Don Skinner, "The Cultural Roots of Professional Wisdom: Towards a Broader View of Teacher Expertise," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2009): 150

theoretical (perhaps scientific) or other principled reflection."[138] They formulate an argument that shows that teaching is a serious occupation that goes beyond showing or inculcating certain knowledge. The teacher needs a "broader cultural literacy" that will invite him or her to engage in critical thought and practical wisdom, given that "the most effective teachers are not those who simply regard the acquisition of knowledge and understanding as worthwhile for others, but those who have first and foremost grasped its value for their own personal, moral and spiritual development."[139]

A philosophical foundation in leisure for student teachers is of utmost importance for their human development, as a condition for it to later overflow enthusiastically unto others. The force by which philosophical contemplation overflows is made possible through leisure, which, as discussed above, is the prerequisite for the enactment of philosophy and contemplation. Leisure in education, then, translates as the condition by which we allow ourselves not only to contemplate but also the condition by which we unleash the force for it to overflow and, ultimately, to teach.

If we are willing to join Yves R. Simon in his characterization of teaching as an overflow of contemplation, we are saying more of the agent than we are of the act of teaching itself. It may be the case that, while we are all too focused on the act, practicality, and utility of teaching, and have developed ways and strategies of teaching, we have pushed to the background the singular importance of the teacher's own education and formation. Good teachers must have understanding and must have a clear grasp of what it means to be a person and a person-in-formation.

Fenstermacher and Richardson argue that both good teaching (adequacy and intrinsic

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[138] Carr, 141

[139] Carr, 150-151, 153.

value of lessons, morality in teaching, mindfulness of the teacher, etc) and successful teaching (achievement of student learning) need to occur for teaching to actually be of good quality. Quality teaching, however, does not depend on the teacher's performance alone. They write: "good teaching is but one of four ingredients in the mix. The others are that the learner desires to learn and expends the necessary effort to do so; that the social surround of family, community, and peer culture support and assist in learning; and that there are sufficient facilities, time and resources (opportunities) to accomplish the learning that is sought."[140] Both authors are concerned with the current focus on improving teaching, as if practices of teaching could be somehow perfected to produce, entirely on their own, what they call successful teaching. They point out that while teaching is not all to which we need to look, it certainly is one of the most important aspects when thinking about education. I have, for this reason, suggested that the teacher, as an educated individual, can be one of the most important tools in modeling a good education through leisure, and his or her own appreciation of time.

Joseph Sen writes: "There is a tendency to associate intelligence with speed. 'Quick' is a synonym for clever and suggests intellectual ability. 'Slow', by contrast, implies a want of intelligence, even stupidity. The slow child in the class is the one who is 'behind', the one who must 'catch up' with the others. This is symptomatic of the wider stress in our culture on getting things done quickly and 'saving time'. It seems that fear of time running out often compels us into running after it."[141] It is precisely because, as Josef Pieper discussed, our culture overvalues, not only work, effort, and exertion, but also quickness and effectiveness into always doing something, it is the responsibility of the school to bring back time to our students and

[140] Gary D. Fenstermacher and Virginia Richardson, "On Making Determinations of Quality Teaching," *Teachers College Record* 107, no. 1 (2005): 190.

[141] Joseph Sen, "On Slowness in Philosophy," *The Monist* 83, no. 4: 607-615.

initiate them in the values of leisure in education. The teacher, being the one closest to the students, should be the one who best understands the value of leisure and all that it implies.

This idea is not new or foreign to the field of philosophy of education. We have seen this ideal earlier in the figure of Socrates. In his dialogues, Plato portrays Socrates as a teacher, as he had been, in fact, a teacher of Plato. Sen writes that the "leisurely spirit pervades in Plato's dialogues, so much so that the impression often received is that Socrates himself is less in time and time more in him."[142] An aspect that remains constant in Socrates all throughout Plato's dialogues is his character, his reflective way of speaking, and his own making of time. While the discussions (and the interlocutors) in the dialogues are varied, the teacher's teaching remains the same: the leisurely attitude. As seen before in the treatment of Plato's *Phaedo* in the first chapter of this work, the attitude of leisure might just be what Plato thought as being most important and most important to share.

Following this, the good teacher must be active in thought and must be rich in contemplative attitude to ultimately share understanding and further inquiry with his or her students. If we achieve this, then the character of a teacher and a teacher's way of life is, then, out in the open, touching each of his or her student's lives and offering his or her own self to imitate. The preceding discussion falls into an agreement with John Portelli's statement, when he writes that "[f]irst, the teacher has to 'demonstrate' the philosophical procedures through his or her actions, attitudes, questions and responses".[143] It is for this reason that if leisure is to make its way into our schools to claim its original significance in the term "school" (*scholé*) as a place for self-cultivation, formation, and physical and intellectual development, then the spirit of

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[142] Sen, 608

[143] John Portelli, "The Philosopher as Teacher: The Socratic Method and Philosophy for Children," *Metaphilosophy* 21, no. 1/2 (1990): 141-161.

it needs to come from the teachers themselves and the act of teaching, not from testing following a prescribed and standardized curriculum.

6. Conclusion: Leisure as Vantage Point

Socrates says to Adeimatus in *Republic*: “And the final outcome of education, I suppose we’d say, is a single newly finished person, who is either good or the opposite”, to which Adeimantus responds: “Of course” (425c). Education, according to this part of the dialogue, is responsible for rendering flourishing individuals with a capacity to lead a good way of life. According to this, education has a commitment to form well individuals in skills and dispositions, but also to prepare them to decide and judge for themselves the essence of a good life. To achieve this goal in education, there needs to be a balance among technical and practical skills on the one hand, and a philosophical and leisurely attitude on the other. In the same work Socrates refers to this balance when he asks Glaucon: “Haven’t you noticed the effect that lifelong physical training, unaccompanied by any training in music and poetry, has on the mind, or the effect of the opposite, music and poetry without physical training?” (410c). In the former case, he says, we become savages and brutes, while in the latter we become soft and over-cultivated, neither of which is good exclusively.

As much as the Ancient Greek philosophers pursued wisdom and the philosophical life, Plato here declares that it is wrong to dismiss all else and focus on philosophy by itself. A harmonious balance in education, according to Plato, comprised of physical work and cultivation of the soul, is what is appropriate. Following this thought I would like to make clear that I am not making the argument that all teachers should become philosophers and contemplate in leisure. My argument is that leisure as a condition for philosophy and contemplation should be

part of the education student teachers receive, precisely because teacher programs seem nowadays to be overwhelmed with practical and technical knowledge to be applied as needed. My proposal, then, seeks not to replace an established practice of teaching, but to uncover and recover an additional one that is sure to make of education a truly human endeavor.

I have in the present chapter tried to understand better the philosophical attitude in order to conclude that leisure, as its condition, is central for education. While knowledge can serve the individual well and ground his thoughts, only leisure will set him or her free to take that knowledge to a higher level from which said person will be able to think about his or her life and decide in what way it should be led. Leisure provides a time for understanding, to stand back from the all things we perceive in everyday life and, calmly and at our own pace, contemplate them. Contemplation provides us with a vantage point by which we can regard the world and ourselves differently; it helps us to pay attention and see differently.[144] The attitude of leisure will provide us with the freedom to make for ourselves time to study and think about our place in the world.[145]

The introduction of the ideal of leisure into our classrooms is therefore a necessary practice. This introduction, however, needs to be made part of the culture of the classroom by means of the education and character of the teacher. The teacher, it has been suggested by Hannah Arendt, is the closest representative of the world that students have.[146] For this reason,

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[144] Margaret Buchmann, "The Careful Vision: How Practical is Contemplation in Teaching?" *American Journal of Education* 98, no.1 (1989): 35-61; and Angelo Caranfa, "Contemplative Instruction and the Gifts of Beauty, Love, and Silence," *Educational Theory* 60, no. 5 (2010): 561-585. Both authors propose that contemplation is intimately linked to attention, which is a kind of *vision*.

[145] Josef Sen writes: "Epictetus carries [pausing] further into the realm of perception. The point for Epictetus is not to be overwhelmed by harmful emotions and this can be done if we slow down the pace of our judgments […] We need to instill a moment of reflection into the flow of appearances, to come to the realization that this flow is not inevitable but subject to modification through the attention we give to it" (610).

[146] Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Education" in *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977).

they should be invited to see the leisurely attitude and choose to want to imitate it because it is good.[147] Leisure, then, in the context here presented, should not be introduced solely through means of a curriculum in philosophy or through external examples of people whose lives have been bettered by a philosophical attitude. The teacher should also embody leisure and philosophy in the classroom and make it part of his or her practice.

In the beginning of this chapter I presented the thought that both philosophy and the philosopher have been traditionally represented as being ambiguous concepts. The ambiguity thrives when only a few people are philosophers, while the rest are excluded from such activity. If the teacher-philosopher, then, makes his or her way into the classroom, introducing a philosophical way of life, leisure and philosophy will cease to be the foreign conceptions that they are today. This way, students will be able to be educated in a culture of leisure and will be guided by the teacher into inquiries and new perspectives that may otherwise not be available to them. The important point is that it needs to be through the example of the character, behavior, and attitude of the teacher that pours out and touches others.

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[147] Hannah Arendt would not necessarily agree with this point. Her position is that teachers, as representatives of the world, necessarily help students catch up with the world by teaching them the various subjects and content matter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Recovering Leisure: *Otium* as the Basis of Education

In 1900 Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó wrote *Ariel*, an essay dedicated "to the American youth." In it, Rodó depicts a teacher who takes some time to speak to his students on the occasion of their last meeting of the academic year. Rodó tells us that the teacher gathered his students and, as they sat around him, he "stoked the statue's brow."[148] The statue is that of the Ariel from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, who symbolizes the "noble, soaring aspect of the human spirit".[149] The statue of Ariel, we learn in the text, held a prominent space in the classroom and in the daily school experience of both teacher and students. Since both the statue's place in the classroom and its intellectual relationship with the teacher was clear in the daily conversations, the children addressed him as "Próspero", the name of the magician that Ariel served. The teacher, then, established an overt relationship with the ideal of learning, humanity, and the love of these ideals. His students were conscious of this relationship, given that it was part of their ordinary interaction, and this is the reason why the students kindly gave him the nickname. On this occasion, then, the teacher, "deep in thought […] began to speak, surrounded by his affectionate and attentive students."[150]

In addressing his youthful students, the teacher began by exalting the idea of youth as "a force" and as "a treasure" that must be invested in ideas of higher order. The students, explains the teacher, as bearers of physical youth and vigor, are also responsible for infusing the same youth and vigor into the ideas that inevitably direct their actions in everything that they do for the good of the life of the collective. The teacher proceeds to tell his students that if it was ever possible during Plato's times for there to be such youthful souls, responsible for a world of

[148] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 32.

[149] Rodó, 31

[150] Rodó, 32

flourishing, we should at least be able to entertain the hope for a human generation that, in our times, will be moved to achieve the same measure of flourishing.[151]

Trying to better explain this hope of human flourishing, the teacher goes on to explain that there is a kind of activity that is particular to each individual (depending on capacities and talents), but that, at the same time, there is a common destiny for all rational beings, which must be realized by other activities that are available to all.[152] This common human destiny becomes available only to those conscious and youthful spirits who are able to resist the forces of living a completely utilitarian and practical life and, instead, are capable of cultivating an interior life, "the life which is made up of selfless meditation, ideal contemplation, the ancient rendition of leisure..."[153]

The account of this small part of the speech delivered by Rodó's teacher brings a timely and powerful image to my project for its illustrative depiction which helps sum up three of the most important aspects considered previously in the chapters of this study. In the first place, it calls to mind the figure of Socrates as a teacher, as described in chapter two of this work. It is evident that we are, in Rodó's essay, in the presence of the figure of a deeply contemplative teacher who, in the last day of class, after having spent a whole year with his students, takes the time to reflect aloud on the moral, social, and cultural responsibilities of educated human beings. The teacher's farewell message is focused on rekindling the flickering flame of his young students' souls, reminiscent of the fire lighting up the ancient Greek world of philosophy. In the likes of Socrates, who left this world exhorting his friends to care for their souls, Rodó's teacher

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[151] Rodó, 37

[152] Rodó, 39

[153] My translation of the original in: José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* in José Luis Abellán (Ed.) *José Enrique Rodó*. (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1991), 41: "la vida de que son parte de la meditación desinteresada, la contemplación ideal, el *ocio* antiguo, la impenetrable estancia de mi cuento."

is here hoping to leave his students with a similar message as they leave the classroom and go out to the world. The teacher is fully invested in the education of each of his students, whose individual course will inevitably affect the lives of all. There is, therefore, in the teacher's address, an explicit valuation for the educated lives of his students, which becomes transparent in his invitation for them to make time for leisure: a condition for purposive mindfulness in a person's actions, in service of the flourishing of both individual and collective lives.[154]

Second, Rodó's writing accentuates the continuous presence and relevance of the wisdom of the ancient world and of figures like Plato, Socrates, and the Stoics. The prevalence of their questions and issues concerning morality, ethics, law, politics, and education, among others, are able to reach us intact across time. Despite changes that occur through time in the world and that, in turn, condition the way we live, these texts seek to communicate to us that a more fundamental basis to humanity is common to us all. This is to say that the reason why Plato's discussion on the philosophical life or on morality, for instance, are relevant to us today is because these are questions that are especially rooted in the human being and are therefore independent from conditions pertinent to different time periods. Questions of this kind must find their way into our contemporary conversations on education.

Finally, the direct reference to the ancient account of leisure is striking in this illustration. The quoted phrase in the teacher's speech that asks students to participate in "the life made up of disinterested meditation, ideal contemplation, and ancient rendition of leisure," can lead us into a final consideration of the concept of leisure and its fundamental relation to education. Rodó's essay seems to hold meditation, contemplation, philosophy, and leisure as equal elements of a

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[154] It goes beyond the scope of this section to offer a more comprehensive and exhaustive look at Rodó's essay, which extends to a complex political, social, and educational view of America as a whole continent, and the political role of its people throughout. For purposes of my study, I have solely focused on the setting and the few elements that, in the exposition of this essay, give way to the message of life and hope through the means of contemplation and education.

life of cultivation. The previous chapter examined the relationship among the last three concepts, but not meditation. This circumstance, then, paves the way for a few questions: how structured is the contemplative practice of leisure? Is there a kind of discipline that is associated with leisure? Why should we consider leisure as the basis of education? In what follows I will seek to render these questions clearer.

1. The Structure and Discipline of Leisure

Throughout this study we have focused on the philosophical aspect of leisure in the way that the ancient Greek and Roman traditions have bequeathed it to us. While contemplation is one of the forms in which philosophy is expressed, it is worth asserting that a practice in contemplation can take many forms. Following Plato, whose *Republic* abounds in metaphors of light and "keen eyesight", we can assert that the philosophical tradition has tried to *see* better. Clear eyesight follows a process of education that requires a practice of continuous adjustment of opinions and previously held views that, in turn, require time and a philosophical disposition. The path we take to achieve the end of seeing better, however, can be varied.

This said, it is clear that the contemplative practice of leisure needs not follow a predetermined structure or activity. Contemplation can be intellectual (rigorous, systematic and active inquiry), meditative (practices of mindfulness by which meditation might follow non-rational precepts, like the emptying of one's mind), or a combination (reason *and* meditation). In every instance, however, the contemplative practice takes the form of training or preparation: a type of exercise of the self intended to create habits for living well.[155] We therefore read in Plato's *Republic*, for instance, that the ideals of living well emanate from the idea of the form of

[155] Hadot, 85-86

the good, which some men can attain after a rigorous education, ending in rational contemplation of the forms. On the other hand, Marcus Aurelius, refers to a contemplation that follows a more meditative practice that reveals a new vision "that is not of the eye, but for a different sort of vision."[156] For him, his time of contemplation took the form of reflections and thoughtful counsel that did not follow any given rational structure. In fact, a salient trait of his well-known *Meditations* is its repetitiveness.[157] Furthermore, we learn from some of the Roman stoics, that they engaged their time in various practices, which feature self-writing, listening, reading, dialoguing, and learning to die.[158] The aim of every philosophical act is to enable consciousness, awareness, and attention to our thoughts, our actions, and to our general state of being. Whichever form the practice of contemplation might take, the philosophical tradition has, notwithstanding, rendered clear the fact that contemplative activity requires a determinate disposition that values practice, time, and guidance; put simply, it requires an education.

The structure of contemplation, therefore, while carrying no blueprint, does necessarily imply an educative goal that, as seen and discussed previously, leads to a vision of human flourishing. Thus, there is not a particular discipline associated with leisure, but rather a disciplined attitude to engage and practice leisure. Leisure does not denote a specific activity, but an activity that can bring together thought, purpose, and mindfulness.[159]

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[156] Marcus Aurelius, 22

[157] Frances and Henry Hazlitt write: "The Meditations of Marcus, for example, were apparently a journal, kept solely for his own eyes, in which he put down each evening or morning some relfection, resolve, or piece of advice to himself, without looking back to see whether he had written substantially the same thing a week or a month before." Frances and Henry Hazlitt, *The Wisdom of the Stoics* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 3.

[158] Hadot, 81-125

[159] Geoffrey Hinchliffe, "Work and Human Flourishing," *Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia* 36, no. 5 (2004): 535-547.

In what follows I will briefly consider an argument that seeks to illustrate the idea that different activities can lead to a contemplative practice. Geoffrey Hinchliffe argues that doing one's work could be an instance of human flourishing. Hinchliffe makes the argument that working does not have to carry the negative conception that often accompanies it, namely as that of being a mechanical activity and thereby robbing us of our human capacities. He argues that there are instances in which work not only carries an ethical value, but that work actually exercises human value and that, through work, we are able to find a sense of flourishing that we could otherwise not find. He maintains, for instance, that in communicating with co-workers, or even in fulfilling a task, we are invited to engage in thought and thereby exercise our own way of doing things. While this reasoning seems right, I would have to add a condition that he does not mention: when a worker (any kind of person who holds a job in society) understands the practices of leisure, he can, in fact, flourish in this daily activity. On the contrary, when a worker is incapable of mindfulness, his or her activity can prove to be not only mechanical, but stultifying and unproductive.[160] It is for this reason that I would like to emphasize that while an activity or structure to attain leisure cannot be specified, a discipline of practicing leisure is necessary. This discipline finds its basis in an individual's education.

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[160] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), p. 840. Smith writes: "But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become." While Smith is here referring to a very special kind of laborer in the context of the division of labor, the point taken here may still very well apply to Hinchliffe's argument. In fact, this part in Smith is followed by thoughts on the regulations the state must make on educaton. A particular disposition or attitude, enabled by education is desirable for every person in society who works and contributes in a community, from professional to specialized jobs. When the disposition for contemplation and leisure is wanting, the moral and flourishing component of which Hinchliffe speaks, will still be lacking.

2. Leisure as the Basis of Education

All aspects considered, I would like to offer as a concluding remark that the ideal of leisure must be cultivated in the life of the classrooms. The centrality of the concept of leisure in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, as a human ideal, shows that it is a foundational element of whoever is to be considered an educated individual. The education in leisure, it has been argued, begins with the teacher, or the person whose responsibility it is to educate others.

To finalize this discussion, I would like to offer three final considerations regarding the recovery of leisure for education. First, in recovering leisure we must understand that education is a process and a practice, and therefore requires time. Second, a recovery of the practice of leisure helps us project the extent and reach of education. Third, leisure can contribute to some demands required of teacher education programs. I will now go on to elaborate on these points.

The example of Socrates in *Phaedo* and *Alcibiades I* in chapters 3 of this work illustrate the argument that becoming educated is a process that requires time, practice, and dedication. For this reason, it would be misleading to equate "acquiring an education" with "learning something". While learning something or learning to do something does, indeed, form part of acquiring an education, it cannot be conceived as a thorough conception of what it means to be educated. Acquiring (or receiving) an education that forms the individual well, necessarily implies a process—a continuous process. To attain a good formation, no doubt, knowledge of facts and practical knowledge of things is useful, but a more conscious application is indispensable. As has been suggested both through example and discussion, one does not become educated at a specific moment in time, having followed one or another path. Education is a life-long practice in which one needs to become initiated. For this reason, we need to consider time and our use of it.

The initiation into a life of leisure can more fully and forcefully take place in the setting of a school, the institution in which he have come to rely and entrust the education of people. If schools are enabled to recover leisure as a guiding ideal for teaching and educating, a more humanistic and meaningful basis of education may be attained. Leisure as a basis of education strives to juxtapose a new order of understanding education and understanding ourselves, as well as the relationships that we keep with one another. An education constructed under the precepts of leisure offers a different set of values that are concealed to a numerous portion of today's population that is being guided by the principles of immediate gratification, results, and material exuberance. Leisure offers the sense of timelessness, pause, and thoughtfulness that should be able to accompany our activities. It is argued here that when we become initiated into this practice, our activity and quality of life is rendered more complete and meaningful.

At this point we can ask: how far does leisure go in education? Based on the examination of the concept of leisure, as it has here been presented, I would venture to say that leisure attains extensive reach within education. Teachers and school administrators who understand (and believe in) leisure should be able to discover a new horizon of education that goes beyond tasks and cause and effect (strictly teaching *x* and learning *x*). A conscious and contemplative practice can be revealing of other spheres of morality and justice that could otherwise remain neglected. The practice of leisure could be an opportunity for the education community to be better able to question and reflect on school missions and ways to better serve the community. We could, for instance, take the example of schools whose mission it is to offer a type of education following the progressive model. Some schools, it is reported, begin with this idea of education only to revert to more conventional methods of schooling. One of the reasons why this happens is because the understanding of leisure, the time for education to develop, is neither understood nor

incorporated into their school culture. Lacking this understanding, teachers are quick to become frustrated, given the need for immediate response or results in the part of the students. In some of those instances, a turn to conventional methods in teaching that reveals an immediate response is desired.

Philosophical queries concerning the mission and goals of the school, school community, or curriculum could spark some thoughts on the quality of the education that we are both offering and receiving. To this query we could further ask to what end and to whose benefit are we receiving (or offering) an education?[161] An education that is founded on leisure should prepare us well to entertain such questions and seek a well formulated answer.

A final observation that makes a compelling case for recovering leisure is the consideration of the principles and standards of Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The principles and standards for quality of student learning, faculty learning, and institutional capacity for program quality are geared towards evidence that shows more than knowledge in the different content areas. The council would like to see a development in students and faculty that highlights caring and inquiry in education. We have seen that these qualities in a teacher can take the shape of various activities, as long as one recognizes the necessity of taking one's time and using this time in the service of the cultivation of our lives. When this need is recognized, any course and any activity have the potential of turning philosophical. As has been discussed throughout this project, recovering leisure as the basis of education promises to add and to extend the reaches of rational thought and life, while rekindling the hope of flourishing individual and collective lives. This consideration will not only be

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[161] These questions have been of great importance in the moral philosophy of Aristotle and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Both philosophers mention that the good man is not equivalent in meaning to the good citizen.

attractive to teacher education programs, but ultimately we will all reap the benefits of creating a stronger sense of education for us all.

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