LEISURE AND ITS CHALLENGE TO LIBERALISM

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation asks the most basic of philosophical questions: what is it? More specifically, it asks the nature of leisure, including its nature within liberal life. Chapter One turns to Aristotle, who offers the most substantial and elevated account of leisure. I interpret and defend Aristotle's account as a "way of being," which means it is itself the end and goal of several virtues, material equipment, and a thorough education. This particular way of being is found to be the goal and purpose of Aristotle's ideal regime. The liberal project, however, presents a competing ideal in the example of the laborer. In Chapter Two, I argue that Locke holds work and labor to be necessary to human happiness, especially with work's necessary role in rational self-authorship. This interpretation is offered as a more complete account of liberalism, where the tendency is to view work and labor as merely a means to legitimate wealth. I argue that Locke's defense of work and labor is more thorough, leading to both political as well as *individual* felicity. And instead of stopping here, at this comparison of the competing poles of leisure and labor, I also analyze vocation as both a complement to the labor described by Locke, but also as a way of incorporating elements of leisure into contemporary life. In the same way that Aristotle understands leisure as the ground of doing something for its own sake, Weber also understands vocation to be a "living for," even if it is always also a "living from." Though there are important points of distinction between leisure and vocation, and though vocation has its own internal pathologies, vocation is our best answer to and incorporation of classical leisure.

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INTRODUCTION

Aristocratic & Democratic Humanities

The fundamental tension of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is the comparison between aristocracy and democracy.[1] For Tocqueville, this tension between aristocracy and democracy is present in all regimes, both past and present. What changed was the domination of democracy in the Western world. Athenian "democracy" still had a number of aristocratic elements, for instance. In America, though, he witnessed democracy fully taking control.

There are a number of consequences of living in a democratic society versus an aristocratic one. Underlying this position that democracy and aristocracy produce two, quite distinct, humanities, and one that is all too often missed by scholars of Tocqueville, is an assumption about the power of politics. If democracy and aristocracy have the power to shape human characters in such a drastic fashion—enough to call them distinct humanities—then politics, even in the modern age, is the most determinative factor in shaping character.[2] Even religion does not have this power. Tocqueville is quite sensitive to the idea that religion is itself shaped by politics. A further discussion of this comes in what follows, but Tocqueville suggests that religion should not contradict the primary tenets of liberal democracy. The reason for this is simply that religion will lose the battle. For example, the passion for material well-being is too strong to be undermined. It can be moderated, and Tocqueville finds this moderating influence to be one of the most important tasks of religion, but it cannot be overturned. If religion were to attempt such a radical undermining of the nature of democracy, the church would fail and

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[1] Pierre Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, trans. John Waggoner (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 13.

[2] Pierre Manent, *Modern Liberty and Its Discontents*, ed. Daniel J. Mahoney and Paul Seaton (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 41.

become completely inconsequential. Thus, even when compared to religion, politics is most impactful on the character of a people.

When it is said that politics is determinative of character, "politics" does not here simply mean political institutions. Tocqueville does not claim that political institutions by themselves operate on the souls of citizens, but that a nation's "social state," which has a reflexive relationship with laws, customs, institutions, and mores, is primarily responsible for shaping character.[3] The American social state is "eminently democratic."[4] Being eminently democratic, it is a striking example of the difference between democratic and aristocratic ways of life. Tocqueville goes so far as to claim that the difference between the two comes to form "two distinct humanities."[5] Though Tocqueville did not believe the progress of democracy was yet complete, he already observed this stark difference between the peoples of democracy and those of aristocracy. The task of *Democracy in America* was to explain the difference between these two humanities: between the old and crumbling humanity of aristocracy and the new and developing humanity of democracy. Seen in this light, the character of this nascent humanity was Tocqueville's guiding question. This is also the starting point of my inquiry, though limited to one crucial subject: leisure. Liberal democracy has seemingly made us reject and ultimately forget leisure. Is there something the aristocratic humanity had that we are now missing? If so, is it necessarily lost forever? What would it mean to remember leisure? Does it disappear or does it change, deform, or perhaps elevate into something else? If it does change or deform or elevate

[3] For an extended discussion of the relationship between politics and the social state, see Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*.

[4] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 52.

[5] Tocqueville, 833.

into something else, does that mean leisure in some form is natural or necessary to us, and not simply to aristocratic humanity?

Tocqueville is not alone in seeing that politics shapes character, and he is also in good company in finding there to be a democratic character type. Among the ancients, Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides treat political regimes as more than a set of institutions, and also as regimes of humanity. In the modern age, Marx and Nietzsche are particularly clear about the existence of a democratic "type" of man that is novel and distinct from others, by having a different worldview and set of values. Of course, there are critical points of difference and disagreement between these thinkers on this subject. Tocqueville, unlike Plato, finds democracy to be an ineluctable process rather than one of several stops in the cycle of regimes. Also, there is severe disagreement over the nature of each type of humanity and even what constitutes each regime. But still, the precise nature of democracy and democratic man is not the important conclusion at this stage. The position currently being defended, or at least being presented as a reasonable starting point for this project, is that politics, understood broadly, shapes people. It shapes their mores, their values, and their very orientation to inhabiting their place in the world. One of the grounds for debate between the partisans of different regimes is this character or nature of the people that will come to be shaped by those regimes. As this dissertation aims to demonstrate and describe, the subject of leisure, and, on the flip side of the coin, the subject of work, are crucial components of the more or less conscious project of liberal democracy.

The Need to Work

One aspect of democratic humanity, Tocqueville points out, is that we all work, and need to work. But he does not stop at this simple, and obvious, observation. Tocqueville sees that this need has more than one source. In general, Tocqueville separates what I will call the "material"

and the "moral" motivation to work. Together, these two components of the need to work demonstrate why leisure is and will continue to be neglected in America.

The material motivation to work pops up in many places throughout *Democracy in America*, but does so most clearly in the analysis of inheritance law. Because estates were no longer bequeathed completely to a single heir, property and wealth "necessarily has a permanent tendency to shrink."[6] There is thus a lot of turnover in the makeup of the wealthy classes. In fact, there really is no such thing as a wealthy "class," because of this great instability of property. According to Tocqueville, "most of the rich started out poor."[7] As we will see later, this creates a problem for learning to be at leisure. Those who go on to gain the material prerequisites for a life of leisure do not have much experience in leisure. Unlike the previous classes of European aristocrats who grew up in leisure, most wealthy Americans have occupations for most of their lives. Even their early educations are primarily for the sake of occupation.[8]

Because of the lack of stability in fortunes, even the wealthy must continue to work. Not only do their children need to work because of the division of the estate, the wealthy must continue to work because there is no guarantee that they will continue to enjoy their status.[9] There is continual competition in the marketplace, and this requires constant attention. Tocqueville recognizes the virtue and justice of such an arrangement—in much the same way that modern advocates of capitalism do. The ambitious and the industrious recognize that there

[6] Tocqueville, 54–55.

[7] Tocqueville, 59.

[8] Tocqueville, 58.

[9] Tocqueville, 519.

is no limit to what they can acquire, and they work to increase their fortune. Whereas a conventional, and perhaps unjust, system affords unequal allotment of riches in an aristocracy, it is nature that does the allotting in a liberal democracy: "the legislature no longer grants privileges, but nature does."[10] So, even if the wealthy were educated for leisure, the instability of fortunes, exacerbated by democratic inheritance law, requires continual occupation. For Tocqueville, then, democracy creates a material barrier to leisure. The barrier begins at birth. The wealthy are often born poor, and are not given a thorough and demanding education in their youth. And those that are born wealthy do not stand to receive their parents' entire estates, requiring them to enter into a profession.

Aside from this material barrier, there is what I call a moral aversion to leisure. This aversion is even more difficult to overcome. The material barrier is outside oneself and, it seems, could be overcome in certain circumstances. For instance, perhaps the owner of a large estate only has one heir, or perhaps someone's occupation pushes them over the economic threshold so that they no longer have to work. These hypothetical circumstances are imaginable, possible, and, for many, not hypothetical.

Whereas the material barrier makes leisure impossible or very difficult for most, the moral barrier makes leisure simply unthinkable. The material barrier is external to oneself and it is possible, though very difficult, to overcome. The moral aversion, meanwhile, is internal and precludes leisure from being a goal of activity. This is why it is called an "aversion" to leisure or a "compulsion" to work. A hurdle assumes there is a race or some other undertaking with a clear goal. The material barrier can be a hurdle in that race, while the moral "barrier" keeps you

[10] Tocqueville, 519.

from entering the race in the first place. It is partly because of the moral compulsion to work that leisure has been forgotten. Unless completely insurmountable, which it does not seem to be, the material barrier is not enough to make leisure forgotten or unthinkable. In order for it to be forgotten, it needs a corresponding moral principle or feeling.

The moral compulsion to work functions in much the same way inheritance law affects the soul of the land owner. Whereas idleness is honored in aristocratic societies, work, even for the wealthy, is considered honorable. The democratic man views labor as a "necessary, natural, and respectable condition of humanity."[11] The ideas of utility and respectability are wed in his mind. There is surely an interest in compensation and gain, and this too is worthy of respect, but there is something else. It is not just high paying work that is worthwhile, but all "respectable occupation."[12] Idleness is not tolerated, even for those that have made their fortune. While idleness would be the expectation in an aristocracy, it is unthinkable in a democracy. This is part of the nature of Tocqueville's democratic man. He feels very deeply both the material and the moral compulsion to work, and the concomitant aversion to leisure and idleness. Tocqueville, while being clear about this need to work, does not explain this morality in any detail. He explains quite well its force, but not the arguments in its favor. For that, I will turn to Locke.

Democratic Nature Versus Democratic Art

One of the important functions that religion serves in democracy is that it, for a time, distracts citizens from their material well-being, if only for a short time. Democrats otherwise have an intense passion for material well-being that can make them blind to other parts of their being.[13]

[11] Tocqueville, 642.

[12] Tocqueville, 643.

[13] Tocqueville, 507.

In this way, religion is an extremely useful complement to democracy. Likewise, the study of Greek and Latin can also be useful. It can help counter some of the aesthetic and moral defects often found in democracy, such as its immoderate preference for the body over the soul, the real over the ideal, and the immanent over the transcendent.[14]

We must be careful, though, in how far we take these prescriptions. It is not as if we should expect religion to completely undermine democracy's passion for material well-being. We should also not expect the study of the classics to reverse democracy's aesthetic and moral tastes. In the case of religion, Tocqueville predicts that a religion would simply disappear in a democracy if it were to attempt to *contradict* rather than simply *restrain* materialism.[15] First, religion does not have this power. Politics is more powerful than religion, and religion will lose the battle. Second, in losing the battle, whatever religion that seeks to contradict core tenets of democracy will simply disappear. Because they go too far in rejecting integral aspects of the social state, they will not be taken seriously.

Oddly, Tocqueville seems to believe that a classical education is more likely to affect the political realm than does religion. This does not mean it will fundamentally succeed, however. It will merely produce "dangerous" citizens if the classics are the *only* education given to citizens.[16] This is because the philosophers of Greece and Rome were interested in the ideal over the real. When taken too far, such an education is too far removed from the mores of democracy. However, when it is moderately employed, for instance with the wealthy or the talented who have the means of devoting themselves to such study, it can be a healthy complement and

[14] Tocqueville, 546.

[15] Tocqueville, 509.

[16] Tocqueville, 546.

restraint on some of the more extreme tendencies of democracy, especially as it relates to its effect on aesthetic tastes.

Taking these two examples together, we see a common theme—one that runs throughout both volumes of *Democracy in America*. The theme is that an "enlightened and free"[17] democracy often requires elements and forces that run somewhat counter to the natural tendencies of democracy. These elements cannot simply *contradict* democracy, because it would be either ineffective, which is most likely, or it will be dangerous to both order and freedom. But, these elements and forces can moderate and complement democracy, and in doing so, make democracy enlightened and free. In this way, though Tocqueville and Aristotle do not agree on the precise differences between democracy and aristocracy, they do agree that the two parties have only incomplete notions of the good, the just, and the beautiful. And though Tocqueville does not believe in the possibility of a mixed regime, he sees the necessity of moderating some of the natural tendencies of democracy. Furthermore, this is not a special problem for democracy—aristocracy too requires countervailing influences. Aristocracy can become cold and cruel, for instance, if it separates itself too much from the existence and interest of non-elites. It is therefore unsurprising that Nietzsche finds cruelty to be so near to the nature of aristocracies. Still, though aristocracy also has this issue, it is perhaps more of a chore in a democracy. Though there are also some aspects that work to the opposite effect, ingrained ideas can be harder to upset in a democracy precisely and paradoxically because democrats tend not to trust the opinions of elites. Instead, their "individualism" leads them to look to popular opinion.[18] In this way, democracy has a tendency to reinforce itself by

[17] Tocqueville, 519–20.

[18] Tocqueville, 491.

automatically looking to mass opinion rather than entertaining contrary opinions from others, even if those others are more enlightened.

What this means, then, is that these countervailing pressures that moderate the inclinations of the social state are all the more important in a democracy. This distinction is between the *nature* of democracy and the *art* of democracy.[19] The nature of democracy is composed of all those tendencies of a democratic social state, if left to its own devices. The art of democracy, meanwhile, is the skillful controlling of those tendencies in order to keep it enlightened and free. It should be noted that not all of the inclinations of democracy, even when they taken to their end, have despotic or otherwise unwanted outcomes. However, democratic inclinations are not always ideal and some others are dangerous. The art of democracy is in the cultivation of those inclinations which are just and beautiful, and in the pruning of those tendencies that can become unsightly or even dangerous when overgrown. This art is especially important when democracy does not conform to nature.[20] The most important example of this is equality. Democracy is right to say that all men are equal, in some respects, but it is not right to say that men are equal in all respects.[21] Democratic art in this case has the job of moderation when it goes too far in asserting human equality.

Tocqueville finds a number of sources that can moderate democracy. Those such as Manent argue that only religion can truly keep democracy in its proper bounds.[22] In the same way that human equality both does and does not conform to nature, Manent's position is both

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[19] For more on this distinction between the nature and the art of democracy, see Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, 26.

[20] Manent, 81.

[21] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 59.

[22] Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, 85–86.

true and not true. Manent is correct that Tocqueville finds religion to be an important influence, perhaps even the most important. Religion uniquely distracts from the passion for material well-being, which strikes at the core of many of the democratic social state's unhealthy inclinations. It is also particularly useful because of how widespread religious participation is in America, and because of how well situated it is in relation to political power. By keeping largely separate from political institutions, it has a greater potential and actual hold over the souls of Americans. Still, despite being perhaps the single most important moderating influence, and despite it being the most paradigmatic one, Tocqueville clearly finds other sources of moderation. As we saw above, studying the classics can be an important, if minor, influence. More impactful is the role of lawyers, who impose a healthy conservatism into the legal realm that ultimately spills over into other areas.[23] This legal spirit, like religion, serves as a crucial counterweight to a possible tyranny of the majority, with the influence of lawyers constituting "the most powerful barriers against the excesses of democracy."[24] Thus, though religion exerts an important and perhaps even necessary influence, Tocqueville clearly recognizes other sources of democratic art that may even be more powerful than the force of religion.

Furthermore, the role of religion is not completely a natural one. Religion owes some of its influence to particular conditions and contexts which may not be always be exigent. For instance, Tocqueville finds religion to be natural to humanity, but its practice is clearly not universal. More than that, some nations are obviously more religious than others, and levels of religiosity rise and fall. As the history of Europe as shown, with the U.S. being somewhat of an exception, there appears to be a tendency of liberal democracies to become less religious over

[23] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 302–11.

[24] Tocqueville, 303.

time. If true, what happens to the role of religion as a counterweight to democracy? If religion becomes less widespread, we should expect, and indeed should look to cultivate such counterweights, such exemplars of the democratic art, in other aspects of society.

To sum up this discussion, democracy has certain tendencies. Some of those are healthy, and correspond to nature, and others do not. The art of democracy is to cultivate and moderate the nature of democracy. The moderating influences do not and should not attempt to contradict the nature of democracy, but moderate and complement it. Religion is part of this art, but it does not compose it in entirety. One of the questions of this project is to what extent leisure and vocation can also be part and parcel of the art of democracy. As the more complete discussion in Chapter Three will show, I think leisure can be a moderating influence, and vocation can be a complementary one. And because leisure and vocation separately and together form crucial aspects of democratic life, they deserve to be treated as more than minor examples of the democratic art.

Plan of the Dissertation

This project begins from the position that leisure, as both a question and challenge, has been largely forgotten. The purpose of this dissertation is to explain that forgetfulness, and to also analyze what it would mean to remember leisure. If we think of leisure at all, we have the feeling that we do not have enough of it, whatever it is. I have begun from this feeling that we do not have enough of it, and I will move to the question of what it is, before moving to what became of it. I conclude by returning to our common experience of leisure, in hobbies, and also suggest that vocation, paradoxically, should also be examined in this light. Finally, I suggest ways in which hobbies and vocation might be deepened by a confrontation with Aristotelian leisure. Said another way, the movement of the dissertation is from the experience of missing something, to

an investigation of what that something is, and finally an analysis of whether we truly lost it, and, if we did, whether and how we might recover it. Using the language of Tocqueville, I move from the nature of aristocracy by examining leisure in its purest form, to the nature of democracy by examining the liberal response of work and labor, before asking whether leisure and vocation may accurately be described and counted upon as part of the art of democracy.

The nature of aristocracy is described, in Chapter One, through a commentary on Aristotle. I offer a theory of Aristotelian leisure by describing and defending it as a "way of being" rather than a condition of time free from utilitarian activity. Viewing it in this way helps us recognize the radical separation, the "distinct humanity," of the life of leisure from the life of work. The difference and contestation is more than inactivity versus activity, but a life devoted to one idea of the good opposed to a life devoted to another good.

In Chapter Two, I turn to this other humanity devoted to work and labor. Tocqueville readily and accurately points to our moral aversion to labor, but does not reconstruct the philosophical argument in favor of that position. For that, I turn to Locke. Contra the interpretive tradition that focuses on labor as the legitimate origin of property, I find in Locke a serious and thorough case for the "dignity" of labor. Going further, I argue that work and labor, in all of its manifestations, is a *necessary* component of human happiness.

After describing these distinct humanities in Chapters One and Two, I examine the possibility and promise of a democratic art in both the "leisure" that is available to those who work, and in vocations for those that have the ability and privilege to have one. Though there are serious questions and limitations to these components of democratic art when compared to the ideal of Aristotelian leisure—and these questions and limitations will be discussed—vocation and hobbies have their own charms and utility that deserve their own telling.

CHAPTER ONE: ARISTOTELIAN LEISURE AS A "WAY OF BEING"

Introduction

We are all familiar with the following formula: "before we fully examine topic X, we must first back up and discuss topic Y." Not only are we familiar with this formula, most of us are guilty of employing it. As a fallback, made-to-order, copy-and-paste phrase, it represents, at best, a laziness in writing that refuses to defend the decision to "back up." At worst, it is an active evasion of exploring new, perhaps interesting, ground, by re-stating something that likely is not required.

Expanding beyond this commonly employed stock phrase as an example of problematic writing, it is also a way of, and excuse for, looking to intellectual history. A question imposes itself upon us, and instead of thinking, we read. This is done with the supposed promise of it being an introduction to thinking, or belief that the method is itself a form, or ground, of thinking. But the laziness in that initial refusal to think goes on to infect the reading itself. Instead of returning to the question that motivated us, we remain solely within the confines of that reading. This is the danger of the approach I use, and I aim and hope to do better. I turn to Aristotle, especially his *Politics*, with the aim of seeing if there is anything worth transferring, transferable, or even familiar, in the horizon of the ancients that can enliven and deepen our contemporary understanding and experience of leisure and work. Besides the analogy of "backing up" being tired, it is also in this way inadequate. It makes the process appear too easy and it too often results in a derivative use of the past. It also overemphasizes its importance by claiming we *must* back up. Such jaunts are rarely *necessary*. I will not make the claim that we *must* turn to Aristotle in order to understand leisure, but I will claim that it will be profoundly useful.

The more specific purpose of this chapter is to turn to Aristotle, who best describes the classical ideal of the leisured citizen. His work is therefore a natural and fitting place to begin. If we are to analyze our own experience of leisure, it is useful to confront that experience with its purest form. Again, the aim of this chapter is not to simply trace an idea, but to explore its various ins and outs with the purpose of achieving a fuller and critical understanding of it. It is less that Aristotle's definition and analysis of leisure has been the most historically impactful, and more that Aristotle offers the most complete and weighty account and defense of leisure.

The thesis of this chapter is that Aristotelian leisure is more than a mere activity or condition. It is a way of being—a specific orientation to the world—requiring equipment, education, and virtues. Aristotelian leisure is thus more than simply free time. Understood as free time, leisure becomes another kind of equipment necessary for other virtuous activities. However, it is my claim that Aristotle conceives of leisure as an end in itself and not simply a means to some other end. Other commentators miss this point, seemingly because of Aristotle's multiple usages of the term (*schole*). Aristotle does, in fact, use leisure as a precondition to virtue and a happy life, but this is not his only usage. He also uses it in a more substantive sense, in which leisure becomes the end of those virtues of which it previously seemed only to be a means.

When so understood, we see more clearly the challenge that leisure poses to modern life. We all seemingly agree that we do not have enough leisure. But this agreement is premised on an understanding of leisure as free time—as an empty vessel that can be filled with whatever activity we so choose. When we understand leisure as something more than free time, however, the challenge of leisure becomes more substantial, and also more imposing. For, if leisure is free time away from work, we can much more easily accommodate leisure. We can take various

measures to get ourselves away from work more often. This may not be an easy task to accomplish in all cases, but it is certainly a much simpler challenge than the one posed by a leisure that involves a fundamental re-orientation, and that requires a particular education and the development of a particular set of virtues.

This concept, Aristotelian leisure, is elusive for a number of reasons. First, Aristotle does not give a unitary and systematic treatment of leisure. His discussions are spread apart in his corpus, primarily in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, but also in places such as the *Metaphysics*. Part of the challenge of this section is to piece together these different discussions and to see if a coherent whole can be found by connecting the dots. Aristotelian leisure is also elusive because of the combination of how foreign the concept is to our ears and how natural it seems to be to the ears of the ancients. Of course, it is not as if we have zero grasp on the concept of leisure, but it is not as primary to us as it was to Aristotle and the other Greeks. Evidence for this is found in the language itself. As opposed to contemporary understandings of leisure, which chiefly portray it as the absence of work, it is the opposite in the Greek language: the word or work is *ascholia*, which means the absence of leisure—*scholia*. The relationship between the terms work and leisure has been inverted. Whereas we treat work as primary, and leisure is the negation of work, the Greeks treated leisure as primary, with work being, literally, the absence of leisure. This is a second source of its elusiveness: we have a largely negative understanding of leisure, which can be a roadblock to analyzing a more robust use of the term. But also, because of its "closeness" to Greek thinking, this is a possible explanation for the lack of systematic writing on the term. Perhaps it is less that someone like Aristotle was unclear about leisure, but took it for granted that his audience also had more than a negative understanding of the concept.

Contemporary Usages of 'Leisure'

The most common contemporary uses of leisure understand the term negatively. It is used "negatively" not in the sense of connotation, but that it is understood as the absence of work or other activity that is a direct means to some other end. There is little to no positive substance to leisure, it is simply a particular condition of *time*. It is not what we do in time, but it is the time we have away from work. Much of the work done in contemporary "Leisure Studies" bears this out. Here there are interesting questions of justice, in terms of what is owed in terms of time away from work,[25] and also interesting analyses of why we do not have as much leisure time as we would like,[26] but there is very little in terms of what should fill those hours of leisure time. In the very least, there is little suggestion that leisure time should be filled with inherently impressive and worthy activity. In the recent *Routledge Handbook of Leisure Studies*, there is an entire section of essays devoted to the "Big Seven" leisure pursuits. The "Big Seven" are: holidays, alcohol consumption, gambling, sex, television, drug use, and shopping.[27] If composed of anything, at least as it is presented within Leisure Studies, leisure is, by definition, unserious activity. In the same volume, there is an essay on "serious leisure," but the activity under examination is "groundhopping." Groundhopping is the attempt to visit soccer games in as many venues as possible. There is a club in London, called the "92 Club," whose membership is composed of those who have attended matches in each of the home stadiums that compose the top two tiers of English professional soccer. The activity is taken seriously by its participants and

[25] See, especially, Julie L. Rose, *Free Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[26] See, e.g., Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991).

[27] Tony Blackshaw, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Leisure Studies* (London: Routledge, 2013), 293–372.

it is therefore deemed "serious leisure."[28] According to most strains of Leisure Studies, then, leisure activities are simply various methods of achieving pleasure outside of work. There is no cultivation. It assumes that work and labor are the serious aspects of life, and leisure is simply an acknowledgment that we need breaks from labor to the end of "blowing off steam." The following begins from the intuition that this is not good enough. As I will argue, in its most common usages, "leisure" is better understood as what Aristotle calls "play." If leisure is worth studying at all, it must be more than the free time that we use to recover from work, which is our serious activity. If it is merely drunkenness and watching television, or their composite, it is no wonder that leisure was rejected by Locke in favor of the life of labor. In what follows, I will attempt to, first, distinguish between the different Greek terms commonly translated as "leisure" or something similar. Second, I will attempt a demonstration of the centrality of leisure to Aristotle's political thought, followed by a discussion of what I intend by the phrase "way of being." The rest of the chapter is devoted to a defense and elaboration of this interpretation of Aristotelian leisure.

Greek Usages of Leisure

Contrary to our own usage, the Greeks had a multifaceted understanding of leisure. We find its most thorough examination in Aristotle, but Aristotle was not the only Greek to value it. In much the same way the Eskimos are said to have had many words for snow, the Greeks had many words for leisure. Four of these will be examined and separated here, to the extent that they can be, at least: *diatribe*, *argia*, *diagoge*, and *schole*. But first, an initial warning needs to be issued: language is often messy. We should not expect these Greek terms to have completely

[28] Blackshaw, 443–55.

stable meanings that are not used to different effects in different contexts. We should also not expect them to be easily translated into English. Still, we can extrapolate some general commonalities about each, and these commonalities are important and often telling.

I will examine *diatribe* first. Literally, in its verbal form, it means "rubbing away" or to "wear out." Its literal meaning comes close to "leisure" in that it is understood as a wearing away of time. Of the Greek terms commonly translated as something near leisure, this is the closest word the Greeks had to our own usage. In its literal form, it is remarkably close to our literal meaning of "pastime." Lysias uses the term to undermine his critics, claiming they spent their *diatribe* on dice games and drinking.[29] On this, he very closely prefigures Locke, who accuses the leisured aristocrats of being truly interested in "cards, dice and drinking" (*Thoughts*, §207). This wasting of time is also the spirit of Thucydides' description of the Spartan lack of activity after deciding to attack Argos. Despite committing themselves, they delayed action and "wasted time," allowing Argos to make use of their alliance with Athens.[30]

However, *diatribe* has other, more positive, uses. It can also mean a conversation or study of something. It is here that we see its origin for the English word "diatribe." However, instead of being an abusive speech, it was originally meant as discourse more generally. We see this in the opening to the *Charmides*. After returning from Potidaea, Socrates sought his habitual conversations.[31] It can also be translated as a "haunt," and some translations of the *Charmides*

[29] Lysias, *Lysias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1930). 16.11.

[30] Thucydides, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, trans. Jeremy Mynott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). 5.82.

[31] Plato, *Charmides*, trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1986). 153a

render its opening as Socrates seeking his old "haunts," or "hangouts." Its meaning therefore extends beyond time and into place. It is not just free time, but the places where we spend that free time. The positive and negative connotations of *diatribe* are sometimes played upon. This is likely Plato's intent in the *Apology*. When discussing his options, such as paying a fine or imprisonment, Socrates rejects banishment from Athens. He does so because, like the Athenians, others will lose patience with his conversations.[32] The word used there is *diatribe*. Socrates is referring to his philosophical discussions, which suggests a higher use of the term, but it is couched in the context of those conversations being inherently irritating. It not only has the potential of wasting the interlocutor's time, but hinders and irks them.

Whereas *diatribe* has both positive and negative connotations, *argia* is mostly negative. It is closest to what we would call idleness. It can also be rendered as a lack of employment. In Plutarch's discussion of Draco's laws, *argia* is spoken of as a crime. Plutarch suggests that it is a minor crime, and that Solon was correct in repealing the laws of Draco, as want of employment should not carry the same penalty as homicide. Even so, Plutarch does not suggest that any positive connotation, only that those that are found to be idle should not be given the death penalty.[33] The term is found in Plato's *Theaetetus*, where it is also used with a negative connotation. There, it is an indolence that undermines one's physical condition and health.[34] Plato also uses the term in the *Laws*, and there its meaning seems to be neutral. The context

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[32] Plato, "Apology," in *Plato: Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1999). 37c.

[33] Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives Volume 1*, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough, trans. John Dryden (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 106–28.

[34] Plato, "Theaetetus," in *Plato: Theaetetus. Sophist*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1921). 153b.

suggests that it is a freedom from business or occupation. It is therefore the lack of employment described above, but seemingly without the implication that the person without that employment is lazy or slothful. Instead, it is used to describe the time otherwise employed persons have away from their occupation. In this way, *argia* can sometimes be used as a synonym for *diatribe*, but it is even less substantive than *diatribe*. Instead of being "pastime," which can imply a particular activity, Plato's use of *argia* in the *Laws* is of leisure *time*. It is the empty vessel of time that was spoken of before, and therefore complements *diatribe*. Together, they encompass most contemporary usages of leisure. *Diatribe* is leisure in the way we speak of a particular pastime, such as watching baseball, and *argia*, in its neutral sense, refers to the time we have away from occupation. *Argia* is closest in meaning to what those, such as Rose,[35] who make claims about whether and how much leisure time we should be afforded.

Diagoge is the closest approximation to *schole*—the term that will become the focus of the following. *Diagoge* figures largely in Aristotle's *Politics*, especially in Book VIII when discussing education. Literally, *diagoge* is a "carrying through." Its literal meaning is therefore loosely related to *diatribe*. And like *diatribe*, it carries both positive and potentially negative connotations. As a "passing of time," its meaning can vary depending upon what is used to fill that time. However, it is largely used in a positive sense. It typically implies a cultured activity, or even the education of those cultured activities. Also like *diatribe*, it commonly has a substantive meaning beyond simply the absence of occupation. But whereas *diatribe* usually means conversation, *diagoge* is often associated with noble practice, such as the learning of music. In the *Politics*, Aristotle argues for education that goes beyond what is required for material success. We should learn to

[35] Rose, *Free Time*.

write and draw, not just so we can write business contracts, but also so that we can study and appreciate the beauty of bodies (*Politics* 1338a37-1338b4).[36] This is one reason why music education is important to Aristotle. Learning to draw and write has much utilitarian value, but there is less of that to be found in music. It is inherently noble in that it is not as easy to be exploited or used for some other gain (1338a30-37). It is here that it overlaps with *schole*.

However, there are some differences. *Diagoge* is almost always associated with amusement in a way that *schole* is not. It may be a cultivated amusement, but it is amusement nonetheless. Aristotle links *diagoge* with *paidia*, which is most often translated as either "play" or "amusement." As we will see, *schole* is often quite serious for Aristotle. It is enjoyable, but it is not necessarily amusing.

It is for these reasons that the translation of *diagoge* as "pastime" is problematic. Contemporary usage of pastime rarely includes the sense of cultivation associated with *diagoge*. A cultured pastime is possible, but it is unlikely to be described as such. Someone who collects baseball cards has a pastime. Someone who regularly attends the opera is much less likely to be described as having a "pastime." There is certainly some overlap in the concepts, but as is commonly the case with translating, it is all too often misleading. Thankfully, many translations of the *Politics*, such as that of Lord, include footnotes or other explanations that help the reader make necessary distinctions in meaning.[37] Still, something like "cultured leisure" would be more precise. Contemporary usage of leisure implies amusement of some kind, if it implies anything beyond time outside of occupation. Of course, we would then have to adjust the traditional

[36] References to and quotes from the *Politics* come from the following edition: Aristotle, *Aristotle's "Politics": Second Edition*, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2013).

[37] Aristotle, 245.

translation of *schole*, but for reasons that will be brought out in what follows, this too is problematic and is worthy of rethinking.

The overlap between *diagoge* and *schole* is such that they are often treated as synonyms. Aristotle often uses them side-by-side in the *Politics*, making this seem even more reasonable. A closer look, however, demonstrates the need to keep them separate. In Book VIII, Aristotle separates the different ends of education. Education for the sake of leisure (*schole*) is deemed the highest education. Aristotle then seems to then transition into using *diagoge* from this point onwards. For instance, when distinguishing between the various kinds of music education, the final, and highest, kind of music education to the end of "pastime" (*Politics* 1339a25-26). This suggests that Aristotle is using the terms interchangeably. However, we need to examine more closely the first use of *diagoge*. Immediately upon saying that happiness is for the leisured and not those that are occupied, Aristotle says, therefore, education should aim at *diagogei scholen*. This particular use is important. Both words are used as nouns, but *diagoge* is used so as to modify *schole*. Aristotle is therefore referring to a particular kind of leisure. Translating this is difficult, but it is something like "cultured leisure." What it does is separate leisure from its other forms. As becomes important later in the chapter, Aristotle eventually separates leisure from politics. This was an important contribution of Aristotle's. Previous accounts included politics as a leisured activity, since it required time away from occupation. But as will be discussed in what follows, Aristotle denies that politics is leisured because it too is for some other sake. What Aristotle is attempting to do here, then, is refer to a specific kind of leisure that is separate from politics. Though he seems to lump "pastime" and "leisure" together, he is actually referring to a specific kind of leisure found in cultural pursuits such as music, which can be enjoyed for their own sakes, as opposed to political or military pursuits that, while traditionally considered

"leisured," were done for some other sake. Thus, when Aristotle refers to *diagoge* in the remaining sections of the *Politics*, it is not because he thinks the terms are interchangeable. Even when *schole* is not used alongside *diagoge*, it is a particular form of *schole* that he has in mind. It is perhaps best, then, to think of *schole* as the peak form of *diagoge*. "Pastime" carries with it a kind of cultivation, but it is often of the amusing variety. Meanwhile, Aristotle's account of *schole* is pleasant, but it is, at the same time, serious.

There is some disagreement about the role of class in Aristotle's conception of leisure. Sylvester, for instance, argues that Aristotle's form of leisure can be best explained as an aristocratic "prejudice."[38] This idea will be more fully addressed, and discarded, below, but *diagoge* is closer to Sylvester's portrayal than is *schole*. "Pastime" has more of an emphasis upon freedom from occupation than does *schole*, and it is more elitist in the sense that the activities that it implies are typically associated with the aristocracy. It commonly involves the arts and letters, and is typically not associated with the kind of leisure that is associated with politics. As we see, this component is important for Aristotle. Still, Aristotle seeks to elevate the concept even more because of its association with amusement. *Diagoge* is an amusement that only the aristocracy have access to. *Schole*, as we will see, goes beyond this. It implies freedom from some kinds of occupation, but it also incorporates a seriousness that *diagoge* cannot capture.

The final use of "leisure" is *schole*, and the attempt to explain its meaning composes the remainder of this chapter. At times, *diagoge* will be discussed, but as explained, its usage in Aristotle's *Politics* is as a modifier of *schole*. As such, any discussion of "pastime" is included as part of the meaning of *schole*, rather than as a separate concept. It should be noted that

[38] Charles Sylvester, "The Classical Idea of Leisure: Cultural Ideal or Class Prejudice?," *Leisure Sciences* 21, no. 1 (March 1999): 3–16.

Aristotle's use of it is more consistent and specific than other Greeks. Xenophon, for instance, tends to treat it as a synonym for some of the other terms described above. This may make the focus on *schole* here seem problematic, but it is better understood as an advantage. It helps demonstrate that Aristotle has something like a "theory" of leisure. Even though he does occasionally use the term in a looser sense, it is more often employed, especially in when it is treated more thoroughly, in a specific and consistent direction.

Centrality of Leisure in Aristotle's Thought

Now that we have separated some Greek usages of leisure that Aristotle had access to, I will next explore the role of *schole* in his political thought. Doing so will give context, but also give our first handhold. As becomes clear, to discuss Aristotelian leisure is not to pick out some minor concept in Aristotle's corpus. It is central to both his political and ethical thinking. Politics and ethics, on the surface at least, are intimately connected: "the end appears to be the same for human beings both in common and privately, and there must necessarily be the same defining principle for the best man and the best regime" (*Politics* 1334a12-14). There are, however, some reasons to doubt that this relationship between the best man and the best regime, or citizen, is as closely connected as Aristotle repeatedly claims them to be. It is true that virtues are needed in both cases, but the virtues required are not the same, and those that are needed in both cases are needed in different ways. In one of the comparative catalogs of virtue, Aristotle names courage, justice, and prudence as necessary to the good regime, and justice, prudence, and soundness as virtues of the good man (1323b34-36). There is some overlap, with justice and prudence required of both, but they are not identical.[39] Most interestingly, courage is required of the regime, but not of the individual.

[39] On this point, see Thomas L. Pangle, *Aristotle's Teaching in the "Politics"* (Chicago ; London: University

Also problematic is the fact that some individuals, while being good for the regime, may not themselves be impressive examples of human flourishing. When it comes to the question of who should compose a democracy, Aristotle clearly prefers a democracy composed of farmers rather than urban artisans and merchants (1318b10-11). The artisan and merchant's life is "ignoble and contrary to virtue" (1328a40-41). At this point in the argument, we know that a democracy based on farming is best, and that a democracy composed of artisans and merchants is not, as those classes lack virtue and are actively vicious. We expect Aristotle to conclude the argument by giving a pastoral or bucolic account of farming life, and to praise farmers and their virtue. But this is not the argument we get. Instead, Aristotle argues that farmers are preferable because they are not actively vicious in the way artisans and merchants are, and because they lack the leisure and monetary interest in holding too often assemblies (*Politics* 1318b10-16). The defense of an agrarian democracy is therefore a negative one. It is not that farmers have virtue, but it is precisely because they lack it, or, more precisely, because they lack the means of attaining either virtue or vice, that they are aptly suited for a democracy. Whereas urban artisans and merchants are actively vicious and have the means and interest in holding frequent assemblies, and presumably thereby introduce instability, the farmer merely will not damage an otherwise well-constructed regime.

What this does is take another jab at the supposedly perfect correspondence between the good regime and individual. In the case of a well-formed democracy, which is properly agrarian, its occupants lack both virtue and leisure, both of which are required for the good life. It may be objected that, elsewhere, Aristotle argues that farmers, while necessary to all regimes, will not

Of Chicago Press, 2013), 230.

compose the citizenry in the ideal one (1328b40-1329a2). This is true, but there are serious doubts about how practicable the ideal regime is, even in Aristotle's eyes. Furthermore, Aristotle is still very concerned with the goodness and improvement of the non-ideal regimes, such as democracy. If there is a one to one correspondence between the good regime and the good individual, then, the only possible place for that correspondence is in the ideal regime, and not in any actual and existing ones.

Likewise, another problem with this supposed correspondence is found in Aristotle's comparison of the good citizen and the good life in Book III. Aristotle agrees that there can and will be overlap between the two, but that they cannot be the same (1286b29-34). The reason for this is that what it means to be a good citizen varies by the type of regime. The different regimes have different understandings of the good, and what it means to participate and contribute to each respective regime will also vary. The good citizen, then, is, to this extent, relative. What it means to be a good individual, however, is not relative and does not vary. Therefore, the good citizen and the good individual cannot be identical, since one varies and the other does not. The only possible place for such a perfect correspondence would be in the ideal regime.

But, again, to say that there is not a perfect correspondence is not to say that there is no correspondence at all. Even if the perfect democratic citizen is not identical to the aristocratic, and even if both deviate from the good in some ways, they still have the possibility of sharing in the good life. As mentioned above, there are virtues common to both regimes and citizens. And, importantly for this present inquiry, leisure is also a proper aim of both. Though there will be complications explained later in the chapter, the virtues aimed at leisure are required for both the ideal regime and life (*Politics* 1334a12-16). This issue forms one of Aristotle's most trenchant critiques of the Spartans. The Spartans, while having many virtues, including some of those that

make leisure possible, are not capable of being at leisure. They mistake the means for the ends. Because they have the virtues of courage and endurance, they are especially apt at war and therefore at gaining and keeping the means of being at leisure. The problem is that, while "appearing to be good men at war," they are "servile when remaining at peace and being at leisure" (1334a39-10). The obsession with the virtues of courage and endurance blind them to the true end of all that activity—which is leisure. It is not easy to be at leisure, and it requires virtues of its own, including moderation and philosophy. This point becomes crucial later.

So, despite the sometimes conflict between the good regime and the good life, it does not apply to leisure. Both require it. This leads to the final and weightiest illustration of the centrality of leisure to Aristotle's thought: the ideal regime is constructed with the creation and maintenance of leisure as one of its primary goals. Existent democracies, even those composed of farmers, as preferred by Aristotle, fail to live up to the ideal political community. This is because farmers, though not actively depraved like those that form other kinds of democracy, do not have the means of acquiring virtue, especially the highest virtues (*Politics* 1238b40-1239a2). Though there is a problem with seeing Aristotelian leisure merely as one form of necessary equipment, it is because they lack leisure in this sense that they cannot acquire these virtues or regularly participate in politics, and it is for this reason that an agrarian democracy is not the highest expression of the political community. Ironically, it is his lack of leisure that makes the farmer a worthy member of existent democracies, and also his lack of leisure that prevents him from being a citizen in the ideal regime.

In many important ways, the ideal regime is set up to avoid the pitfalls of the route of the Spartans. While being impressive in some ways, namely warfare and ruling over others, the Spartans do not recognize and are incapable of the strength necessary to cultivate leisure. The

purpose of war is not more war, but peace (*Politics* 1333a31-36), and the purpose of rule is not the rule over the conquered or slavish, but the rule of other free persons (1333b26-29). In the end, we see that the ideal regime is the ruling in turn amongst a relatively large group of citizens. The size of the citizenry is larger than an aristocracy but smaller than a democracy (1332a33-35). Importantly, the size of the body of citizens is limited to the number of people that can be leisured. All other inhabitants of the city support this leisure through labor. The citizens have the leisure to both engage in politics and cultivate and practice the virtues. The precise arrangement will be explored in more detail, but the ideal regime is both egalitarian and inegalitarian in this way. It is inegalitarian in the sense that a large group of inhabitants are precluded from citizenship and the way of life that they themselves make possible, at least in the material sense. But it is also egalitarian in the sense that citizenry is larger than an aristocracy and seemingly constructed to be as large as possible without undermining the true end of both politics and human life. If it were to expand, it could no longer be dedicated to that end, as the citizens would be unleisured and thereby incapable of the highest virtues and also thereby incapable of ruling in the greatest fashion.[40] Aristotle's ideal regime is both idealistic and tragic in this way. It is idealistic in that it aims at the highest goods and for the most people, and it is tragic in that it is at least partly built upon many others not having access to these goods.

We can therefore take this point about the ideal regime being built on the backs of slaves too far. It is certainly true that the ruling class is supported by a large class of workers and slaves, but it is only supported by them in the material sense. It is the ruling class's virtue that makes the city worthwhile, and while that virtue owes something to the material equipment provided by

[40] The physical size of the city, and not just the number of citizens, is also linked to creating optimal conditions for leisure (1326b28-32).

the other classes, it is only the citizens, by means of their leisure, that make the city great and worth having. If we accept Aristotle's assumptions that leisure is required for the best life, and that, because of natural scarcity, not everyone can have leisure, his creation of a relatively large and equal class of citizens is as egalitarian as we could expect. Of course, Aristotle's assumptions are not without controversy. Also, Aristotle seems to recognize the possibility of technology creating a world in which there is neither master nor slave (*Politics* 1253b33-1254a1). It is not sufficiently clear to say that Aristotle finds this to be a real possibility—he certainly does not suggest it is possible during his own time—but the idea of a future without scarcity is an idea Aristotle was capable of having, even if he did not think it was, immediately, possible. Still, no matter if we find Aristotle's ideal regime to be just or unjust, egalitarian or inegalitarian, the point remains: the creation of leisure and the cultivation of leisured citizens that are capable of maintaining a political community devoted to leisure is the center and primary function of Aristotle's ideal regime.

Leisure as a Precondition

Why leisure is important to Aristotle's corpus is clearer, immediately at least, than what leisure precisely is. The most widely understood meaning of Aristotelian leisure is as a means to attaining the virtues—whether those virtues are moral or intellectual. Here it is best described as a *pre*-condition. For instance, consider the following passage from Marshall: "Agriculture is a form of life that among all actual occupations, comes closest probably to the ideal, since the life of fruit gathering, hunting, and fishing - because of the refractory character of actual nature - does not leave us enough time for the leisure required for the fuller life of man."[41] Leisure,

[41] John S. Marshall, "Aristotle and the Agrarians.," *Review of Politics; Notre Dame, Ind.* 9 (January 1, 1947): 354.

understood here, is a particular form of emptiness. It is a negative condition that is marked by the absence of work. Of course, leisure in this sense can remain important. As Marshall correctly notes, leisure is necessary for the "fuller life of man." It is a precondition, but a particularly important one. Without it, we can neither attain nor express the virtues that mark the higher aims and purposes of human life.

We get a similar account in Destrée. For him, Aristotelian leisure is the "condition for the possibility of the exercise of those activities which implement the goods that are desired for their own sake."[42] Again, Destrée is correct to find this condition important, as it is the "fundamental principle" of Aristotle's ideal regime. However, Aristotelian leisure remains a means to the higher goods, rather than itself being the end to which other means aim. It is equivalent to a kind of equipment. On this account, the ideal regime requires leisure in the same way it requires food and weapons.

This interpretation of Aristotelian leisure certainly captures part of its meaning. Beginning with moral virtue, we learn in Book VII that farmers are to be excluded from citizenship in the ideal regime. The reason for this is a "want of leisure both with a view to the creation of virtue and with a view toward political activities" (1328b40-1329a3). Farmers are incapable of attaining many of the moral virtues because they seemingly do not have sufficient time away from their work. Moving to intellectual virtue, we see in the *Metaphysics*, for instance, that Aristotle finds the beginning of intellectual activity to correspond with the beginnings of leisure: "when all such arts had been built up, those among the kinds of knowledge directed at neither pleasure nor necessity were discovered, and first in those places where there was leisure.

[42] Pierre Destrée, "Education, Leisure, and Politics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. Marguerite Deslauriers and Pierre Destree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 309.

It is for this reason that the mathematical arts were first constructed in the neighborhood of Egypt, for there the tribe of priests was allowed to live in leisure" (*Metaphysics* 981b21-25).[43] Aristotle uses leisure in this instance as a precondition to mathematics. Connecting this to his claim in the *Metaphysics* that human beings naturally desire to know (980b21), it seems that leisure is perhaps the most crucial precondition to the development of non-utilitarian intellectual activity. The desire to know is naturally part of us, but we are unable to explore fully this desire when we are preoccupied with securing the means to other desires. We utilize practical knowledge when building tools to secure our basic needs, but it is not until we have freedom from labor that we are allowed to gain knowledge outside of those concerned with either pleasure or necessity. Thus, Aristotle seems to understand leisure, at times, as a precondition—largely to either moral or intellectual virtue.

Yet, this is not the end of the story. It is not that the account of Aristotelian leisure as a precondition is simply incorrect. But it only captures half of the picture. Likely because of the modern conception of leisure, which tends to understand it simply as either the absence of work or simple idleness, most commentators are blind to the other half of leisure. This other half is more than a negation of labor. It is an affirmation of a particular way of being that itself requires virtue, material means, and an education. Furthermore, this way of being is to be sought after as an end and not merely a means to something else.

[43] Quotations from the *Metaphysics* come from the following edition: Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Santa Fe, NM: Green Lion Press, 1999). See also Joseph Owens, "Aristotle on Leisure," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy; Edmonton, Alta.* 11, no. 4 (December 1, 1981): 715.

Heidegger on Attunement

My operationalization of "way of being" also shares much overlap with Heidegger's notion of attunement. In the lecture course that is now published as *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger begins defining "attunement" in much the same way I attempt to define leisure: by first separating it from common notions. First, like my usage of leisure, an attunement is not a mere state or condition. But whereas the common usage of leisure is of a state in relation to time, "attunement" is often used as a state related to emotions. It is this usage from which Heidegger wishes to separate. An attunement is an awakening, and "is not something that one can simply undertake like picking a flower."[44] Instead, it is sticky and constant. Since it is not an emotional state, it also not a mere side-effect. An attunement is not our reaction to something, but it itself determines everything else.[45] Said another way, an attunement conditions and determines our reactions to things, as opposed to an emotional state, which is a reaction to those things. For instance, if we experience a death in the family, grief is an emotional state that occurs because of that death. An attunement, meanwhile, is what determines our reaction to that death in the first place. It "always already" exists. Our attunement, therefore, determines our "manner and way." Here, Heidegger plays with the word *Weise*, which is commonly translated into English as either "manner" or "way." In German, *Weise* also carries with it a sense of "tune" or "melody."

Heidegger goes so far as to claim attunement to be the "*fundamental way in which Dasein is as Dasein*."[46] Heidegger famously argues that Dasein is not a being that simply exists with

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[44] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 69.

[45] Heidegger, 67.

[46] Heidegger, 67.

particular faculties and goes on to interact with its environment with those faculties. Instead, Heidegger radicalizes and generalizes the phenomenologist position that all perception is perception *of something*. Dasein does not objectively interact with its environment, but "always already" brings something with it. This "it" that Dasein brings is an attunement. For sure, our attunement can and will change, but we are never without it. We are already "disposed" in particular ways.

Heidegger's notion of attunement is helpful in understanding Aristotelian leisure, and encapsulates much of what I wish to say in calling it a "way of being." As a way of being, leisure is not a condition out of which we can slip in and out. Attunement, on Heidegger's account, always involves the "whole."[47] Therefore, I am not leisured the moment I leave work. Because it is more than a condition, it cannot be understood in terms of a strict parsing of time. An attunement or way of being sticks with you without much regard for coincidence. A way of being is not immune to adaptation, but it does not operate like a switch that can turned on and off. Aristotelian leisure, then, is not determined by a work schedule, but instead does the determining. As such, we cannot strictly delineate particular activities as being proper or improper to leisure. Instead, we can say that someone did or did not practice that activity with a leisured attunement. This is what is meant in the discussion of music education at the end of this chapter. The appreciation of music is not, alone, enough for leisure, even if we would describe it as such in ordinary usage. Instead, Aristotle separates different forms of music appreciation. One of these forms assumes the way of being, or attunement, of leisure, and the others do not.

[47] Heidegger, 283–84.

One way in which the following separates from Heidegger's notion is the inclusion of virtue. Heidegger's account of attunement does not explicitly exclude virtue, but Heidegger never mentions or hints that virtue is a necessary or even possible part of attunement. In what follows, however, virtue is a necessary component of my use of "way of being." This keeps the chapter, as well as the rest of the project, from being in complete conformity with Heideggerian language and terminology, but this is not a goal of the project anyway. Heidegger's insightful commentary on attunement is merely a useful lens through which to view the category in which Aristotelian leisure resides. Because Aristotle's "theory" of leisure, while in keeping with some parts of contemporary usage, separates itself so radically in other ways, explaining leisure as a way of being, or "attunement," helps disclose that Aristotelian leisure is not only distinct from our understanding, but is best understood as belonging in a different category.

Leisure as a "Way of Being"

Paradoxically, leisure is both a means to achieving virtue while also being the ultimate end of those virtues (some of them at least). Coming to grips with both senses is our only way of getting to a complete picture of this crucially important Aristotelian concept. The task of this section is to investigate the various clues we are given, primarily in the *Politics*, in order to defend this fuller understanding of leisure as a way of being. There are a number of components to describing something as a "way of being" that are not commonly included in everyday usage of "leisure." First, a way of being is a relatively durable comportment. *Scholê*, in Aristotle's corpus, is primary in its relationship with work. Contemporary usage of "leisure" assumes the opposite. As such, leisure is often treated as a diversion: it is not that for which we aim our life, but it is the remainder after our work is completed for the day or week. This gives leisure a strict temporal boundary, and one that is determined by occupation.

What I intend by "way of being," then, is a durable turn, or comportment, of the soul. We should expect durable comportments to themselves have their own requirements. For instance, they likely require their own excellences and, perhaps, material means in order to support them. And this is precisely what Aristotle describes. If leisure were something less than a way of being, if it were merely a diversion from one's more serious endeavors, then enumerating virtues, and even organizing the ideal political regime around it, would be profoundly odd.

Finally, if leisure is a way of being, we should expect it to be closed off *from*, and closed off *to*, other ways of being. Leisure as a temporal state is a condition out of which we can maneuver in and out. Separate ways of being assume different ends, and those ends cannot always be consistent. As Aristotle tells us, different political regimes aim at different ideas of the good. A regime aimed at success in warfare, as he sometimes accuses Sparta of being, has a different idea of the good than, say, his ideal regime aimed at leisure. The Spartans are incapable of being leisured, not because warfare takes up all of their time, but because they have a different understanding of the good. Furthermore, these different and often exclusive aims assume different virtues, as will be discussed below. With the above in mind, I define "way of being" as a durable comportment of the soul toward a particular end that, as such, requires virtues of character, an education, material means, and a supportive political environment.

Though this way of defining Aristotelian leisure may seem abstracted from Aristotle's own language, "way of being" is not alien to Aristotle's thought. In fact, it is one way to describe, and is consistent with, the distinction Aristotle famously makes between *energeia* and *kinesis*. Everyday usage of "leisure" treats it as a kind of *kinesis*, as a potential for something else. For most commentators, leisure can accurately be described as a precondition and potentiality

for developing the virtues. Instead, I find leisure to be better described as an *energeia*, or activity that finds its end within itself (*Metaphysics* 1048b19-30, 1050a4-10). Leisure is an *energeia* in much the same way that *eudaimonia* is an *energeia*. It is not a becoming on the way to something else, but is a durable, continued, and complete activity. Describing leisure as a complete activity also has the advantage of signifying that it is not a lack of motion. Leisure, just like *energeia*, is not rest, but has its own kind of work. What separates it from other forms of motion is that there is no end of its motion outside of itself. In plainer language, leisure is not to be understood as rest from work, or even an absence of work that allows for the development of virtue, but is an activity that implies and requires the use of excellences such as intellectual virtue. It is not the potential for virtue, but the actuality and practice of many of those virtues.

In previous sections, the place of *schole* in Aristotle's political thought was determined, other attempts at explaining *schole* were discussed and found wanting, and a general theory of Aristotelian leisure was outlined. We must now look more closely and see if this theory of *schole* as a way of being is fitting. The most thorough treatment of leisure begins in Book VII, Chapter 14, which is fittingly the first chapter in Aristotle's turn toward the subject of education. In this section, Aristotle directs us through a series of divisions. The first divide is between the two parts of the soul: the part capable of reason and the part capable of obeying reason. The part of the soul that has reason is itself split; the two kinds of reason being active reason and "reason of the studying sort" (*Politics* 1333a24-26). After this analysis of the soul, Aristotle tells us that "life as a whole" is also split into a series of divisions: occupation and leisure, war and peace, and the useful and the noble (1333a31-33). In each case, both in the divisions of the soul and those of life, one of the two is to be preferred over the other. Aristotle gives us a clear rubric to making this judgment: the inferior is for the sake of the superior (1333a22-24, 33-36).

With this standard in mind, we are told that the part of the soul with reason is superior to the other, leisure is superior to occupation, peace superior to war, and the noble superior to the useful and necessary. In some sense, this is obvious. It may be clear in the abstract that peace is to be preferred over war. However, in practice, the relationship becomes murky. This is especially true in light of the context in which Aristotle couches these claims, which is an analysis of the education proper to the best regime. For even if we all, or most of us, recognize that peace is superior to war, we nevertheless do not always *act* if that were true, and we surely are not all educated as such. Aristotle appears to have something similar in mind when discussing the example of other Greek cities whose legislators did not direct their cities to the proper ends of politics and human life. Instead of organizing the city with the best things and the concomitant virtues in mind, they are "inclined in crude fashion toward those which are held to be useful and of a more aggrandizing sort" (1333b5-10). This passage also seems to reveal what these "useful" rather than noble things are at the level of the city. The useful, by being aggrandizing, suggests an obsession with commerce and mastery of others. Mastery over others is a recognizable symptom of this problem, because, as Aristotle tells us, "rule over free persons is nobler and accompanied to a greater extent by virtue than ruling in the spirit of a master" (1333b26-28). The cities that prioritize war and domination necessarily express a mistaken set of priorities. The means come to be seen as the end, and there ensues a never-ending quest for greater wealth and mastery over others.

Thus, though Aristotle's claim that war is inferior to peace may be seen as a mere platitude, Aristotle's elaboration later in the chapter shows us that he is pointing to a real danger. For, indeed, it is a rare city that can be effective in securing its safety and interests without shrinking into a merely commercial and imperial society: "Most cities of this sort [that initially

aim toward peace and leisure] preserve themselves when at war, but once having acquired [imperial] rule they come to ruin; they lose their edge, like iron, when they remain at peace" (1334a5-10). On why cities "lose their edge," Aristotle explains that the "legislator has not educated them to be capable of being at leisure" (1334a10-11). This is one of our first hints that leisure is something bigger than a precondition to the moral and intellectual virtues. It itself requires an education and a number of virtues. It is not a simple state, but it is something that is accomplished.

Equipment and Virtue for Leisure

Leisure is an accomplishment, and it is the end and purpose of both equipment and many of the virtues. As outlined above, this is an important component of a "way of being." We first see leisure as itself an end of equipment in Aristotle's discussion of the quality and quantity of territory to be had in the ideal regime:

> As far as its being of a certain quality, it is clear that everyone would praise the territory and is the most self-sufficient. That which bears every sort of thing is of necessity such, for self-sufficiency is having everything available and being in need of nothing. In extent and size the territory should be large enough so that the inhabitants are able to live at leisure in the fashion of free men and at the same time with moderation. (*Politics* 1326b27-32)

Though Aristotle does not want fertile enough land that the temptation to immoderation is too great, he does want enough so that it is unnecessary to work tirelessly in order to acquire life's necessities. What this does is demonstrate that leisure is not simply one of many forms of equipment needed for virtue, but that Aristotle also conceives of leisure as itself being the motivation for acquiring property and a particular standard of life. Though this does not, by itself, become a sufficient argument for leisure as a way of being, it does start the work of showing leisure as more than both the absence of work and the means of virtue. It does not

reveal completely the point being made, but it does give us a peek—an indication of the possibility of something more.

More important to the thesis that Aristotelian leisure is best understood as a way of being rather than a precondition is that virtues are themselves required for leisure, and those virtues are different from those required for other ways of life. The notion that virtue is required for leisure initially appears backwards. If asked the relationship between leisure and virtue, most would say that leisure may be useful for some of the virtues—especially intellectual virtues. Indeed, most commentaries on Aristotle focus on this point.[48] But to say that virtue is required for leisure is a bit perplexing. And yet, this is Aristotle's claim: "Since the end appears to be the same for human beings both in common and privately, and there must necessarily be the same defining principle for the best man and the best regime, it is evident that the virtues directed to leisure should be present" (*Politics* 1334a12-15). Leisure is one of the ends of both the good regime and the good life, and the virtues should be directed at leisure in both cases. The conclusion immediately previous to this is that wise legislators should educate their citizens so that they be "capable of leisure" (1334a5-11). Many cities are successful in warfare, including to the extent of subjecting neighboring cities to their rule. These cities therefore have the virtues that are necessary for war. However, once in peace, they "lose their edge, like iron." Now, at this point, we could say that the virtues necessary for leisure are merely to the end of preservation. We can imagine a city that turns soft once they have obtained the goods of imperial rule. If this were the extent of Aristotle's point, it would be unfair to say that the virtues are to the end of

[48] See, e.g., J. L. Stocks, "ΣΧΟΛΗ," *The Classical Quarterly* 30, no. 3/4 (1936): 177–87; Robert C. Bartlett, "The 'Realism' of Classical Political Science," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 2 (1994): 393; Destrée, "Education, Leisure, and Politics," 309.

leisure, as it would seem the virtues are directed toward preservation. The section immediately following, however, tells us that war is for the sake of peace and occupation for the sake of leisure. Furthermore, the distinction between war and occupation is blurred, with leisure also suggested as the proper end of war (1334a5). As such, the virtues required for peace and leisure are more than simply a means to preserving oneself and one's city.

This point is further seen by a closer look at the specific virtues that Aristotle claims are "useful with a view to leisure" (*Politics* 1334a15-16). The virtues required are split in two: some virtues are needed indirectly, and others are needed directly. The virtues needed indirectly are those that are required for occupation. In order to be at leisure, whether at the level of the city or the individual, occupation is required. For instance, a city needs to protect itself from invasion if it is to have the security required for leisure. At the level of the individual, endurance is needed to secure the means of leisure. If I am to be at leisure, I need to "endure" the work that allows for leisure. This pair, courage and endurance, are the virtues required for the occupation that ultimately serves leisure.

There is another pair of virtues, moderation and justice, that are required both indirectly and directly. The moderation and justice that are exercised to secure the means of leisure, while being the same virtues, take on a different flavor when practiced indirectly versus directly. When practiced indirectly, you have the virtues that are exemplified by the Spartans. When at war, the Spartans are both moderate and just, but it is war that makes them this way (1334a26-28). The extreme circumstances make it so they cannot survive if they do not practice both of these virtues. One does not make a free choice to be moderate or just in warfare. You simply do not have the opportunity to practice vice.

Aside from the moderation and justice required indirectly for leisure—that is, the moderation and justice required for war—there is a form of these virtues that is required directly for leisure. It is the direct forms of moderation and justice that the Spartans do not have (1334a40-1334b5). These direct forms are what keep leisured cities from overextending themselves. Without them, a city such as Sparta becomes "arrogant" (1334a28). They enjoy the success they earn in warfare and begin to treat that success and its resulting spoils as the true end of warfare. The moderation and justice practiced in peace is therefore the more difficult form to cultivate (1334a27-34). When surrounded by wealth and success, it is difficult to remain moderate. Success has a way of tempting cities into a lack of moderation. The lack of moderation also begets injustice. If a city uses its wealth immoderately, it will need to obtain more. The tried and true way of obtaining more is through the imperial rule over others.

For these reasons, Aristotle nearly goes so far as to suggest that the moderation and justice exercised in warfare are not, in fact, true examples of those virtues: "war compels them to be just and behave with moderation, while the enjoyment of good fortune and being at leisure in peacetime tend to make arrogant" (1334a26-28). And later: "it is disgraceful not to be capable of using good things, it is still more so to be incapable of using them in leisure, but to be seen to be good men while occupied and at war but servile when remaining at peace and being at leisure" (1334a36-40). In a sense, it is *more* vicious to be the Spartans, who only practice the virtues of moderation and justice when at war than a city that never practices these virtues at all. The true test of these virtues is whether and to what extent they are practiced when in peace and leisure—when one is not compelled to practice them, but when one has a choice to practice them, and practice them for the right reasons. This matches up with one of Aristotle's definitions of virtue in the *Nichomachean Ethics*:

> with the things that come about as a result of the virtues, just because they themselves are a certain way it is not the case that one does them justly or temperately, but only if the one doing them also does them being a certain way: if one does them first of all knowingly, and next, having chosen them and chosen for their own sake, and third, being in a stable condition and not able to be moved all the way out of it. (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a29-35)[49]

The Spartan forms of moderation and justice fail at least two components of the rubric: having chosen them and chosen them for their own sake. The Spartans, Aristotle notes, only practiced the "virtues" under compulsion and did not choose them. And to the extent that they did choose them, they did not choose them for their own sake. Had they done so, they would have been able to continue practicing them in peace and leisure. Therefore, not only do some of the virtues take on a different flavor when practiced in war and occupation versus peace and leisure, it is peace and leisure that provides the true test of those virtues. If only practiced during the compulsion of war, they are perhaps not virtues at all.

What the Spartans seem to miss most of all is the crowning virtue of philosophy, which is the primary virtue that is directly required for leisure without also being required for war and occupation (*Politics* 1334a23-25). The lack of other, moral, virtues is in large part a lack of understanding. They come to understand the goods they gain from warfare to be greater than both the having of the virtues and being leisured (1334b1-5). In order to be truly leisured, we therefore require this virtue of philosophy. Notice that we do not need philosophy because it is the proper activity of leisure. That is not Aristotle's claim here. Instead, it seems we need philosophy in order to come to the intellectual recognition that the purpose of war and occupation is peace and leisure. We do not need this virtue when it comes to succeeding at these

[49] Quotations from the *Nicomachean Ethics* refer to the following edition: Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newbury, MA: Focus, 2002).

means to peace and leisure, but for rightly understanding peace and leisure as their proper end. On this, I largely agree with Solmsen and Lord that Aristotle likely intends "philosophy" here in a broad sense.[50] Given the later treatment of music as, in some forms at least, proper to the life of leisure (1339b11-20), Aristotle cannot mean only the philosopher is capable of leisure, especially since the discussion is of virtues held at the level of city, not just those of some of its inhabitants. However, I will not broaden it as widely as Lord who argues for it in the sense of "culture."[51] This is because it remains a virtue in this context, and this suggests more than a collective interest in the fine arts, but also an intellectual *aptitude*. Aristotle certainly does not require aptitude to the level of the philosopher, but, as suggested above, it implies the ability to recognize that war is for the sake of peace, and occupation is for the sake of leisure.[52] Regardless of the precise level of specificity that Aristotle intends by using philosophy as a virtue in this context, the larger point remains: leisure itself requires virtues, both of the moral and intellectual variety.

Where does this discussion of virtues required for leisure get us in terms of the final thesis of leisure as way of being? Quite far, I think. It shows that leisure is far more substantial than the mere absence of work. It is difficult to achieve and it is the proper end of the above virtues, whether directly or indirectly. It is not whenever I *happen* to be free from occupation, but is something I *cultivate*. If leisure were merely free time, or even also including the material

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[50] Friedrich Solmsen, "Leisure and Play in Aristotle's Ideal State," *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie* 107, no. 3 (1964): 216–17.

[51] Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ Press, 1982), 199.

[52] Depew also argues that Aristotle intends philosophy in a more specific sense, but Depew's argument focuses on musical education in Book VIII. David J. Depew, "Politics, Music, and Contemplation in Aristotle's Ideal State," in *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell, n.d.), 371–72.

equipment necessary for leisure, the Spartans would be leisured or capable of leisure. And yet, Aristotle argues that they are incapable. They lack the ability because they lack the true forms of moderation and justice, and, especially, the virtue of philosophy that is required in order to recognize peace and leisure as the proper end of all of their war and occupation.

Aristotle's discussion of the virtues required for leisure also supports the interpretation of leisure as a "way of being" because it shows it to be separate from other ways of being. As we saw, there is not a perfect overlap in the virtues required for leisure and those for occupation. Leisure has additional requirements, most notably the virtue of philosophy, but even the virtues that do happen to overlap are not quite the same for the warlike and the peaceful. For instance, Aristotle shows that the moderation practiced in war can be radically different from the moderation practiced and required for peace and leisure. It may be objected that Aristotle's inclusion of additional virtues in the life of leisure, as well as it being the ground of a higher expression of overlapping virtues such as moderation, does not suggest different ways of being so much as a more excellent expression of the human being. These are not exclusive explanations. The life of war and the life of leisure can be different ways of being in addition to their being in an hierarchical relationship. Both lives require excellences, and to some extent, they are competing. The moderation found in the professional warrior cannot be the exact same as the one found in the leisured citizen. The moderation found amongst the leisured requires that war only be engaged in for the sake of peace and leisure. They are different ways of being, and the way of leisure is concluded to be superior.

Leisure and the Limits of Politics

Leisure's relationship with politics and the political life is also complicated. At times, Aristotle notes that leisure is needed for the political life (*Politics* 1329a1-3). This may suggest that leisure

is a means to politics, in the same way that many commentators find it to be merely a means to the virtues. But this is neither the complete story nor the most important part of it. This is because leisure, when portrayed by Aristotle as only a means to the political life, is using leisure in the lower sense. When referencing the higher form, leisure as a way of being, Aristotle instead portrays the relationship as being reversed. Politics, and the political life, even in the ideal regime, is for the sake of leisure.

To the end of not making this point too strongly, it is also true that politics plays an important role in the ideal regime, both in terms of what is best for the city as a whole, and what is good for the individual citizen. For instance, all citizens take part in governing in the ideal regime (*Politics* 1332a33-35). If politics is about cultivating excellent and happy human lives, and the ideal regime is the best way of reaching that goal, this goes a long way in suggesting that political activity is a contributor to human happiness, or at least not a serious detractor from it. In addition, political activity can be more or less worthy, depending on the nature of political rule. Rule as a master, whether as a tyrant or as a slave master, is not noble in the way rule over free persons is (1333b26-28). Rule over free persons, which is exemplified in the best regime, is accompanied by virtue. Thus, there is something worthwhile about engaging politics, at least within certain cities.

Still, despite participation in a noble city being regarded as noble activity, it is not the final end or purpose of those cities. Though freedom from occupation, which is what Aristotle means by leisure in one sense, is required for participation in politics, politics is also a detractor from leisure in the highest sense. This is stated most definitively in this extended passage from Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> Now the activity of the virtues that involve action is present in political pursuits and in things that pertain to war, and the actions that have to do with these things

> seem to be unleisured—completely so with the actions involved in war… But the activity of the person engaged in politics is also unleisured, and political activity achieves, beyond itself, positions of power and honors and happiness for oneself and one's fellow citizens that is different from their political life, and which it is clear that we seek as something different from it. So if, among actions in accord with the virtues, those that pertain to politics and war are pre-eminent in beauty and magnitude, but they are unleisured and aim at some end and are not chosen for their own sake, while the being-at-work of the intellect seems to excel in seriousness, and to be contemplative and aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its own pleasure (which increases its activity), so that what is as self-sufficient, leisured, and unwearied as possible for a human being, and all the other things that are attributed to a blessed person, show themselves as the things that result from this way of being-at-work, then this would be the complete happiness of a human being, if it takes in a complete span of life, for none of the things that belong to happiness is incomplete. (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b6-25)

Ultimately, despite its many advantages, the political life pales in comparison to the life of leisure. Even at its peak, even when it involves ruling in the best city, the political life still exists as a means to some other end. As we see here, that end is leisure. This seems to be the ultimate reason why all citizens participate in the city by ruling in turn. It is not so that everyone can take part in the virtuous activity of ruling a virtuous and free citizenry, even if it is simultaneously true that such activity is noble.[53] It is primarily so that everyone can enjoy *not* ruling.[54] The lack of professionalization of ruling in Aristotle's ideal city is not so that all citizens can enjoy ruling, it is so all citizens can enjoy leisure. Leisure in the low sense is required for politics, but politics itself exists for the purpose of leisure in the highest sense.

Part of the reason for political participation being unleisured is that Greek politics was far more of an investment than modern democratic participation. In other words, Greek political life involved more than casting a few votes per year. In Athens, the citizen was required

[53] For the argument that rotation is so all can have the chance at ruling, see Catherine Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits and Satisfactions of Political Life," *Interpretation* 11, no. 2 (1983): 197.

[54] For a similar account, see Pangle, *Aristotle's Teaching in the "Politics,"* 226.

to meet and deliberate with the rest of the city's assembly, as well as meet with the assembly of one's tribe. Deliberations in the city assembly were long, often beginning early in the morning and reaching until late at night. They were held at least three times a month, and attendance was required. If he were a senator, a role typically filled multiple times throughout one's life, deliberations were a daily occurrence and lasted all day. On top of these deliberative responsibilities, the citizen was, by rotation, a magistrate and a judge as well.[55] Greek political life was therefore a way of life that had the potential, or even a tendency, to tyrannize over any other concern of the citizen. And yet, this is not Aristotle's primary problem with politics as a leisured existence. If the devotion of time to politics were the issue, we would have reason to refer to Aristotelian leisure as free time. We would also have to admit a different possible interpretation of ruling in turn. If the issue of time were the primary problem, it could be that citizens need to rule by rotation so that they could spend the rest of their time securing the means of bare preservation.[56]

Instead, Aristotle's primary complaint is that the political life is still done for some other purpose. This is true even of the rule over other free persons. One of the defining elements of the rule of the free is that it is done for the sake of the ruled and not for the ruler. This is what distinguishes it from the rule of the master over the slave (*Politics* 1333a4-7). What makes the rule of the free noble is also precisely what makes unleisured. The purpose of good ruling is other people. It is not one's own excellence, but the excellence of others. Again, this may be

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[55] Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, trans. Willard Small (Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2006), 334–35; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1959), 15.

[56] This is the argument of both Zuckert and Salkever. Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits and Satisfactions of Political Life," 197; Stephen Salkever, "Whose Prayer? The Best Regime of Book 7 and the Lessons of Aristotle's 'Politics,'" *Political Theory* 35, no. 1 (2007): 29–46.

noble, and elements of the political life may actually share in the philosophical,[57] but it is at bottom not leisured, and is not, thereby, the highest expression of human life.

The above raises a question: why should citizens participate in politics at all? If politics is merely for some other sake, and there are better ways of employing oneself, why should the citizen of the ideal regime participate in politics? Well, to some degree, they do abstain from politics. As pointed out above, participation in the ideal city is done via rotation. This allows for citizens to not be employed to as great of a degree in politics. Despite this, there is surely still much participation required of each citizen, even if it is done in turn. The question therefore remains. The reasons for political participation are wide, ranging from utilitarian concerns to the inherent, if still limited, worth of political activity. Beginning with the utilitarian reasons for political activity, politics is a necessity. Aside from it being natural to us (*Politics* 1253a1-2), it is necessary to all human lives that are worthy of living. This is especially true in the ideal regime. There are many temptations in the political sphere, even amongst the so-called virtuous. A successful city will be tempted by further acquisition, for example. It takes enlightened political leadership to avoid these pitfalls. More precisely, it takes enlightened political leadership to keep a steady eye on the true end of the city. This is why political activity is required, even and especially on the part of the citizens of the ideal city. Politics, for Aristotle, is not a machine that only requires maintenance on the part of skilled technicians. The maintenance of the regime is more than skill—it also requires an intellectual understanding. Again, this is where the Spartans fail. They have many of the moral virtues required for a good regime, but they do not have a proper intellectual understanding of the true aims of human political community. The citizens of

[57] Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits and Satisfactions of Political Life."

the ideal city need to participate in politics because, without their participation—without their understanding of the true aims of politics—the city will decline into a city like Sparta. Thus, in order to cultivate and maintain a city devoted to leisure, an element of the unleisured life is needed as a sacrifice. Unlike agriculture, which can be successfully accomplished by those with mere technical knowledge, politics cannot be successfully entered into with only technical skill. It also requires the participation of those that have the contemplative virtues. You may be able to cultivate crops without intellectual virtues, but you cannot cultivate a good city without them.

Aristotle's inclusion of intellectual virtue in political life leads to the inherent worth of political activity. But even before intellectual virtues, political life is the highest stage upon which to practice the moral virtues such as courage and justice and moderation. Though, as we saw above, the practice of some forms of these virtues have their limitations—with the kind of justice and moderation displayed by the Spartans being less true than the justice and moderation practiced in a regime capable of being at peace and leisure—they are nonetheless impressive and done for their own sake (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a29-35). As for intellectual virtue, we have already seen why it is needed, but have yet to see *that* it is present. This is most seen in the job of legislation. The process of legislation, especially for the Greeks it seems, is not just in the writing of laws, but also in the act of deliberation. These deliberations not only take the form of what is prudential, which is itself a serious activity, but also of what is just.[58] Even outside of the ideal city, it is foreseeable that this would be the case in well-organized mixed regimes. Because the different parties will all have a role and a voice, it is possible that deliberation will be akin to the back and forth we find in Book III of the *Politics*.

[58] Zuckert, 185.

Some commentators have argued that the satisfactions of political life are high enough to suggest that Aristotle finds political activity, when practiced in a certain way in certain regimes, is on par with the life of philosophy. Zuckert, in particular, makes a powerful case.[59] However, for reasons that have been discussed, this is not quite right. Zuckert is correct to point out that some types of political activity allow for or even require intellectual virtue.[60] This I admit. I also admit that this means that, for Aristotle, there is not such a sharp distinction between the active and the contemplative life as Arendt[61] portrays there to be. Still, despite giving this much ground, there remains an hierarchy, with the leisured life above the political. The political is clearly for the sake of leisure, regardless of to what extent the political shares in the philosophical. Notice, it is not the political as such that is philosophical. It is only the political when practiced in particular contexts, with particular virtues, and in particular regimes, that the political participates in the higher activities of the mind. It is not so of itself. The political is not by definition philosophical. And even if it were, as Zuckert also notes,[62] there are many elements of the political life that do not share in the philosophical. This point is obvious enough that it requires neither defense nor elaboration, only the recognition of its veracity. Thus, in the end, the disagreement between Zuckert and myself is less principled than it is one of emphasis. I admit that the political, for Aristotle, has its charms, and there is not always a night and day difference between the active and the leisured.

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[59] Zuckert, 185.

[60] See also Pangle, *Aristotle's Teaching in the "Politics,"* 238.

[61] Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

[62] Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits and Satisfactions of Political Life," 197.

Yack therefore gets closer to the mark when he describes Aristotle's position on politics as less a rejection of the political life and more an insistence on its limitations.[63] The disagreement between myself and those who emphasize the charms of the political life is over the extent to which the political and the contemplative overlap. In the end, I find the political to pale in comparison to the leisured because of the issue of means and ends. Despite the nobility and sometimes contemplative aspects of the political life, it still serves the cause of leisure. Politics is *an* end to the extent that it is done for its own sake, but it is not the *final* end.

Leisure in the Ideal Regime

Partly because of the truncated and hurried discussion of the ideal regime as we have in the *Politics*, there is much disagreement among scholars as to how the ideal regime is organized, what lives look like in that regime, and what the ideal regime means for the status of politics. For instance, Salkever argues that the ideal regime demonstrates the limits of politics and political life.[64] In particular, it shows that, even with leisure and various other opportunities, the life of philosophy is left out. And as philosophy is the highest form of excellence, Aristotle finds the political life, even in the ideal regime, to be lacking in important ways.[65] The above argument, however, conveniently ignores glaring aspects of Aristotle's ideal regime. First, as stated and explained above, participation in the ideal regime is by rotation. Salkever suggests that citizens will not have time outside of everyday concerns and politics. But since participation is by

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[63] Bernard Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 271.

[64] Salkever, "Whose Prayer?," 32; Mary P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics* (Savage, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1992), 164–65.

[65] Salkever, "Whose Prayer?," 33.

rotation, what else will citizens be doing? As non-citizens are accomplishing most, if not all, tasks necessary for everyday life, there is therefore a high level of freedom for citizens.

Salkever's stronger argument is that the discussion of music in Book VIII shows that there is not philosophy, and if there is, it is watered down, in the ideal regime.[66] Aristotle never comes close to stating that music is the highest way of life, and because it forms such a large portion of a citizen's education, it must therefore mean that the excellence of these citizens is limited in this way. Though this is a stronger argument, it too has a blind spot. The education in Book VIII ends at age 21. Again, what happens after? Though my supposition is also supported by an argument from ignorance, we have no reason to believe that the education stops at this point. As a corollary, education in dialectics begins at age 30 in the *Republic*, and the full engagement with philosophy does not start until age 50. Though we cannot be certain that Aristotle would think a similar arrangement would be appropriate for his own city, Aristotle clearly would have been alive to the possibility that education would not end at 21, and there is no indication of his contradicting Plato on this point.

If the argument stopped at this point, it would certainly leave something to be desired. It is an argument from ignorance with the addition of speculation, even if some of those speculations have reasonable foundations. However, there are other indications that the ideal regime is about more than demonstrating the limits of politics and political life. If we look outside of Books VII and VIII of the *Politics*, and attempt to link Aristotle's corpus in its entirety, we find more clues. Starting with the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle famously claims that human beings have a natural desire to know (980a). This alone does not suggest that philosophy will be present

[66] Salkever, 38; Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Oxford England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 198; Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, 33.

in the ideal regime, but we get closer when we advance to Aristotle's history of theoretical wisdom:

> It is not surprising, then, that in the earliest times anyone who discovered any craft that went beyond the perceptions common to all was admired not only because he discovered something useful, but also for being a wise person, superior to others. Later on, as more crafts were discovered—some related to necessities, others to leisure time pursuits—those who discovered these latter crafts were in every case taken to be wiser than the others, because their sciences did not aim at practical utility. Hence, finally, after all these crafts had been established, the sciences that aim neither at pleasure nor at necessities were discovered, initially in the places where people had leisure. This is why mathematical crafts arose first in Egypt; for there the priestly class were allowed to be at leisure. (*Metaphysics* 981b)

There are preconditions to theoretical wisdom. Perhaps the most important of those is the freedom from utility. It is without exaggeration to say this is Aristotle's primary goal in organizing the ideal regime. Given leisure as the organizing principle of the ideal regime, it would be odd to suggest that philosophy would be absent in this regime. The *Metaphysics* suggests that, given certain preconditions, theoretical wisdom would spontaneously arise. Because of the natural human desire for knowledge, setting up the material and temporal preconditions are all Aristotle has to do to ensure the activity of philosophy.

But just how much philosophy should we expect? On this point, Salkever[67] and Kraut[68] are correct to say that it will not be a universal activity. Though they are incorrect to suggest that philosophy will be absent, there is nevertheless no indication that it will be widespread. The proof here is Aristotle's distinctively elitist conception of virtue. Simply, Aristotle does not believe humans are naturally equal. There are inequalities of both the body and the soul. Greatness of soul is not easy to see like greatness of the body is, but it nevertheless exists (*Politics*

[67] Salkever, "Whose Prayer?," 33.

[68] Kraut, *Aristotle*, 198.

1254b27). Aristotle finds these inequalities in nature, and also sees a parallel in the relationship between the ruled and the ruler. The ruler is always better than the ruled. This shows up in the case of the rule of the human over the beast (1254a21-26). Man is by nature superior to the beast and therefore rules the beast. Within man himself, this element of rule and ruled shows up again: the soul rules the body by virtue of the soul's superiority to the body (1254b4-10). Immediately we see a source of natural inequality. Though it is by nature that the soul rule the body, there are those who whose bodies rule their soul, as well as those whose body-soul relationship is one of equality. These people are, by definition, "defective" and "depraved" (1254a38-1254b3). In this case, the relationship between those whose soul rules their body and those whose body rules their soul is more than, strictly speaking, unequal, but is incommensurable. We cannot speak of degrees of differentiation between these two types. One is by nature and one is defective and counter to nature. Where we find comparability is in the degree to which the soul governs the body and the quality of that soul that governs. Though the person with the naturally arranged constitution should rule the person with the defective constitution—this is the controversial example of the natural slave—the real test of Aristotle's elitism concerns the differences among those with a naturally arranged constitution. Here, Aristotle also finds natural and important differences. For, when we get to the contestation between the democrat and oligarch, Aristotle does not speak of the relative merits of the few over the many in the clear-cut terms of master and slave. Instead, we see differences of degree, and those differences of degree are important enough to have political implications.

Natural inequalities are also broached in the discussion of the best regime in Book VII: "Now that everyone strives for living well and for happiness is evident. It is open to some to achieve these things, but to others not, on account of some sort of fortune or nature; for living

nobly requires a certain equipment too—less of it for those in a better state, more for those in a worse one" (1331b40-1332a2). Like Tocqueville, who will later point to the importance of equipment and education in achieving human excellence, Aristotle also admits that there are external requirements for virtue. For instance, enough wealth is required so as to be free from necessary occupation. The highest levels of virtue require this kind of leisure. But Aristotle also points to nature as a roadblock. To some extent, nature and fortune can apparently be overcome. The right education and habituation can overcome some of these natural roadblocks. But notice Aristotle does say equipment, whether of nature or fortune, is *not* needed in "better regimes"; only that *less* of it is needed. Thus, even the force of education and habituation cannot completely direct the force of nature. In this case, this means that, despite an ideal education and regime organization, the inequalities in nature will still surface.

What is Aristotle's goal in the ideal regime, then? Taking the foregoing together, it suggests that the goal is to give the greatest number a real shot at attaining intellectual virtue. Again, this is the way in which Aristotle is a kind of egalitarian. But by showing how the good life necessarily requires others to not have access to that life, he also shows himself to be a kind of elitist. His egalitarianism is of a realist or even tragic sort. Aristotle recognizes that natural and conventional inequalities do not always correspond, but because of his attachment to the possibility of human greatness, he is willing to have a class of people, many of whom must be naturally superior to those they serve, provide the means and preconditions of those that may have a shot at achieving greatness. And yet, one effect of emphasizing a virtue like moderation is that it gives an unprecedented number of citizens the opportunity for it. The franchise is certainly, and painfully, not expanded to all, but the advantages of aristocracy are expanded to envelop more than previously hoped. What must be recognized, though, is that the having of

the requisite equipment does not necessitate the having of philosophy. Theoretical wisdom spontaneously arises whenever the right preconditions are present, but it does not spontaneously arise in all *individuals* that have the necessary equipment. Philosophy will still be relatively rare, but we have reason to believe that it will be present to a greater extent. Furthermore, it is not seemingly because of an egalitarian tendency in Aristotle's thinking that this is the case, but only because greatness of soul is neither reliably inherited biologically nor is it easy to see. It is primarily for these reasons, rather than a penchant for equality, that Aristotle is an egalitarian. He is an egalitarian, but for less than egalitarian reasons.

Leisure as an End

We see leisure as an end and purpose of equipment, many of the virtues, and even the ideal regime. Leisure as an end is further elaborated in in Book VIII of the *Politics*, where the subject of education returns to the forefront. There we receive a direct questioning of the true and ideal activity to be practiced in leisure. One possible activity, play, is the first to be dismissed (1337b32-36). Play is for the sake of rest and is merely a remedy for the tension to be found in occupation. Play is therefore not the *end* of occupation, but in fact *serves* occupation. Meanwhile, leisure is "held itself to involve pleasure, happiness, and living blessedly" (1338a1-3). Play and leisure seem to share pleasure, but play does not share, at least as completely, in happiness and "living blessedly." On the relationship between work, play, and leisure, Solmsen provides a helpful and precise characterization. Instead of treating work and play as opposites, Aristotle sees them as two sides of the same coin. Thus, instead of depicting the two as different categories, with leisure associated with play, Aristotle lumps work and play together, with leisure

as a separate category.[69] Aristotelian leisure transcends this dichotomy between work and play. Unlike our own understanding of leisure, which associates it with play, or, in the very least, as the absence of work, Aristotelian leisure is a separate category. Perhaps better stated, the important distinction is not between work and play, but between leisure and un-leisure.

The next hint given by Aristotle is that leisure is "not available to those who are occupied" (1338a3-7). Though Aristotle may initially seem to be relying upon the dichotomy of work and leisure, the very one just dismissed, a careful reading of the passage suggests otherwise. Notice that the lack of occupation is not equated with leisure. This is not his statement here. Instead, it is that the lack of occupation is a precondition to leisure. This freedom is necessary to leisure, but the freedom from labor does not itself completely compose leisure. Furthermore, the way in which the freedom from occupation is connected to leisure is quite different from our own understanding. The reason why freedom from occupation is required for leisure is that when you are "occupied" you are working to some other end. It is in and through leisure that we are doing something for its own sake. Furthermore, occupation is accompanied by pain, while leisure is pleasurable. However, though pleasurable, leisure requires a lot of us. It requires particular virtues, such as courage and endurance (indirectly) and moderation and justice (directly). Leisure also requires a substantial amount of time; more than the time available to those who work. It is therefore a serious endeavor that requires dedication. The farmer cannot engage in leisured activity, nor can he "be at leisure," despite Aristotle's recognition that farmers have free time after the harvest (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1160a26-30). It is a

[69] Solmsen, "Leisure and Play in Aristotle's Ideal State," 214.

way of life that is only available to those that are fortunate enough to have the necessary equipment and are virtuous enough to engage in the activities proper to it.

Though Pieper incorporates some of these elements of leisure, especially the transcendence from the dichotomy of work and play,[70] his account remains focused on festivity.[71] To the extent that this festivity transcends its use for recovering one from labor, Pieper's account of leisure may approach leisure as a way of being, especially with its connection to the creation of culture,[72] but it remains distinct from Aristotle's understanding. Though Aristotelian leisure is pleasurable, it, on the whole, remains serious rather than playful. Virtue and an education are directed toward it, and, furthermore, it is understood as an end. Pieper gets closest when calling leisure a "condition of the soul."[73] This condition of the soul goes beyond "vacation" and "time off,"[74] but its break with the dichotomy of work and play is not as stark as it is in Aristotle. As a condition, rather than a way of being, the same people who live in the realm of work and play remain capable of leisure. Aristotle's conception is more radical, as suggested in the discussion of both the exclusion of the farmer from citizenship in the ideal regime, and also in the discussion of the limits of the political life. These are different lives, not just different bearings between which an individual can switch. Pieper's account of leisure, though interesting on its own, does not quite capture this spirit.

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[70] Josef Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture by Josef Pieper*, trans. Gerald Marsbary (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 34–36.

[71] See also Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955).

[72] Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture by Josef Pieper*, 50–60.

[73] Pieper, 30–31.

[74] Pieper, 31.

Leisure and Music

Though I have explained the importance and centrality of leisure, as well as given an account of leisure's structure and its relationship to politics, I have yet to analyze possible activities that are worthy of Aristotelian leisure. And though I have stated that leisure is not itself an activity, it is nevertheless true that some activities are more proper and fitting than others. In the very least, we would expect the leisured to engage in activities in a different way than others without their advantages. This is perhaps why, when it comes to the particular activities proper to leisure, Aristotle does not give a direct answer. Instead, he writes: "This pleasure, however, is not regarded as the same by all, but by each individual in accordance with themselves and their own disposition; but the best sort regards it as the best pleasure and that deriving from the noblest things" (1338a6-9). Leisure is the greatest pleasure, but we are not given a clear answer as to the activities that compose leisure. This does not mean, of course, that the scope of appropriate activity is infinitely wide. Though there is some variation, the pleasure that is derived is from the "noblest things." As the highest activity, and the one that expresses the highest virtue, philosophy is an obvious contender for being worthy of leisure—of being something that is done for its own sake and is also worthy of that devotion. But is that it? Is philosophy the sole activity that can properly be said to be undergone in leisure? If this is true, then leisure would be more or less a proxy for philosophy. Its character of being a way of being would remain, but it would be closer to a singular state or condition marked by philosophical activity and intellectual virtue than a way of being. The question then becomes: what other activities are worthy of leisure, and what do those activities tell us about leisure? For this, I will turn to Aristotle's discussion of music in Book VIII of the *Politics*.

One of the questions concerning music is whether it is "education, play, or pastime" (1339b10-14). To some extent, music is each of those things.[75] Treating these out of order, there are then three purposes of music education, with the purposes ascending in importance and value. The first purpose, associated with play, is amusement. Amusement is pleasurable, but is *merely* pleasurable. It is a form of rest that serves to recuperate one for later occupation. This is perhaps the most common use of music. The second purpose, associated with education, is moral virtue. In short, music affects us. It captures our emotions and is capable of pointing our emotions in different directions. The particular directions music can point us are important. This is because music can make us "feel affection" for either proper or improper things (1340a22-23). The final and most important purpose, associated with pastime, is leisure. Though many commentators, such as Lord, focus on the role of music in moral education, even going so as to lump completely the "pastime" element of music into the educative element,[76] there is an element of music appreciation that goes beyond both pleasure and moral education.[77] Leisure is the most essential and valuable purpose because it is an end in itself. Experiencing and recognizing the enjoyment of music as an end is difficult, largely because it looks much like, and is often confused for, the enjoyment of music as play. The outward presentation of both may be exactly the same. In the same way that the virtuous man is difficult to recognize because beauty of the soul is not as easily recognized as beauty of the body (1254b27-1255a3), it is difficult to recognize and differentiate between someone at play and someone at leisure. Initially, the true

[75] Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, 79.

[76] Lord, 103.

[77] For other accounts of music as an end in itself, see Depew, "Politics, Music, and Contemplation in Aristotle's Ideal State"; Kraut, *Aristotle*, 200–202. For an alternative explanation, see Bartlett, "The 'Realism' of Classical Political Science," 395–99.

Aristotelian gentleman may look exactly like Veblen's conspicuous consumer. Both play and leisure are pleasurable. What separates the two is whether that pleasure is animated by rest, which is merely a means to some other end, or whether the pleasure is animated by leisure, which is an end in itself. The fullest enjoyment of music, then, is that which notices and appreciates the music's beauty, and simply for the sake of the beautiful. Aristotle says as much when prescribing the proper mode of teaching drawing to children:

> they should be educated in drawing not so that they may not make errors in their private purchases and avoid being deceived in the buying and selling of wares, but rather because it makes them expert at studying the beauty connected with bodies. To seek everywhere the element of utility is least of all fitting for those who are magnanimous and free. (1338b1-4)

There is no end beyond recognizing and appreciating beauty. We may enjoy beauty as a rest from the toil of work and as instructive for later acts of virtue, but these are lower activities for the very reason that they serve some other purpose. The study of beauty itself, meanwhile, is not "for" anything. There are ends below it, but not above or beyond it.

The obvious contender for an appropriate activity of leisure is the highest activity—philosophy. However, Aristotle's curious section on education and music suggests that philosophy it is not alone. Music, because its value goes beyond its role in the development of moral virtue, and into the appreciation of beauty, is also a contender. Aristotle does not provide an exhaustive list of appropriate activities of leisure, but gives us a rubric instead: they need to be capable of be undergone for their own sake, rather than as a means to some other end. It is therefore less an engagement in a particular activity and more the purpose underlying the completion of that activity and the various excellences employed along the way. This may account for Aristotle's "failure" to enumerate directly and exhaustively the proper activities of leisure. This is not to say all activities are equal. Aristotle certainly seems to preclude all that

involve toil, for example. Still, there appears to be multiple acceptable manifestations of being at leisure. Philosophy and what we would now call the fine arts are both clear candidates. Also, leisure seems to presuppose philosophy in that it involves the recognition of the forms—whether of beauty or truth or goodness.[78] Though other activities may suffice, studying the higher arts may be the clearest and most direct route to recognizing beauty. The same is true of philosophy for truth. This would partially explain why Aristotle emphasizes the proper appreciation of music rather than skillfully playing an instrument. The playing of music is only valuable in the instrumental sense: it helps us better appreciate harmonies and melodies. By continuing the play of music after such an ability is gained is to, once again, mistake the means for the end.

The discussion of music in the *Politics* has confused generations of readers. There are multifarious purposes to that discussion, and interpreting it through the lens of leisure is incomplete. Still, Aristotle clearly states an order of importance to the role of music in education. Reading it through the lens of leisure is incomplete, but focusing on its place in moral development misses what Aristotle states to be most important, which is its relationship to and role in the education and life of the leisured.

Conclusion

Inquiring into the concept of leisure forces us to address some of the most primordial and important questions: how should I spend my time, and where should I devote my energies? On my account, Aristotle conceives of leisure first as a way of being rather than a specific set of activities or as a mere precondition to those activities. Looking to the discussion of music in

[78] Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* (Millwood, N.Y: Kraus International Publications,U.S., 1962), 19–20.

Book VIII, we see that the mere listening to music is not enough to categorize the activity as leisured. There are at least three ways of listening to music and each has a different end: pleasure, development of moral virtue, and leisure (1339b11-20).[79] What is important is not *that* you listen to music, but your specific *comportment* to the music and your *ability* to recognize and appreciate the forms of beauty in that activity. Leisure requires much. It requires time, energy, and skill. It requires skill and virtue to not only push away the use*ful* but also the ability and intellect to appreciate the use*less*. As the example of music shows, if leisure is an "activity," it is so in the sense of an *energeia*. Using music in the development of moral virtue is not sufficient because it is on the way to something else. Only the leisured appreciation of beauty is a complete end. We do not, of course, have to go so far as to suggest that only the life perfectly removed from all utility is in fact leisured. As we saw, it is also improper to say that the leisured citizen is or should be perfectly uninterested in politics. In this way, it seems Arendt is not quite right to so neatly separate the active and inactive lives.[80] However, the life of leisure understands itself as fundamentally devoted to those things that are worthy. Political activity may be undergone, but it is now understood as valuable as a means, noble as it may be, rather than valuable as a final end.

If the above is true, "leisure," in the Aristotelian sense, cannot simply be the name we use for the time away from occupation that we may have on the weekend,[81] but is something that requires cultivation. Because leisure is inextricably tied to particular activities that are

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[79] The word used by Aristotle here is not *schole*, but *diagoge*. However, as Kidd points out, there is significant overlap in their meanings and usage, especially in Book VII of the *Politics*. See Stephen E. Kidd, "Play in Aristotle," *Classical Philology* 111, no. 4 (2016): 360. And as pointed out in the beginning of the chapter, "pastime" is used as a modifier of *schole* in this context.

[80] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 155–56.

[81] See also Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture by Josef Pieper*, 30–31.

worthy—specifically those that participate in truth and beauty, many of our "leisure" activities do not meet the standard. It is unsurprising, then, that leisure in modern life, without much of an explicit and thorough education and cultivation, has its critics, most forcefully in Veblen,[82] Adorno,[83] and Bourdieu.[84] Leisure, according to these critics, becomes conspicuous consumption or some other practice that merely serves, or is at least determined by, the capitalist economy. Aristotle, we may conjecture, may not have been shocked by this development of the concept without an associated cultivation.

The dissertation opened with the suggestion that leisure is a challenge to liberalism. Only now that we have seen Aristotelian leisure in its fullest expression, as a way of being, can we begin to accurately recognize the nature of this challenge. Because leisure is not merely the absence of occupation, or a precondition to the virtues, or even a "condition of the soul," but is instead a way of being that contradicts other ways of life, its challenge to liberalism, with liberalism's emphasis on work and commerce,[85] is different and more extreme than implied by other common definitions of leisure. It is to the response of the liberals that we now turn.

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[82] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, ed. Martha Banta, Reissue edition (Oxford University Press, 2009).

[83] Adorno, *The Culture Industry*.

[84] See, especially, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1986).

[85] See, e.g., Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 68; William A. Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 223. But also Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, Revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 68–69.

CHAPTER TWO: LOCKE'S MORAL ARGUMENT FOR LABOR

Introduction

The most distinctive of Aristotle's four causes is the final one: the *telos*, or final cause. It is to ask: to what end is this thing or activity? This question is, at once, natural and foreign to our ears. It is natural in the sense that it is a "why" question, but it is also unnatural, or at least partly foreign to us, in that it asks of some *final* end rather an immediately prior and necessary cause. This is as much the case when we extrapolate from biology and physics and into the realm of human values. Take the following example as an attempt to illustrate the distinction. If you ask someone, "why do you work?," you will likely get a response along the lines of "because I need a paycheck to pay bills, buy food, etc." And this is likely the most proximate motivation for work for most people. But, and this is why Aristotle's concern with ends is not so natural to us at it first seems, Aristotle is not primarily interested in the most immediate motivation, but in the ultimate end: how it is connected to the ultimate end of human life—the thing at which everything else does, or at least *should*, aim. The difference is also seen in Book I of the *Politics*. There, Aristotle admits that two kinds of necessity are at the genealogical beginning of human community: the necessity to reproduce, and the need for preservation (1252a30-31). Furthermore, Aristotle points out that the city comes into being for the sake of living, but, and this is the difference, it exists for the sake of living well (1252b29-30). Aristotle therefore recognizes the difference between the proximate or even historical motivation for something, and the higher end that it ultimately serves. Part of the modern turn is the focus on the question that Aristotle largely ignored in favor of the final cause.

For Aristotle then, in the previous example of "why do you work?," the "why" has less to do with the immediate issue of a paycheck, and more to do with the ultimate *goal* of work.

The question now looks more like: what do you eventually hope to gain by working? Is work an end to itself? How is work related to the final end of human life—happiness? Now, there are serious questions about whether such ultimate ends, as discussed by Aristotle and the other ancients, actually exist. Still, the proximate motivation for work does not seem to fully explain the modern attachment to work. So even if there is no ultimate end, no *summum bonum*, there are weightier and more serious and less immediate ends. The task of figuring these out and assessing them is both interesting and important.

The reason for this change in emphasis on this "why" question is too thorny and not central enough to this project to be addressed fully, but it is at least related[86] to the different ancient and modern conceptions of the goal of the political community. The question is no longer what is best and how do we achieve it, but what is the universal and immediately proximate psychological *motivation* for joining or forming a political community, especially if and when one does not currently enjoy a political community.

The above is part of the well-known gulf between classical and modern thinking. However, I am beginning from the position that the "gulf" is not quite a chasm; the modern turn is certainly a revolutionary change in emphasis, but it is not a matter of a complete overturning. I will not go so far as to say that ancient and modern thinking are completely commensurable, but that there are some lines of communication crossing the gulf that separates them. For example, and this is the subject of interest in this chapter, Locke is interested in the issue of labor as it relates to the question of happiness. In other words, Locke is not merely interested in labor for the sake of its immediate motivation, or even the slightly less immediate

[86] Whether it is related in a causal manner or not, I do not presume to answer here.

political usefulness of commerce and the advantages of a nation devoted to commerce. Locke is a more complete thinker than this, and this is what I hope to demonstrate. Locke clearly does not have the same understanding of a contented and complete happiness as does Aristotle, but happiness and moral excellence is present. Locke therefore also has what I refer to as a "moral" defense of labor. To return to Aristotle's final cause, it is true that modern thought tends to emphasize other causes, but it is not true that it completely ignores the final cause. It may be more difficult to find the final cause of labor in Locke's corpus, but it is there for those willing to seek it out.

The telling of this side of the story is important for a few reasons. First, it helps us recognize an easily ignored aspect of modern and liberal thought. Second, and more importantly for the purposes of this project, it helps tell the fuller story of leisure and our forgetting of leisure. If leisure is to be valued, it is primarily because of its supposed relationship with human fulfillment. Meanwhile, our arguments in favor of work and labor are usually incommensurable with this line of thinking. Arguments in favor of work and labor, especially those we focus on in the liberal tradition, focus on questions of fairness, freedom, or security. When we tell the story of labor in Locke's political thought, we say labor should be privileged because of fairness, or because of our natural rights, or because wealthier nations are more secure nations. This is fine, but this line of argument does not operate on the same level as Aristotle's. Aristotle's concern is human happiness, and we respond by talking about freedom and preservation. We can still make leisure and labor face one another, but the debate will not be commensurable; it will instead be the weighing of different principles. There is value in this, but it would be better, or at least more complete, if we could make leisure and labor use the same language and debate *within*,

rather than *between*, principles. That is the goal of the chapter. More specifically, I will be asking labor to use the language and principle of leisure—that of human happiness or fulfillment.

Let us begin with an obvious point. Locke enlarges and elevates the role of labor, and he provides one of the most forceful and impactful accounts of its role in human life and society.[87] This is clearly and commonly recognized when it comes to labor as the foundation of the right to property. Despite the many critics of Locke's account, few deny its impact on the liberal psyche.[88] But there is another side to the question of labor. Alongside the question of whether and how labor is the legitimate source of property, is the question of how labor relates to human happiness and fulfillment. In other words, even if we accept labor as the legitimate basis of property, it can still be the case that labor is fundamentally a painful and unsatisfying aspect of human life. On this account, labor is useful, but it is an unavoidable evil. And this is how most interpret Locke.[89] Contra this interpretive tradition, I defend a reading of Locke that sees labor as not solely a curse, but also a source of fulfillment. Though labor as a source of fulfillment is typically associated with the Hegelian and Marxist traditions, my account of Locke suggests that early liberalism can account for labor as more than the painful source of property. Indeed, if such an account of labor were missing from liberalism, this would seem to be a strike against it. If we understand property as Locke does, as a necessary component of preservation,[90] and if

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[87] As Manent puts it, for Locke, "Man is not naturally a political animal; he is an *owning* and *laboring* animal." Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, trans. Rebecca Balinski (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 42.

[88] See, for instance, Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1959), 62.

[89] See, especially, Alan Ryan, *Property and Political Theory* (New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1984), 28; Jeremy Waldron, *The Right to Private Property* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 147; Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Revised edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 251. See also Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 17.

[90] Here I am also setting aside Locke's sometimes inclusion of life and liberty into his definition of property.

labor, as opposed to inheritance or charity, is the primary legitimate foundation of property, it would be problematic if labor were simply or even largely painful or corrupting. But if Locke can account for this other side of the question of labor, Lockean liberalism becomes more defensible. In the very least, such an account provides a more accurate retelling of the liberal tradition with which its critics need to contend.

There has been much advancement in recent decades in recognizing the role of virtue in Locke's thought, and in classical liberalism generally.[91] Such arguments are both timely and, often, accurate reconstructions. However, almost exclusively,[92] these accounts of liberal virtues focus on the importance of these virtues for the vitality of liberal government and ignore the role those virtues play in individual human happiness. There is also a lively debate about the extent to which liberalism is or should be neutral when it comes to notions of the good.[93] However, in this debate over *whether* notions of the good exist or belong in the liberal tradition, the *content* of the liberal good is rarely systematically treated. This chapter partially aims to give content to the good, here understood as human happiness, found in one strand of liberalism. It

[91] See, e.g., Nathan Tarcov, *Locke's Education for Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); William A. Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Steven Kautz, *Liberalism and Community* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 171–91; Peter Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism*, 2nd Printing edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[92] Rare contrary examples include Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); E. J. Hundert, "The Making of Homo Faber: John Locke between Ideology and History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33, no. 1 (1972): 3–22.

[93] See especially Bruce Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980), 3–30; Galston, *Liberal Purposes*; John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Expanded edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 173–211; Patrick Neal, "Vulgar Liberalism," *Political Theory* 21, no. 4 (1993): 623–42.

is an attempt to address this other half of the question of virtue in liberal politics. In doing so, I take Locke at his word:

> For God, having, by an inseparable connexion, joined V*irtue* and publick Happiness together; and visibly *beneficial* to all, with whom the Virtuous Man has to do; it is no wonder, that everyone should, not only allow, but recommend, and magnifie those Rules to others, from whose observance of them, he is sure to reap Advantage to himself. (*Essay,* I.iii.6)[94]

Locke suggests that public and private felicity are connected, and not incidentally. Instead of stopping at what creates public happiness, I here propose to address how some of those virtues that create public happiness may also create private felicity. The question that *motivates* this chapter is whether liberalism, specifically on the question of labor, can account for and create human happiness. The chapter's *purpose* is to explore the possibility that Locke does in fact have an account of human happiness in line with the political goals of liberalism. And its *thesis* is that Locke does have a coherent account of happiness, which, importantly, requires labor.

The movement of the following is a process of narrowing down. To link labor with happiness, I begin with aligning Lockean happiness with self-authorship. Self-authorship, we find, requires labor. This labor comes in at least three forms: cognitive, occupational, and physical. Physical labor, for Locke, is more than an analogy for the other types. As others have noticed, Locke uses the metaphors of business and industry rather gratuitously.[95] However, the following argues that the significance of this language goes beyond metaphor. In a way that

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[94] All references to the *Essay* come from the following edition: John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[95] C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2011), 225–26; John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the "Two Treatises of Government"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 255; Paul Marshall, "John Locke: Between God and Mammon," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (1979): 94.

radically separates him from previous thinkers, Locke finds even intellectual activity, and the pleasure that is associated with it, to be marked by labor and industry. Even further, occupational and physical labor is a source of pleasure, and is *required* for happiness as Locke understands it. Though I cite widely from Locke's corpus, the following is largely a study of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*,[96] two works of Locke's that, despite some growing interest over the last few decades, are largely ignored by many political theorists.[97]

Labor as a Curse

There is some good reason to believe that Locke would hold labor to be a painful curse, despite its role as the legitimate origin of property. First, the position makes intuitive sense and corresponds to much everyday experience. Much of our labor is done, not because it is a source of joy or fulfillment to us, but because it is instrumentally valuable. Whether it be a paycheck or something else, many of us only engage in work and labor because of some other desired result. Even if we agree with Locke that work, rather than inheritance or charity, is the legitimate origin of property, we also recognize this potentially negative characteristic of labor—its instrumental quality. Without a promise of some beneficial conclusion to labor, we would not do it. This orientation to labor assumes that labor is necessarily painful, or is at least the source of unease.

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[96] All references come from the following edition: John Locke, "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, ed. Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996). It will hereafter be referred to as "*Thoughts.*"

[97] For a defense of using Locke's epistemology to inform an interpretation of Locke's politics, see Andrzej Rapaczynski, "Locke's Conception of Property and the Principle of Sufficient Reason," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42, no. 2 (1981): 305.

Because some of Locke's treatment of labor corresponds with this orientation—indeed, much of our orientation, especially labor as the origin of property, is *due* to Locke—it would make sense that Locke would also view labor as a kind of curse. However, this interpretive view is largely an assumption that is indulged in rather than a conclusion that is demonstrated. For instance, both Ryan and Waldron make the claim in passing as if it did not require a defense.[98] According to Ryan, the view that work is fulfilling comes after Locke, finding form in Hegel and early Marx. Hegel saw the work as a form of self-expression and as the primary way of humanizing and even creating the world.[99] Though Ryan does not give a full account of the relative misery or joy found in Lockean labor, it is assumed that joy is not present. The inclusion of joy into work is a later development to be found in the "Romantic" theory of ownership, and not in liberalism's early founders such as Locke. Only later do we see such a "bond" between people and their property.[100] Doing better, Strauss cites a few paragraphs in the *Second Treatise* as evidence for such a view. In his provocative conclusion that Lockean happiness is a "joyless quest for joy," Strauss claims that the means of assuaging pain, which is labor, is also a pain.[101] As evidence, he cites a number of sections of the *Second Treatise*. In each case, as a placeholder for labor, Locke uses the idiom "taking pains." For instance, Locke writes:

> amongst those who are counted the civilized part of mankind, who have made and multiplied positive laws to determine property, this original law of nature, for the beginning of property, in what was before common, still takes place; and by virtue thereof, what fish any one catches in the ocean, that great and still

[98] Ryan, *Property and Political Theory*, 28; Waldron, *The Right to Private Property*, 147.

[99] Alan Ryan, "The Romantic Theory of Ownership," in *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2012), 594.

[100] Ryan, *Property and Political Theory*, 11. This is a curious argument. By linking property with both life and liberty, and also by connecting so closely property with preservation, it is difficult to imagine a thinker that would view the relationship between person and property to be closer than does Locke. This point will be discussed in what follows.

[101] Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 251.

> remaining common of mankind; or what ambergrise any one takes up here, is by the labour that removes it out of that common state nature left it in, made his property, who takes that pains about it. (*ST*, §30)[102]

The evidence given for labor being the necessarily painful origin of both property and happiness is the literal reading of an idiom. Again, this is not a problem unique to Strauss. Strauss at least cites evidence, however shaky, for his claim. The task of this paper is to address this claim, and show that it is severely wanting. Locke does not require all labor to be pleasurable—such a position would be absurd—but Locke's account of labor is more complicated than simply being the painful origin to property. Not only does labor form the basis of the legitimate right to property, Locke also accounts for labor being an important and necessary source of happiness. Though labor is often, directly, a mixed pleasure, it is necessary in the rational creation of the self.

Locke on Happiness: Complicated Hedonism

The first step in connecting labor to happiness is to investigate and outline Locke's account of happiness. For this, I will largely rely upon an analysis of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Though the *Essay* is normally understood as an epistemological work, which it certainly is, contemporary scholars have begun to recognize that it contains some of Locke's greatest insights into both happiness and morality.[103] Virtue and happiness are present from the beginning of the work, and the topic composes much of one of its central chapters: *Of power*. In the *Essay*, Locke shows himself to be a kind of hedonist. This much is clear. Still, of what kind and to what extent Locke is a hedonist is less clear. Also, Locke moves back and forth, often

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[102] John Locke, "Second Treatise," in *Locke: Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, 3rd edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Hereafter referred to as "*ST*."

[103] Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism*, 78; Steven Forde, *Locke, Science and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

with little indication, between phenomenological questions of what we *experience* to be happiness and unhappiness and what *truly* composes felicity. Navigating these two sources of confusion, Locke's complicated hedonism and his seeming inconsistency on the question of whether there is a universal form of happiness, compose the greatest challenges to understanding Locke's account.

Consider first Locke's account of good and evil:

> Things then are good or evil, only in reference to pleasure or pain. That we call *good*, which *is apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish pain in us; or else to procure, or preserve us the possession of any other good, or absence of an evil*. And on the contrary we name that *evil*, which *is apt to produce or increase any pain, or diminish any pleasure in us; or else to procure us any evil, or deprive us of any good*. (*Essay* II.xx.2)

Initially, then, Locke appears to be a hedonist, and a rather simple one. Good is merely pleasure and evil is merely pain. On top of this, he appears to be a relativist on what causes pleasure and pain:

> The philosophers of old did in vain inquire, whether summum bonum consisted in riches, or bodily delights, or virtue, or contemplation: and they might have as reasonably disputed, whether the best relish were to be found in apples, plums, or nuts, and have divided themselves into sects upon it. For, as pleasant tastes depend not on the things themselves, but on their agreeableness to this or that particular palate, wherein there is great variety; so the greatest happiness consists in having those things which produce the greatest pleasure, and in the absence of those which cause any disturbance, any pain. (*Essay* II.xxi.56)

There cannot be a single highest good because preferences differ across individuals. This appears to be an especially reasonable conclusion given Locke's insistence that good and evil and happiness and unhappiness is entirely a product of pleasure and pain. An idle glance at humanity clearly teaches you that different people take pleasure in different goods. Not only is their variation *within* categories—some take especial pleasure in sweet foods while others in savory—but there is also variation *between* categories. There are those that find great delight in sensual pleasures and there are those that find their greatest pleasure in, say, the telling of jokes.

Therefore, because Locke defines the good in terms of pleasure and pain, it seemingly follows that the good is not one but many.

So far, Locke appears to be both a simple hedonist and a relativist. But the implications of connecting the good with pleasure do not stop there. Pleasure and the absence of pain composes the good, but they are fleeting. We are not capable of sustaining either pleasure or the absence of pain indefinitely. The pleasure of eating a piece of cake quickly erodes. Soon enough, I will desire a second piece, or perhaps begin to feel pain because of that indulgence. The same is true of supposed higher pleasures. Our minds, just like our bodies, are constantly in motion (*Essay* II.vii.9; xiv.13). We are not capable of holding onto ideas for long periods of time. Ideas, just like sensations, are continually moving into and out of consciousness. Ideas can build and culminate, but they also disappear and are eventually forgotten. So, if we take pleasure in ideas, we cannot expect that pleasure to be sustainable. The idea will disappear and with it the pleasure.

Because of this fleeting nature of pleasure and pain, and other reasons I will discuss in what follows, we are almost always uneasy:

> We are seldom at ease, and free enough from the solicitation of our natural or adopted desires, but a constant succession of uneasinesses out of that stock which natural wants or acquired habits have heaped up, take the will in their turns; and no sooner is one action dispatched, which by such a determination of the will we are set upon, but another uneasiness is ready to set us on work. (*Essay*, II.xxi.46)

Not only are pleasures temporary, then, but they also represent the clear minority of our experiences. Lack of ease is more common. We are seemingly incapable of being satisfied with a current pleasure, but either seek greater ones or, much more commonly, seek the cessation of the next and most immediate unease (II.xxi.31). The "constant pursuit of true and solid happiness," Locke tells us, is the "highest perfection" of our "intellectual nature" (II.xxi.52). But notice that it is the *pursuit* of true and solid happiness, not its actual *attainment*, that is our highest

perfection. This is seemingly because such true and solid happiness, for the reasons listed above, is unattainable. Pleasure in all of its forms is like sand: no matter how strongly you long to hold onto it, it will continuously be slipping between your fingers. Therefore, true and solid happiness is even worse than the slipping sand: it is a phantom. It cannot run between your fingers because its existence is unreal.

And it does not stop there. Not only is pleasure unsustainable and solid happiness impossible, pain also marks its pursuit. The only reason we become active, Locke argues, is unease. Happiness may be what moves all desire (II.xxi.40), but it is only unease that prods us into the pursuit of that happiness (II.xx.6; xxi.29; xxi.33-34). This has led Strauss to portray Lockean "happiness" as a "joyless quest for joy."[104] Humans are nearly always uneasy and that uneasiness spurs us into activity that is itself marked by pain.

There are two main points to the above interpretation of Lockean happiness. One, Locke, by being primarily concerned with pleasures and pains, is a simple hedonist. And by emphasizing the subjectivity of pleasures and pains, Locke is a relativist. Second, because pleasures and pains are fleeting, and because lack of pleasure is more common and dominant, human beings are unhappy creatures. As I will argue, however, this portrayal is not completely accurate. Both of the above points, though containing some truth, need to be moderated in varying degrees. These two misconceptions need to be addressed because they amount to the conclusion that Locke's moral theory is unserious. To be a relativist is to say that there is no satisfactory account of human happiness. The same is true of the interpretation that says Locke's theory, on its own grounds, can admit of no happiness—happiness is impossible and we should

[104] Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 251.

therefore not address Locke's account of happiness. We should focus on his more overt political theory, because political harmony is his sincere and ultimate aim.

Let us begin with the claim that Locke is a relativist. Locke does allow for variation amongst individuals as to the sources of happiness, but he nevertheless points to both better and more stable sources of pleasure. The mistake stems, I think, from not piecing together Locke's various statements about pleasure and happiness. At times, it is certain, Locke points to the obvious variation found amongst individuals' sources of pleasure. Some of these passages were quoted above. Further, Locke argues that we are never wrong about our present happiness (*Essay* II.xxi.60). Not only do we vary in what we choose for pleasure, our choices are *always* correct when it comes to what would make us pleased in the current moment. The crucial point, however, is that we do err when it comes to *future* good and evil (II.xxi.60). Importantly, this claim comes immediately after Locke's most forceful seeming denial of a *summum bonum*. When combined with the later point that we are often, in fact, wrong about what makes us happy, and Locke's account of the various means and reasons why we mistake the sources of what makes us happy, we get a more complicated account of human happiness and misery. There may be no single *summum bonum*, but only about immediate sources of good and evil. But the fact that Locke allows us to be *wrong* about what will make us happy in the future and what will make us the most happy and make our happiness more stable, creates the possibility that there *is* a single *summum bonum*.[105] In the very least, it means that the spectrum of true goods is more constricted than is the unbounded range of immediate goods and evils.

[105] For an argument for the existence of a highest good in Locke's thought, see Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism*, 76.

There are two broad and related sources of error when it comes to deciding what will make us truly happy: a lack of understanding and a lack of virtue. They are connected because it is not that cold and neutral reason often mistakes the true good. While this may be a logical possibility, it does not reflect what usually occurs. What usually occurs is a present good or absence of evil easily blinds us to a greater and more remote good (*Essay*, II.xxi.61-69). We tend to be myopic. We easily see what will bring us pleasure now, but we ignore or do not understand the ramifications of that choice, or we do not understand or actively ignore the level of good that could be had in the future if the immediate good were to be put off.

Virtue is important here, because it is the influence of the passions that is most likely to lead us to a failure of understanding. Virtue, understood as self-control, is what allows us to see the ramifications of our present desires as well as the prospect of a greater good that is less immediate. This certainly requires understanding, but the understanding is made ineffectual without virtue. Without self-control, Locke suggests, we are unable to take advantage of our understanding. We easily forget and set aside our better selves in moments of strong desire. Virtue, therefore, leads to greater pleasure and happiness (II.xxi.70). Vice allows us to take great pleasure in moments of great desire, but virtue demands and makes possible the suspension of desire. The result of this suspension is even greater good and less evil:

> There being in us a great many *uneasinesses* always soliciting, and ready to determine the *will*, it is natural, as I have said, that the greatest and most pressing should determine the *will* to the next action; and so it does for the most part, but not always. For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in experience, a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another, is at liberty to consider the objects of them; examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty man has; and from the not using it right comes all the variety of mistakes, errors, and faults which we run into, in the conduct of our lives, and our endeavors after happiness; whilst we precipitate the determination of our *wills*, and engage too soon before due *examination*. (Essay II.xxi.47)

Not only does this suspension lead to greater happiness, it is the "source of all liberty." This passage is consistent with, and helps explain, Locke's seemingly strange formulation of law and its relationship to liberty in the *Second Treatise*: "For *Law*, in its true Notion, is not so much the Limitation as *the direction of a free and intelligent Agent* to his proper Interest" (*ST* 57). Freedom is not license, but is the *ability* to direct oneself in a rational way without being hindered by others. While the absence of external hindrance is important, indeed this issue composes a great part of the *Second Treatise*, the *Essay* points to the importance of *internal* hindrances. The greatest of these is the force of desire and the need for reason and virtue to suspend that desire. Without this ability, we are beasts moved by necessity and not beings capable of rational direction. This is why law does not oppose freedom, but actually supports it. Law is the political manifestation of reason: it guides and directs the citizen to what is truly proper.

Not only are we capable of suspending desire, we also have a hand in the relative force and object of that desire. Beginning with the ability to affect the strength of a desire:

> by a due consideration, and examining any good proposed, it is in our power, to raise our desires, in a due proportion to the value of that good, whereby in its turn, and place, it may come to work upon the *will*, and be pursued. (*Essay* II.xxi.47)

And on affecting the object of pleasure and pain, and thereby desire:

> The last inquiry therefore concerning this matter is, whether it be in a man's power to change the pleasantness, and unpleasantness, that accompanies any sort of action? And to that, it is plain in many cases he can. Men may and should correct their palates, and give a relish to what either has, or they suppose has none. The relish of the mind is as various as that of the body, and like that too may be altered; and 'tis a mistake to think, that men cannot change the displeasingness, or indifferency, that is in actions, into pleasure and desire, if they will do but what is in their power. A due consideration will do it in some cases; and practice, application, and custom in most. (*Essay*, II.xxi.71)

The abstaining from a pleasure that will later cause greater pain does not always have to itself be painful. The individual can also, through "consideration" and other means, reduce the amount

of desire one feels. This works in a similar manner when it comes to increasing desire for a greater good. How this happens, on Locke's account, is through changing one's opinion of the good. I can reduce the desire I feel for a piece of cake by recognizing it as a lower good that may also cause later pain. This is especially true if I recognize health as a greater good than immediate gratification of a lower desire. This does not necessarily imply the desire for immediate pleasure or removal of pain simply disappears, but that the strength of the desire will be moderated and thereby easier to overcome. This is partly accomplished because the pleasure itself will be felt less extremely. If I understand that I am sacrificing a greater good for a lower pleasure, I am likely to enjoy the piece of cake less, and will therefore desire it less in the future.

Related to this ability to raise or lower desire is the potential to create new objects of desire. Aside from lowering the desire for and pleasure I take in eating cake, I can create a desire for a healthy alternative. Locke's examples of this phenomena humorously display our altered understanding of health: "Bread or tobacco may be neglected, where they are shown to be useful to health, because of an indifferency or disrelish to them" (*Essay*, II.xxi.71). Though we may use different, and likely better, examples today, Locke argues an individual can be made to desire both bread and tobacco, despite not originally taking pleasure in either. This is a two-stage process: "reason and consideration at first recommends, and begins their trial, and use finds, or custom makes them pleasant" (II.xxi.71). Changing our minds about the good is necessary, but we are also profoundly affected by habit. This is at once a hindrance to taking pleasure in a higher good and the source of hope for aligning our desire with that recognized higher pleasure. I can therefore, within bounds, lower the pleasure I get from eating cake and increase the pleasure, and lessen the pain, I get from "bread and tobacco." The above applies to not only simple and immediate pleasure, but also higher and remote goods and, importantly, virtue

(II.xxi.71). These abilities are important considering Locke's claim that it is not the greater good that determines the will. We are myopic creatures that are primarily concerned with immediate uneasiness. Some idea of a final and greatest end does not motivate us to action; it is only the most immediate and pressing uneasiness (*Essay*, II.xxi.31). To be happy, then, requires these abilities to suspend desire, raise and lower desire, and to also alter the object of desire.

The role of reason and virtue in achieving higher and more stable happiness will be analyzed in greater detail and with greater precision in what follows. But for now, what is important is what Locke's account so far implies. Locke's inclusion of reason and virtue implies a distinction between Locke's phenomenological account of pleasure from his normative account. In his phenomenological account, Locke recognizes that individuals find pleasure in a wide range of sources. If he stopped at this point, we could perhaps call him a relativist. But his normative account suggests otherwise. The fact that we can be *mistaken* about what makes us truly happy, combined with his denigration of desire and elevation of reason and virtue in suspending and controlling desire, suggests that there are better and worse means of becoming happy. Locke is not so much denying that there are true sources of happiness as he is denying that nature automatically moves us toward it. LoLordo puts it well: "the moral good exists, but has little psychological power."[106] We, by nature, desire happiness, and also have desires that we assume will lead us to happiness, but we are more often than not misled by our initial desires. This is why Charles Taylor argues that Locke is against moral teleology.[107] If left to our own devices, without cultivation, we do not tend to the good. Because of this lack of a natural

[106] Antonia LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 51–52.

[107] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 169.

tendency to the good, we see an infinite variety of goods being sought. But this does not mean the good does not exist. We need to distinguish between Locke's denial of moral teleology and the more extreme position of denying the existence of the good or true and stable happiness. The former sometimes sounds like the latter. Locke's denial of moral teleology has him explain the incredible variety of supposed goods that individuals chase. When taken out of context, this implies, to some, that Locke is denying the good. But, when we combine it with the rest of his descriptions of the good and happiness, this interpretation quickly and decisively becomes untenable. As we have seen, Locke not only affirms that we often err in our quest for happiness, but he enumerates and describes the various ways we err.

Locke's *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* can be seen as a handbook for avoiding these errors, and his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is a guide for raising children so that they avoid these missteps. To deny that he has an account of the good would be to deny that he wrote such books. When viewed in light of the *Essay*, the *Conduct* and *Some Thoughts* become not just about creating citizens useful for liberal regimes, but also individuals that are attached to and capable of attaining valuable human lives. In other words, many of those that, rightfully, argue that the Locke of the *Second Treatise* is not the complete Locke are themselves mistaken. This is because the Locke of the *Conduct* and *Some Thoughts*, when only understood in light of the *Second Treatise*, is also incomplete. It is incomplete because it assumes that the end of the education is simply a citizen prepared for liberalism. The *Essay*, while not contradicting such an interpretation, adds to it, and it is necessary that it does so. It is not only about creating a citizen that is useful and prepared for a new political order, it is also one that is, arguably, better fit for happiness than those molded for other political orders. Locke's educational writings, when understood in this way, are not subservient to his political writings, but are mutually dependent. It is not enough to

say that individuals can be made to live in a liberal world; we must also, as Locke does, argue that such lives are worth living.

As it stands, this argument is not yet fully sound. A skeptic could respond as follows: the fact that we can err about what makes us happy does not mean there do not remain infinitely variable ways of becoming happy. It could still be the case that I can mistake what makes me as an *individual* happy without there being a single account of what makes me as a *human being* happy. What is still required in this argument is a positive and specific vision of happiness that excludes other ways of life. I believe such a vision exists in Locke's corpus, and I will describe it in what follows. But for now, it is enough to say that Locke excludes some ways of life. The life devoted to simple and immediate pleasure is clearly a lower existence. Such a life is less happy because immediate desire leads us astray from higher and more stable pleasures and often leads to great pain. Thus, the range of proper ways of life is not infinitely wide. We have yet to determine just how narrow it is, but because it is delimited at all, we cannot rightfully call Locke a relativist.

A second reason we cannot rightfully call Locke a relativist is that he admits of both higher and more stable pleasures. The understanding, in particular, is a source of higher pleasure: "*the* UNDERSTANDING, *who does not know, that as it is the most elevated faculty of the soul, so it is employed with a greater, and more constant delight than any of the others*" (*Essay*, "Epistle to the Reader"). The stability of this pleasure will be discussed in what immediately follows, but the important point here is that the understanding is the source of the highest pleasure. Despite being in the opening Epistle, Locke does not claim that the understanding is only a great pleasure to himself. He does not limit it in this way, or in any other. The understanding is portrayed as a universal pleasure, and its attributes of being the highest and most stable are seemingly universal.

Connecting this back to Locke's supposed denial of a single *summum bonum*, the pleasure of the understanding creates an interpretive challenge. We can either argue that Locke is contradicting himself, or we can see Locke's position in the nuanced way that I have laid out above. If we see Locke's claim of there being no single *summum bonum* as a phenomenological account, we can make his position coherent. It is not that everyone's possible highest and most stable good is different, but that not everyone, for reasons explained above, correctly recognizes the highest and most stable goods. Desire and immediate and pressing unease are primarily what drive us, and the understanding is rarely if ever the source of this kind of desire. Many may never come to know the pleasure of the understanding for this reason.

And now, to the second dimension of Locke's account of happiness: its supposed lack of stability. Happiness, so some interpretations go, is impossible because Locke thinks we are always uneasy. We are always striving for happiness, but it is always and necessarily avoiding our grip. Further, the striving itself, because it necessarily implies unease, is itself painful. There is some truth to this account of Lockean happiness as a "joyless quest for joy," but like the other two dimensions of this pessimistic account, it requires moderation. It is true that Locke finds us to be often uneasy. Locke makes this claim clearly and repeatedly (see, i.e., *Essay* II.vii.9, II.xxi.46), and without contradiction. We tend to be anxious creatures that are rarely satisfied with our current conditions. But this account needs to be moderated in two ways. First, some pleasures are more lasting than other, and, second, pain does not necessarily mark the pursuit of happiness.

We just witnessed an example of a pleasure that is relatively stable. That the understanding is the source of the most lasting pleasure demonstrates a scale of stability. The pleasure derived from eating sweet foods may be short-lasting and quickly cause unease in the

form of a desire for more and perhaps a resulting pain if undergone immoderately, but not all pleasures have this nature. The pleasure found in the activity of the understanding may not be infinitely lasting, but Locke can still hold it to be significantly more stable than some other pleasures. The simple fact that intellectual pleasures are not infinitely lasting is no reason to view Locke's account of happiness in a pessimistic light. If it is true that the moderns, including Locke, doubt the higher forms of bliss that are found in the works of the ancients, this current point cannot be used as a link in the chain of that argument, for Locke's position is decidedly similar to Aristotle's. While pointing to the stability of pleasure found in the activity of philosophy (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1177a25-28), there are limits to this stability. We are compound beings that have other needs and sources of pleasure (1177b26-28, 1154b20-31). These other needs and sources of pleasure curtail some of the possibilities of our intellectual natures. In its most simple form, I cannot philosophize indefinitely because I will eventually get hungry. Translated into Lockean language, a more pressing unease can interrupt a pleasure, even a higher one. Unceasing intellect may be an option for a god, but it is not in the deck of cards for a human being. Far from being a pessimistic deviation from the so-called elevated example of the ancients, then, Locke's portrayal of the stability of pleasure is nuanced and gives hope for pleasures that are relatively stable.

Moving to the issue of the pursuit of happiness, the "joyless" portion of the "joyless quest for joy" also needs to be moderated. The confusion here stems from a failure to distinguish between what motivates action and the activity itself. Locke is both clear and consistent on what motivates the will and all action and industry: unease (see, i.e., *Essay*, II.xx.6, II.xxi.29, 34). And unease is, by definition, not pleasurable (II.vii.2). It is understandable, then, why some could extend this claim to say the pursuit of happiness is necessarily painful. If what

motivates us is unease, the action aimed at quelling that unease would seem to also be painful. Locke's account of the pursuit of happiness, though, is more complex. Reconsider Locke's portrayal of the pleasure found in the faculty of understanding. Immediately after claiming it to be the source of the highest and most stable pleasure, Locke writes: "*Its searches after truth, are a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure*" (*Essay*, Epistle to the Reader). Locke does not draw a severe line between the delights of the mind and those of the body. Unease motivates both; and ideas, like sensations, are in motion and lack solidity (II.vii.9). Thus, unease is also the spur to the faculty of understanding. And yet, pain does not mark the pursuit of its object. In fact, Locke portrays the activity of removing the unease as quite pleasurable. Though this does not mean that all the pursuit of happiness is pleasurable in all cases, it is decidedly enjoyable in some.

If the pursuit of the cessation of unease were always painful, Locke's elevation of industriousness would be strange. If we are capable of suspending desire and altering the objects of our desire, and if the constant quest for higher goods were necessarily painful, the best route to happiness would seem to be the alignment of one's wants and desires with one's current station. Take the instructive example of poverty. If industriousness were to provide an ample exit from that poverty, but such activity proved to be painful, it would perhaps be best to become satisfied with one's condition rather than work oneself out of poverty. This becoming comfortable with poverty is a possibility that Locke himself sees (*Essay*, II.xxi.35). Not only is such an orientation possible, he ascribes laziness and a lack of industriousness to the "far greater number" of the world's inhabitants (I.iv.15). Though our bodies and minds are continually in motion, both are capable of laziness. The mind, for instance, does not think at all times (II.i.10). Ideas and desires are constantly waxing and waning, but the degree to which we feel unease and

also move on that desire is relative, and to some extent, the result of our own understanding of the good. For these reasons, the question becomes: why not remain content with one's lower station? Why work? In the case of the body, why be industrious if such activity were painful, and contentment with poverty is possible? In the case of the mind, why engage the faculty of understanding if the pursuit of truth, even in the form of assessing the means of true and stable happiness, were painful? Why not, instead, quell the desire for understanding? Locke, of course, does not prescribe inactivity of the either the body or mind. Throughout his works, even in the *Second Treatise*, Locke consistently elevates the virtue of industriousness (see, i.e., *ST* §34). If Locke is a hedonist and such work is always and only painful, the elevation of industriousness would be inconsistent. The answer can only be that such a pursuit of the cessation of unease is not always painful, and is, sometimes at least, even pleasurable. And as I showed above, this is indeed Locke's position.

The joyless quest for joy, then, is not so joyless. Though it is true that unease, which Locke equates with pain, is the sole motivator of activity, of either mind or body, it is a mistake to extend that unease to the activity itself. Both of these dimensions of the cynical interpretation of Lockean happiness deserve moderation. First, Locke is a hedonist, but his hedonism is nuanced and accounts for an hierarchy of goods. Locke is aware that individuals find pleasure and pain in a seemingly endless variety of sources. But this does not mean he is a relativist. People can mistake the true good, and his seeming denial a single *summum bonum* is contradicted by his affirmation of the activity of the understanding as the source of the highest and most stable pleasure. And second, as we just saw, the unease that motivates activity is not always a component of that activity. Some pursuits of happiness, especially those that involve the intellect, are themselves pleasurable. What this means, I think, is that Lockean happiness is not

so miserable or empty as critics often allege. In some ways, as has already been hinted at and will be explained more completely later, there is significant overlap between Locke's account of happiness and those whose accounts of happiness, such as Aristotle, are typically treated as more robust, perfectionist, and consistently marked by contentment.

Self-Authorship and Happiness

So far, we have outlined and defended the possibility that Locke's moral theory allows for the possibility of human happiness. Next, we will examine in more detail the content of this account, and show the connection between happiness and self-authorship. The chain of reasoning of this chapter is as follows: the possibility of a durable and non-relative happiness exists for Locke, that possibility requires self-ownership, and, finally, self-ownership requires labor. We are now at the second step of the argument. We already saw that Locke is a hedonist, even if of a complicated sort. Locke's hedonism is present in both his account of pleasure as well as his account of morality. While it is true that Locke differentiates between proper and improper pleasures (*Essay* II.xxviii.5-6),[108] even moral good and evil centers around pleasure and pain. The only difference is that moral law involves rewards and punishments, and thereby pleasures and pains, resulting from obeying or disobeying moral law. Moral law therefore adds another step to the calculus, but does not change its ultimate and driving principle.[109] Moral laws and virtues, then, are useful tools for attaining happiness. In what follows, I mean "self-authorship" in two senses: self-control and self-creation. I will treat each in turn.

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[108] See also Peter King, *The Life and Letters Of John Locke: With Extracts from His Journals And Commonplace Books* (London: John Childs and Son, 1858), 311.

[109] Sterling Lamprecht, *The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918), 91.

Self-control, the first part of self-authorship, is best seen in Locke's account of the suspension of desire. True happiness is often hidden and obstructed by immediate desire, and rationality and self-authorship is what is activated in the suspension of that desire. Lolordo, in her compelling account of Lockean suspension, notes that though a single act, suspension is the result of at least three abilities or conditions.[110] The first is the ability to draw inferences. We need to be able to infer the acts that appropriately correspond to our understanding of the good. When tempted by a desire, we need to be capable of inferring that our understanding of the good requires us to reject the temptation. Second, we need to be able to alter our desires as a result of our beliefs. This process has two parts. Reason points us to the appropriate desire, and repetition, or habit, fixes the desire. Though we cannot immediately or perfectly alter our desires toward rational ends, ideas of the good can moderate inappropriate desire, and can also create new, more rational ones (*Essay*, II.xxi.71). And third, suspension assumes a belief in and concern for our future selves. In other words, we need to have a personal identity. A personal identity is a consciousness of ourselves and the understanding that this consciousness persists through time and across space. Personal identity is therefore what Locke calls the "sameness of a rational being" (*Essay*, II.xxvii.9). Even if I have consciousness, if I do not understand that my idea of myself is temporally and spatially durable, I have no reason to reject immediate desire. If I have the abstract understanding that giving in to that desire will have negative long-term effects, that has no force for a being that only exists in the current moment. Only a being that experiences individual consciousness as persisting through time can have any interest in suspending and altering desires.

[110] Antonia LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63.

In each of the three abilities implied by suspension of desire, reason is required in some form. The first, the drawing of inferences, is the essence and most specific of Locke's account of reason.[111] In the second, the changing of desires, reason is involved in the first of its two-part process. Habit is ultimately required to fix the desire on a new object, but reason is needed to assess which object is appropriate. Suspension assumes that some forms of desire are inappropriate or irrational. While desire is, by definition, not a rational faculty, it can be altered by reason. We may not, at first, long for that which we wish we desire, but through the intellectual recognition that we *should* long for such a thing, with the help of habit and custom, the objects of our longing can change over time. This applies not just to changing the objects of desire, but also the relative intensity with which we feel that desire (*Essay*, II.xxi.47). For instance, it is very unlikely that we could force ourselves to never long for food. Also, certain kinds of foods, such as those that are sweet or fattening, will always be more desirable than those that lack these qualities. However, through reason and habit, we alter the intensity of that desire. When we are children, the intensity of such craving may be insuperable, but we cultivate an ability to redirect ourselves and moderate the intensity of such desires.

Finally, reason is also part of having a personal identity. In order to suspend and deliberate over our longings, it is assumed that we have a consciousness of ourselves as ourselves, and that such consciousness persists. A consideration of my desire assumes that I have an idea of myself and that I will also exist in the future. LoLordo refers to personal identity as an "ability,"[112] but it is better to call it a condition. I follow LoLordo in calling the previous prerequisites to suspension abilities, but personal identity is in a separate class. Having a personal

[111] Ibid., 106.

[112] Ibid., 63.

identity, as we will see, assumes certain abilities, but it is not best understood as itself being an ability. This is because having an identity is not simply the consciousness of oneself, but the *concern* for oneself. In other words, it is not enough that I *understand* that "I" am a discrete individual from other individuals, and that "I" persist through time in that individuality, but that I also *care* about my current and future self. To speak of concern or an interest as an ability stretches the definition of ability too far. Identity as a condition is a better fit. It is less that I am "able" to have an identity, and more that this is the condition into which I am born.

Still, despite being better described as a condition than an ability, having a personal identity implies reason. The experience of ourselves as ourselves is done "only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it" (*Essay*, II.xxvii.9). Consciousness and reason go together and always accompany one another. We cannot have consciousness without reason, and when we reason, it is always done with consciousness. Even further, the awareness of ourselves as a durable being is fundamentally the awareness of ourselves as a durable and *rational* being. We do not judge ourselves to be the same entity through time and across space because our bodies remain the same. If we were to lose a limb, we would not deem our being to be consequently distinct from the being that existed before such a loss (*Essay*, II.xxvii.11). We still consider ourselves, after losing the limb, to be the author of the actions and the thinker of the thoughts that were undergone beforehand. And this requires the ability to recall memories and to think about those memories. It is individual consciousness that separates us from other rational beings, but it is only because of and alongside the faculty of the understanding that consciousness occurs. Thus, as Locke says, personal identity is not just the sameness of being, it is the sameness of a *rational* being (*Essay*, II.xxvii.9).

Locke is seemingly inconsistent in his discussions of consciousness. While making consciousness an important component of personal identity and moral agency, he attributes consciousness to all animals. This appears to lead him to the conclusion that even lower forms of animal life, such as oysters, have moral status. The logic goes something as follows: personal identity is rooted in consciousness, all thought is conscious (*Essay*, II.xxvii.9), perception is a form of thought, and all animals, including low forms such as oysters, have perception (II.ix.12). Said another way, oysters have perception, which is classified by Locke as a form of thought. And since all thought is conscious, this seemingly leads Locke to the view that all animals have identities, which is equivalent to moral agency and moral worth (*Essay*, II.xxvii.14, 19, 21). But, as is typical in such cases, there is significant nuance that complicates this otherwise simple syllogism. Most important for current purposes, not all forms of consciousness are equal. The consciousness of the oyster is not equal to the consciousness of the human being. Though Locke does not state this explicitly, it seems the human being is different because of the version of consciousness that was mentioned previously: the kind that involves an awareness of oneself through both time and space. This implies that we also have an *idea* of ourselves, and not simply an experience of ourselves.[113] The oyster, while conscious of some aspect of its existence according to Locke, does not also have an idea of itself that extends into both past and future. It does not have a memory of previous perceptions, it does not foresee itself having future perceptions, and, most importantly, it does not have an idea of itself having those past and future perceptions. Thus, though consciousness does not require reason in any significant sense

[113] Ibid., 122.

in all animals, the kind of consciousness that is required of moral agents is much more expansive.

Locke is obviously not unique in requiring self-control in the pursuit of happiness. However, Locke does not stop at self-control, but also prescribes self-creation, which is the second component of what I have been calling "self-authorship." This is where his position is much more novel. Locke's prescription of self-creation is seen in both his rejection of innate ideas and in his account of disengagement. First, on the rejection of innate ideas, Locke's position is found in the answer to the following question: how do I come to know the sources of good and evil understood as pleasure and pain? Locke answers emphatically that reason, as opposed to innate ideas, are our source of knowledge. This is true not only of knowledge generally, but also of moral knowledge (*Essay*, I.iii.3-4). Nature furnishes us with an inclination for happiness and an aversion to misery, but it does not furnish us with ideas about how to achieve that goal. Nature gives us the goal, as well as some faculties and tendencies that help direct us, but nature does not provide the means. Because of this lack of instinct, we are capable of a wide variety of thoughts and desires. The problem is that not all ideas and desires lead us well. Our thoughts are "more than the sands, and wider than the ocean where fancy and passion must needs run him into strange courses," and our imagination is "always restless, and suggests variety of thoughts, and the will, reason being laid afield, is ready for every extravagant project" (*FT*, §86).[114] Our various thoughts, imaginations, and desires can lead us into a wide array of activity, experience, and understandings of the good. In other words, we can become quite

[114] References from the *First Treatise* come from John Locke, "First Treatise," in *Locke: Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Hereafter cited as "*FT*."

strange and miserable creatures if left to our own devices. The natural perfect freedom we find in the state of nature finds a corollary in the untrained mind. Luckily, we have another faculty that, though not as powerful as instinct, is our means of giving direction to the seemingly infinite diversity of ideas, imaginations, and desires. This faculty, of course, is reason, which is our "only star and compass" (*FT*, §58). Reason is able to put together, compare, sort out, and order the ideas that are otherwise without order. We may not be able to stop the constant motion of ideas and sensations, but we are able to give them a pattern and accept or reject those that are respectively coherent or incoherent. Locke would therefore be in with agreement with Aristotle that the human being is capable of being worse than beasts. Without using reason, we are capable of acts and opinions that mark the insane or monstrous (*FT*, §58). In this way, our lack of instinct is a kind of blessing but also operates as a potential source of corruption and gives human beings an increased responsibility.[115]

Belief in innate ideas, then, is not just a problem for the philosopher interested in epistemology, but is a profoundly dangerous tendency in everyone. Since innate ideas do not exist, we can attribute a wide variety of irrational ideas to what is natural. Locke's hope in challenging innate ideas as a source of moral knowledge, therefore, is not to undermine morality so much as to ground it more solidly.[116] Only once we see its true foundation in reason can we get onto the right path of virtue, morality, and by extension, happiness. Such a right path is

[115] See also Peter C. Myers, *Our Only Star and Compass* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 125; Uday Singh Mehta, *The Anxiety of Freedom: Imagination and Individuality in Locke's Political Thought* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1992), 80–118; Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 179–81.

[116] See also Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism*, 78; Steven Forde, *Locke, Science and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 14.

attainable because of the know-ability of moral laws. Unlike the external world, where our knowledge is, at best, probabilistic, Locke finds morality to be demonstrable in the same way the laws of geometry are demonstrable. Moral ideas are demonstrable because they are in the class of "mixed modes."

Unlike knowledge of the physical world, which is not arbitrary but therefore uncertain and probabilistic (*Essay*, IV.iii.26; II.xxiii.9-12; II.xxiii.28-29; IV.xvi.6), we can have demonstrable knowledge of mixed modes. Though calling mixed modes "arbitrary" appears to put it in a lower class, its arbitrariness is precisely what lends its character of certainty. This is because mixed modes have no connection with anything except ideas. As such, it is not subject to the same problems associated with correspondence and causation. And because knowledge of mixed modes is not subject to these issues, it is capable of demonstration:

> Upon this ground it is that I am bold to think that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics: since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge. (*Essay*, III.xi.16)

What stops empirical "knowledge" from being demonstrable is that we cannot be sure of essences of physical objects, their relation between each other, and how they are caused. Mixed modes, however, are created in the mind. There is no translation between the thing itself and an idea—mixed modes only exist as ideas in the first place.

It may be objected that there is a physical referent when we speak of morality. When we talk about what is morally appropriate and inappropriate, we have in mind what is good and bad for a human being. This, so the objection goes, must go along with a claim about the essence of a substance; the substance in this case being the human being. To this, Locke responds:

> as to substances, when concerned in moral discourses, their divers natures are not so much inquired into as supposed: v.g. when we say that man is subject to law,

> we mean nothing by man but a corporeal rational creature: what the real essence or other qualities of that creature are in this case is no way considered. (*Essay*, III.xi.16)

Moral ideas do not require any claims about the essence of man. We are making assumptions, not about the biological essence of a particular animal, but are instead referencing an *idea*, a corporeal rational creature that Locke calls the "moral man." Moral ideas do not refer to a physical being, but to a series of characteristics that do not have to be part of the substance of a particular physical being (*Essay*, II.xxvii.26). As Locke says, if some other animal, such as a monkey, were to fit this description, it too would be subject to moral laws.[117]

Because moral ideas are mixed modes, then, they are capable of demonstration. Another possible objection arises, however. By portraying moral ideas as arbitrary, does this not take away from the force of morality? Because we are not making claims about the essences of substances, and because we are not grounding our moral ideas on practice, why should we base our behavior on these abstract conclusions that are radically removed from the real world? Though Locke's reply may not be perfectly satisfactory, there is a possible response to this objection. If we remember, all simple ideas, according to Locke, are the result of experience. We are a *tabula rasa* without innate ideas. This is Locke's primary epistemological conclusion in the *Essay*. From these simple ideas, we form abstractions (*Essay*, II.ii.15; II.xi.9). This process of abstraction, while divorcing ideas from the simple impressions made by the physical world, still requires that world. In other words, abstracting to the realm of modes makes those ideas arbitrary in a sense, but those complex ideas are still based on and rely upon the "real world."[118] There is a cost to this abstraction, but it is not the cost implied by the objection. The cost of

[117] See also LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man*, 85; Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 173.

[118] Forde, *Locke, Science and Politics*, 94.

abstraction is not that moral ideas have no application to the real world; the cost is that we must remain agnostic regarding the essence of substances. In other words, we cannot be certain that our simple ideas achieve perfect correspondence with the physical world.

What does this conclusion mean for moral ideas and morality generally? It means our moral claims take a slightly different form. The conclusions stemming from Locke's moral science do not address either the form or the essential nature of the biological human being. Locke must argue that we do not have access to this knowledge. What we have access to are moral ideas about a particular *idea* of man. For Locke, this idea is of a corporeal rational creature. Like all other ideas, it has a foundation in our empirical experience, but it does not make claims about our essence. Locke's moral science is founded on an idea of a being, and to the extent that we say we are that being—a rational corporeal creature—Locke thinks his moral science is binding. And many of us likely say, or wish to say, that this is what we indeed are.

What does the above complicated, occasionally technical, and largely epistemological discussion mean for the role of reason in happiness? It shows both the promise of and grave necessity for reasoning about morality. We have an innate desire for happiness, but we do not have innate ideas about how to secure it. As is shown in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, there is a place for authority in setting up the right habits and virtues,[119] but ultimately it is reason that must guide us. Many of those habits created through the authority of parents, for instance, are in the service of developing reason in the pupil. Even more importantly, rationality is best

[119] The relative force of outside influence in the education of the Lockean pupil is of controversy. See, e.g., John Baltes, "Locke's Inverted Quarantine: Discipline, Panopticism, and the Making of the Liberal Subject," *The Review of Politics* 75, no. 2 (2013): 173–92; Hina Nazar, "Locke, Education, and 'Disciplinary Liberalism,'" *The Review of Politics* 79, no. 2 (2017): 215–38; Rita Koganzon, "'Contesting the Empire of Habit': Habituation and Liberty in Lockean Education," *The American Political Science Review* 110, no. 3 (August 2016): 547–58; Joseph Carrig, "Liberal Impediments to Liberal Education: The Assent to Locke," *The Review of Politics* 63, no. 1 (2001): 41–76.

understood here as a form of self-creation. As rational corporeal creatures, we are ultimately responsible for our own selves.[120] Part of this responsibility is sorting out what makes us happy. Luckily, there is much to be gained through reasoning about morality, which, for Locke, is a complicated form of hedonism. As mixed modes, moral ideas are demonstrable. This means, with the appropriate effort, we can demonstrate laws about our happiness that achieve the same level of certainty as the laws of geometry.[121]

It is not just the lack of innate ideas that points toward self-creation, but also Locke's radical espousal of disengagement. In the modern era, As Taylor points out, it is not until Locke that the ideas of disengagement and rational control reach their full expression.[122] Taylor goes so far as to say that Locke's view of knowledge as sense experience, in opposition to innate ideas and various forms of rationalism, is not as radical as was his view of disengagement.[123] Other traditions, including the Thomistic, also give weight to sense experience over innate ideas. What is far more unique, then, is the extent to which Locke thinks we can "disengage" from nearly all of our mental activity. We begin from the one mental component that is not largely in our control: simple ideas. Though we have some impact over simple ideas, the understanding is largely passive in this regard (*Essay,* II.i.25; II.ii.2; II.xxx.3). We simply take in, through sense experience, these simple ideas.[124] While we do not have a large hand in these basic building

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[120] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 173.

[121] Locke never provides such a demonstration, in the *Essay* or elsewhere. There are, however, some possible outlines of what such a demonstration would look like (*Essay*, IV.iii.18; IV.xiii.3). See also Forde, *Locke, Science and Politics*, 109.

[122] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 160–61.

[123] Taylor, 166.

[124] Those like Heidegger and later existentialists will take this one step further: not only are we responsible for how we put together simple ideas, we are active rather than passive when it comes to sense experience.

blocks, we can construct them in a variety of ways. On their own, simple ideas cannot do much. We need to create complex ideas, which, unlike their simple counterparts, are not passively entered into our minds. These complex ideas are created through the combination and organization of simple ones. In other words, we have to construct a world ourselves, using these building blocks (*Essay,* II.xii.1). There is, then, another corollary between the operations of our mind and the creation of property. The mind, like much land in the state of nature, is not of much use to us on its own. Land requires cultivation in order to be productive. It is not what is given to us, the commons, that is valuable, it is what our labor introduces to the land that makes it valuable. Labor, as opposed to nature, is responsible for 99 percent of all value (*ST* §40). The same is true of our minds. That which is given to us, simple ideas, is not of much use. We have work to do. This work, which Taylor calls the reification of the mind,[125] is the uniting and separating of simple ideas.

This combining and ordering of simple ideas has a goal: getting to truth. Most of our knowledge is the result of empirical, probabilistic reasoning (*Essay*, IV.xiv.1-2). As we saw, the exceptions to this are the deductive truths of mathematics, morality, and the existence of God. There are general rules, discussed in large part in Book IV of the *Essay* and also in the *Conduct*, to dealing with empirical evidence. Essentially, we get to truth by assessing and demonstrating the compatibility and incompatibility of ideas (*Essay*, IV.xv.1). This must be done in the face of two notable hindrances to getting to true complex ideas: passion and authority.[126] Passion and desire has already been discussed in some length, but here it is the role of authority that is of issue.

[125] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 166.

[126] Ibid., 167.

It is commonplace, to the point of triteness, that authority and custom can have an undesirable influence on the attainment of truth. Much like desire can lead us away from true understanding and behavior that tends toward happiness, we feel that authority and custom can likewise misguide us. This point is not unique to Locke and is a near universal position of all Western philosophy, at least since Plato. But Locke's position is much more radical. Locke, like other modern thinkers such as Descartes, not only pointed to the possibly misleading character of authority and custom, but also denied them as legitimate sources of truth. Even if authority and custom lead us to the correct idea, it is not knowledge unless you achieve it yourself using your own reason and understanding:

> For, I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other Mens Eyes, as to know by other Mens Understandings. So much as we our selves consider and comprehend of Truth and Reason, so much we possess of real and true Knowledge. The floating of other Mens Opinions in our brains makes us not a jot more knowing, though they happen to be true. (*Essay*, I.iv.23)

This position is more extreme and less universally accepted than the view that authority can deceive us. As Taylor, following Husserl, notes, this position is something many of the moderns share, in opposition to many of the ancients.[127] While Plato would agree to the view that *doxa* has the potential to delude us, it is still possible for someone to force us out of the cave and into the light (*Republic*, 514a-520a).[128] This may prove dangerous to those forcing them out, but it is a possibility. Locke denies this. Authority cannot get us to the light—we must reach it ourselves. As *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* shows, this does not mean we need to be individuals that are entirely detached from others, using pure unassisted reason. We need help getting to the proper modes of thought. However, we still need to do the work ourselves if we are to consider

[127] Ibid., 167–68.

[128] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, Second edition (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

it knowledge. Locke's account is "procedural" in this way. It is not enough that we get to a correspondence between idea and reality, we must follow a specific path in achieving that correspondence, as laid out in Book IV of the *Essay* and in *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*.

Again, the focus here is less internal forms of corruption as external forms. The authority of others is what is most of concern. If knowledge is not knowledge unless the individual completes the rational activity herself, then the immediate menace to that process is outside authority. There are, of course, internal components to this. In order to reject authority, I need to see myself as capable of using my own reason at the expense of trusting that authority. Also, I need to actually have this capability and be up to the challenge of using reason in the face of my own desires that may corrupt that activity. Locke uses the example of innate principles to illustrate this negative influence of outside authority. Locke famously rejects all innate ideas, including innate moral principles, but he also finds there to be a danger in believing that such principles exist:

> For having once established this tenet—that there are innate principles, it puts their followers upon the necessity of receiving *some* doctrines as such; which was to put them off from the use of their own reason judgement, and put them on believing and taking them upon trust without further examination; in which posture of blind credulity, they might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide them. (*Essay*, I.iv.24)

The belief in innate principles is not only wrong, it also leads to other untruths. If I believe that some moral principles are naturally ingrained in my mind and in the minds of all others, I am less likely to put to question moral principles. I am much more likely to trust authorities that make moral claims. This gives an edge to Locke's rejection of such principles. As Colman points out, it is difficult to find an opponent to Locke's rejection of innate moral principles.[129] Much of

[129] John Colman, *John Locke's Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 51. But see

Book I of the *Essay* is given to this discussion, but few philosophers profess such a view. Rationalists such as Leibniz had argued for the existence of innate ideas generally, but there has been confusion over Locke's need to devote a chapter to this topic.

Those who read Locke as primarily a political thinker have some explanatory power here. They may argue that this shows Locke's concerns to be, first and foremost, political. The thought goes something as follows. No one, or very few, argue for the existence of innate moral principles. Locke's thorough rejection of them, especially in light of his concern for the consequences of such a belief, show that we should primarily be reading him with a political bent. He is undermining such a belief so as to make people better fit for liberal regimes. Pangle lays claim to such a view. Though he refers to Locke as a profoundly moral philosopher,[130] and though he agrees that the *Essay* should perhaps be best understood as a treatise of ethics, he also finds the move from the *Essay* to the *Second Treatise* to be a kind of ascent.[131] Locke's epistemological and moral thought is important, but on such an account, it is still the handmaiden to Locke's political thought. This interpretation is incomplete. First, Locke's rejection of innate principles, while significant, composes less than half of his discussion of ideas generally. Second, and more importantly, Locke's immediate concern is less about political rights than it is about rationality and, therefore, happiness. We see this by taking a closer look at the above passage. Locke, I grant, is concerned with the authority of others over our view of moral principles. But, he is not concerned, at least here, with such authority as such. It is only an issue, and can only be an issue, because of Locke's account of truth and rationality. Authority over

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Forde, *Locke, Science and Politics*, 74.

[130] Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3.

[131] Ibid., 206.

innate principles is a problem because we cannot be said to have knowledge unless we come to know it ourselves. Such a belief in innate principles is therefore problematic because, one, it is a false belief, and, two, it leads to further reliance on authority, which, again, is dangerous because it undermines the motivation to reason for oneself. The ultimate point is not to undermine authority, it is a means to the ultimate end: rationality and knowledge, which are valuable because of their necessary connection to human happiness. Though this interpretation does not entirely unseat the politically minded interpretation, it is more complete. My interpretation does not reject Locke as a political thinker, only that his political thought is not somehow responsible for his epistemology. They correspond and support one another, which is precisely what we should require of Locke.

We become responsible, then, not only for our own material well-being, but also our happiness and the relative accuracy of our view of the external world.[132] Galston, following Rogers Smith, calls Lockean responsibility "rational self-direction."[133] But this is not enough. Rational self-direction would be fitting if Locke were only interested in the direction we give ourselves in terms of the recognition of the correct values and the development of the various virtues that help us achieve the kind of life we choose. Locke certainly attributes such responsibility to us. But, considering the above, we are responsible for even more than that. We are also in charge of the shape of our minds. This is true not just of the desires we choose to have and our ability to suspend our other desires, but it is also true of how we see the world much more generally. Though we do not have control over simple ideas, it is complex ideas that

[132] Taylor, 173.

[133] Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, 229; Rogers M. Smith, *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 200.

are important, and how we put together these simple ideas is under our control. This is why I find "rational self-direction" to not go far enough, and find rational self-*authorship* to be more fitting.

Work and Self-Authorship

Though a complete account of Lockean happiness has not been articulated—indeed it cannot be within the bounds of this chapter—we have seen that it requires self-authorship. Self-authorship is understood in terms of both self-control and self-creation. The next step is to look more closely at how this self-authorship is achieved. I will argue that it requires work, of its cognitive, occupational, and even physical varieties. Beginning with cognitive labor, Locke connects work and industriousness with our capacity to reason in multiple ways. First, being rational is not a form of idleness, but is active and requires industry:

> the wise and considerate men of the world, by a right and careful employment of their thoughts and reason, attained true notions in this, as well as other things; whilst the lazy and inconsiderate part of men, making the far greater number, took up their notions, by chance, from common tradition and vulgar conceptions without much beating their heads about them. (*Essay*, I.iv.15)

Reason requires ingenuity. Though we cannot stop ideas from moving in and out of our minds, our will can direct our minds in particular directions. The cognitive laziness described by Locke is not a lack of movement, but is instead an avoidance of critical thought. Ideas are always in motion, but it is up to the relative industriousness of the individual to assess whether those ideas correspond to reality and whether they cohere or contradict other accepted ideas. The mind is always receiving sensations, but the practice of thinking is not necessary (*Essay*, II.i.10). This is partly why, in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke describes laziness in children as a "sickness" (*Thoughts*, §208). If reason is required for true and stable happiness, and if reason requires industriousness, then laziness inevitably leads to misery. Without an industriousness of

the mind, the individual becomes a slave to mere immediate cures of unease and is unable to secure a more lasting and higher happiness.

Cognitive labor is not only involved in avoiding moral vice, but is also necessary to the higher intellectual virtues. The intellect, called the faculty of understanding by Locke, is not quite the same as "reason." Though Locke sometimes uses reason and the understanding seemingly interchangeably, the two are largely distinguished in the *Essay*. The understanding is a broader faculty, with reason specifically referring to inference.[134] And importantly, the faculty of understanding is a source of enjoyment. In fact, it is the source of the highest and most stable pleasures: "*the* UNDERSTANDING, *who does not know, that as it is the most elevated faculty of the soul, so it is employed with a greater, and more constant delight than any of the others*" (*Essay*, "Epistle to the Reader"). The relationship between the understanding and happiness is more direct than it is in the case of moral self-control. In the suspension of desire, reason is connected to joy in a rather remote or instrumental way. Suspension is not by necessity pleasurable on its own. In fact, it may be painful. It implies, at least temporarily, the refusal to give in to a desire, a desire that may be strongly felt. Not only is the refusal of desire uneasy, but so is the desire itself (*Essay*, II.xxi.32). Suspension implies both the desire and its refusal, both of which are uneasy. The promise of suspension is the possibility of greater joy or lack of unease in the future, but this means its value is instrumental, or at least remote from its actual practice. The pleasure of the understanding, meanwhile, is direct and can be immediate. As we saw, the very activity is itself the source of joy.

[134] LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man*, 105–6.

Furthermore, it is the *working* of the faculty of the understanding that is joyful, regardless of its conclusion. We do not need to arrive at a unifying theory of the universe in order to feel such pleasure: "*Its searches after truth, are a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure*" (*Essay*, "Epistle to the Reader"). Though the use of the understanding implies a level of competence, the joy of its practice does not require the attainment of truth. It is the pursuit, rather than simply the attainment of truth, that is enjoyable. The significance of this point is difficult to overstate. The pleasure found in the intellect is not a stable and settled enjoyment of the truth. Newton is not happiest when he arrives at the conclusion of his experiment, but during the actual experimentation. The philosopher of Plato's cave finds the purest joy in wresting herself free of her chains, not in the sunbathing at the cave's exit. And this wresting oneself free is a labor. Again, it is a cognitive labor, but it is a labor nonetheless.

We may complain that the "labor" found in contemplation is not what we normally have in mind when thinking of work, even if we grant that Locke considers it as such. Locke, however, does not stop at the cognitive labor found in contemplation, or even in the suspension of desire, but also has in mind forms of labor that better conform with contemporary usage of "work." It is what I will refer to as "occupational" labor. Here, we need to look more closely at *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. The explicit purpose of Locke's prescribed education is to prepare the pupil for his calling (*Thoughts*, §201). The conceptual history of the calling is long and multifaceted, and Locke seems to incorporate disparate elements. As Dunn points out, Locke uses the term in at least two different senses: a particular calling and a general calling.[135] The general calling refers to our religious responsibilities, while the particular calling refers to our

[135] Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, 250–53.

more or less secular responsibility to secure our comfortable passage through this world (*Conduct*, §7-8; §19).[136] Though Dunn argues that Locke is a largely religious thinker, Locke's separation of the particular and general calling suggests that he is, in the very least, interested in separating the concerns of a profession from our religious duties. Furthermore, in his educational writings, most of Locke's concern resides with preparing the pupil for his particular rather than general calling. And as Marshall has shown, the notion of a calling already gained secular connotations by Locke's time.[137] Thus, the end of the pupil's education, even of an aristocrat,[138] is occupation. We need to address the significance of this, and can do this by asking: what is the other option? What is Locke rejecting in educating the pupil for a calling? The other primary option is preparation for leisure, and the choice between these two options is a real one. The pupil in Locke's education is a member of the gentry, and as such, has access to leisure. Locke rejects this life, and does so in an extreme way. The pupil not only does not have access to leisure as an adult, but he is to learn a trade, which Locke admits is an extreme position for his time (*Thoughts*, §201). Also, the pupil is allowed recreation, but that recreation must have some utility (§206-207). Even more radically, the child is made to make his own toys (§130)! Leisure, to Locke, becomes "dice and drink" (§207). Leisure is not, as it is in Aristotle, the end of all occupation and even the end of the ideal regime, but it is instead associated with vice. In a way prefiguring those such as Veblen, Locke suggests the leisured life is fundamentally corrupt.

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[136] All references from the *Conduct* come from the following edition: John Locke, "Of the Conduct of the Understanding," in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, ed. Ruth Weissbourd Grant and Nathan Tarcov (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1996). Hereafter cited as "*Conduct*."

[137] Marshall, "John Locke," 86–90.

[138] That Locke's thoughts on education are intended for the gentry is made clear in the Dedication.

Locke's position, however, is deeper than many of those social critics of the nineteenth century. The most important critique of the leisured is not the moral vacuity of their "conspicuous consumption," but is instead that the leisured are unhappy in comparison to those that work. Locke's rejection of leisure in favor of labor is also not simply the dour finger-wagging preacher's admonition that "idle hands are the devil's workshop." Locke understands happiness as pleasure, and if he is to advocate work over leisure, he needs to demonstrate that work is a greater source of pleasure than leisure. We can debate the extent to which his arguments are sound, but we must first recognize that they exist. First, Locke points to the anxiety of leisure (*Thoughts*, §207). A lack of activity is not pleasurable. Children prefer activity (*Thoughts*, §74), and this Locke takes to be evidence of a natural inclination of our species to prefer activity over inactivity. Idle hands, therefore, are anxious hands. They prefer to be put to use.

Second, Locke argues that leisure is an idleness associated with "dice and drink." If we do not have recourse to a useful activity, we are more likely to turn to base habits. This operates as a kind of rejection of the Aristotelian premise that, given the opportunity and right education, people will generally turn to impressive activity, whether it be music or philosophy, in their free time.[139] Locke rejects this. And remember, Locke only has the English gentry in mind here, so Locke's assumption is that even those with the opportunity to remain removed from labor and receive a thorough and demanding education will turn to lower pleasures if given the opportunity. In this way, leisure's relationship with happiness is much the same as the eating of cake's relationship with happiness. In both cases, there is assuredly pleasure. However, in the

[139] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981b14-25, in *Aristotle: Selections*, trans. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1995).

long run, dice and drink make us unhappy in the same way that eating too much cake makes us unhappy. Suspension of desire may make us uneasy, but we have greater pleasure, or at least less unease, than if we consistently indulge our immediate desires. On this point, Locke is in some agreement with those who say idle hands are the devil's workshop, but for the Locke, the devil is simply your own future unease.

Happiness is found in and is the result of activity, but of what kind? Consistent with the pleasure found in the hawking and hunting of the intellect, Locke also finds there to be pleasure in occupation. It is not just the result of that occupation, whether it be property or something else, that gives us pleasure, but the work itself. We see this in Locke's argument that even physical labor has the capacity for pleasure. Physical labor, for the member of the gentry, forms his recreation. Recreation is "not being idle (as everyone may observe) but easing the wearied part by change of business" (*Thoughts*, §206). Recreation is not complete relaxation, but the relaxation of one part while exercising another. Further, the exercising of another part is not to be useless, in either the high or low sense of the word, but is to be useful. Engaging in useless activity, such as "idle sports in fashion," is not for the "rational man." Seeing oneself above useful activity is mere "vanity and pride of greatness" (*Thoughts*, §208). Lockean recreation is also useful in this abstract way, but it is also intended to be directly useful. One reason to learn gardening, for instance, is so that the gentleman will be better able to direct his gardeners. Likewise, learning carpentry has the benefit of creating useful and also beautiful things (*Thoughts*, §204).

Useful recreation, unlike pure idleness, has the benefit of causing future pleasure. But, again, this does not mean that Lockean recreation must be solely interested in those *future* pleasures. There is also an *immediate* pleasure found in the labor of farming and hunting. These

activities may also involve some discomfort, but Locke still assumes, and requires, that each of these forms of recreation will be enjoyable. Perhaps our bodies become sore because of the physical activity associated with carpentry or hunting, but Locke claims that such unease is overshadowed by the activity's capacity for greater joy. We only need to look at examples of "men of the greatest condition" to see that these laborious activities are a source of "constant recreation" (*Thoughts*, §207).

Utility and Self-Authorship

There is a pleasure, therefore, found in work, whether it be the work of the intellect, the work of "accounts," or the work of the hands. Further, aside from some kinds of immediate gratification, many kinds of work lead to even greater future gratification. However, this still does not fully capture the role of work and labor in Locke's account of human happiness. It is also the case that it is a necessary component of the self-authorship that was delineated in the first half of this essay. We will examine this question in light of Locke's rejection of a certain kind of aristocracy, and more importantly, *why* Locke rejects it. The question is this: why would it be required, in an aristocratic society, that the nobility learn to create their own means of ease and safety? It is much easier to see why this would be required in a democracy where inheritance does not create a stable class of people that are free from the work that produces the means of preservation.[140] Locke's account of labor as necessary to moral virtue and happiness could be seen as limited to more or less democratic societies. The answer to this question has already been alluded to in previous discussions, but it will addressed more directly in what remains. It can be resolved through the examination of the more specific question of whether and why a

[140] This, of course, marks the beginning of Tocqueville's analysis. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 52–59.

pupil should cultivate an ability to produce the means of their own security and contentment, even if that pupil has access to those goods without working for them. The question of *whether* Locke thinks the pupil should cultivate an ability to produce their own means of security is easily answered. Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is written explicitly for the English gentry, precisely the class that does not need such a skill. Of course, the young gentleman needs to eventually have a hand in managing an estate, but they have the opportunity to be removed from many of their material needs in a way that the day laborer does not. So, *that* Locke thinks it important to be actively involved in such concerns is easily settled. The interesting and more difficult question is *why* Locke thinks this is the case. First, as we saw above, learning a trade prepares the pupil for the later management of the estate—learning to tend a garden will help the student later manage his gardeners. Still, though learning a trade may help in this way, it does not form a complete answer to the question. Surely, as Locke clearly notes, this is not intended to be the "chief end of his labor" (*Thoughts*, §204). Learning a trade is meant to be a diversion from his "more serious thoughts and employments" (*Thoughts*, §204). The difference between better and worse forms of recreation is whether it is marked by rational self-authorship. Drinking and gambling are irrational forms of removing unease, whereas gardening and joinery are rational. They "ease the wearied part" by removing the pupil from his study, and employ his body to a task. Each activity has a goal that is being sought, and that goal should be of some use to the pupil, argues Locke (*Thoughts*, §207). Part of what separates gardening and hunting from idle sports and gambling is that the result of the activity is something of use. However, it is not simply that it is of use, *but that the pupil himself was the author of that useful result*. The gardener could assuredly tend tomatoes as well or better than the young gentleman, but Locke prescribes the activity anyway.

More instructive than the example of recreation is the example of the calling. Again, the whole of the education of the gentleman, Locke tells us, leads toward the calling (*Thoughts*, §201).[141] The dedication to a particular calling, which, again, is largely concerned with working to achieve a comfortable existence, and the way the pupil is prepared for this calling, is suggestive. As we saw, the pupil learns a trade in the process of this education. Locke himself admits how revolutionary and strange this may seem (*Thoughts*, §201), and he uses examples such as Gideon, Cato, and Cyrus to show how great men have often engaged in labor (§205), seemingly in an attempt to undermine, even if gently, contrary prejudices in the gentry. Immediately after discussing the role of the trade, Locke discusses the pupil learning accounts (*Thoughts*, §210-211). This skill will be of more direct use for the pupil when he comes to manage an estate. But Locke believes there to be a continuity between the kinds of work. As opposed to the view that manual labor is corrupting and fundamentally distinct from noble professions and responsibilities fitting of a gentleman, Locke places them side by side and suggests, in the very least, a family resemblance. What all of this tends to is a radical taking control of one's life, including its material needs. Though Locke suggests that labor can be alienated (*ST*, §28), and the pupil's eventual calling will almost certainly not be largely composed of manual labor, the calling remains best understood as the mark and practice of rational self-responsibility, self-direction, and self-creation.

The focus on rational self-responsibility is also present in the *Second Treatise*. The work of the "wise and godlike" prince is to "secure protection and incouragement to the honest industry of Mankind" (*ST*, §42). Notice that the work of the wise and godlike prince is not to provide

[141] Going further, Dunn calls the calling the "key to Locke's moral vision." Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke*, 245.

material well-being for citizens. If felicity were simply the *having* of material possessions that give us pleasure, this would be the goal of the wise and godlike prince. Instead, the goal is to inspire industriousness.[142] When viewed in this light, Locke's critique of aristocracy is not founded upon a concern for equality, but instead a concern for supporting productive industry in opposition to aristocratic idleness.[143] It is not abundance simply that makes such an arrangement desirable, but the direct relationship between industriousness and felicity. Abundance has public benefits, but it also has private ones.

This is because, in order to happy, we need to work. We need to take ownership of our own ideas, their relation to one another, and become the author of our actions by employing reason over animalistic desire. By being more rational, we become happier. Importantly, though, calling this work of the mind a "labor" is not simply a metaphor. As the example of trades, recreation, and a calling show, actual labor is a necessary component of self-creation. Recreation and the learning of a trade are required to be useful and also train the pupil's character and abilities in the direction of industriousness. They also train the pupil for his eventual calling, which becomes the focus of the gentleman's life. Though Locke does not make the claim that each of these labors are pain-free, they are more than the means to pleasure. Labor is a mixed pleasure, but it is a pleasure nonetheless, and it is required if we are to achieve the happiness Locke finds fitting of corporeal rational creatures.

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[142] See also Myers, *Our Only Star and Compass*, 166; Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 244.

[143] Neal Wood, *The Politics of Locke's Philosophy: A Social Study of an Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 148; Stanley C. Brubaker, "Coming into One's Own: John Locke's Theory of Property, God, and Politics," *The Review of Politics* 74, no. 2 (2012): 225–26; Michael P. Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 275–88.

I will respond to another possible objection. The objection is this: if it is true that labor is pleasant and that it is required in the achievement of happiness, why is it that we often view labor as a burden? There are a few reasons. First, the pleasures of labor are typically mixed. That is, they are usually mixed with unease. Though Locke asserts that the activity of hunting is pleasurable, it still requires dealing with poor weather and early waking (*Thoughts, §206*). Second, as Locke claims, most of humanity is not inclined to industriousness, in part because of the mixed character of its pleasures (*Essay*, I.iv.15). There are seemingly easier ways of acquiring what we want, whether it be property or knowledge. The querulous and contentious can rely upon various kinds of theft to gain property, and the cognitively lazy can rely upon authority for knowledge (*Essay*, IV.xvi.4). But as we saw, these are false paths. Work is required for legitimate property, true knowledge, and stable happiness.

Property and Being

To the end of taking one more cut at demonstrating this focus on self-authorship, I will turn to and analyze Locke's ontological discussion of property. As part of the claim that Locke's account of labor is a necessary evil on the way to property, Ryan states that it is not until later thinkers, such as Hegel and Marx, that we see an intimate "bond" between the person and their property. I have suggested ways that this is not an accurate assessment of Locke's account of labor and property, largely by arguing that is labor instrumentally crucial to property rights, freedom, self-creation, and happiness. Now, I will address the literal meaning of this "bond."[144] Largely through an analysis of the *Second Treatise*, I understand Locke's account of personhood to include property. Locke goes as far as to suggest that property becomes ontologically part of the

[144] Ryan, *Property and Political Theory*, 11.

individual. As such, it is difficult to imagine a stronger "bond" between the person and their property.

Locke's deduction to his labor-mixing theory of property begins with the ownership of the self. In the state of nature, everything is held in common except other persons. Our persons are the only beings held separate from the commons. Part, though not the whole, of the person is the body and its activity. But our bodies are not self-sufficient and require nourishment from outside of itself. It must turn to the commons and take into itself goods that are held in common. It does this by mixing with it something that is already part of the person—that something being labor (*ST*, §27). According to Macpherson, the argument that labor is owned by and is part of the person is Locke's greatest novelty in his theory of property.[145] This appropriation that puts a "distinction between them and common" is not founded on the grounds of consent and convention (*ST*, §28), but is the result of a natural right whose origin is in the right to and duty of preservation (*ST*, §30; §35).

Locke intends his use of the word "mixing" to be quite precise. The mixing of labor is both a putting oneself into something else, and also a folding into our person something external. On the role of labor, Locke writes: "The *labour* that was mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath *fixed* my *Property* in them" (*ST*, §28). One of the results of our labor is that we extend our being into what was previously foreign to us. Our labor is part of our person, and that labor is what extends into potential property. But, it is more than an extension, it is also the metaphorical arm that pulls in outside entities into our person: "His *labour* hath taken it out of the hands of Nature, where it was common, and belong'd equally to

[145] Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 220–21.

all her Children, and *hath* thereby *appropriated* it to himself" (*ST*, §29). The process of labor brings is therefore both an extension of oneself and an aggrandizement unto oneself. Labor extends the person into other things, and also is the morally legitimate method of appropriating what was held in common. This is why I take Locke's theory of "mixing" to be explicit, and not merely metaphorical. It is not either extension or appropriation, but the mixing of labor implies both. This helps explain why the apples and acorns are mine before I eat them (*ST*, §28). By picking them, I extend myself into them, and alter their being in that extension of property,[146] before eating them. They clearly have still retain some form of separation from the person that picked them—in this case a physical separation. However, importantly, they are still considered appropriated and part of the person that picked them. The mixing of labor is always both. It is, at the same time, an extension and an appropriation.

The ontological relationship between property and person is also hinted at in their conceptual integration. Locke's widest, yet clearest, definition of property includes "Lives, Liberties and Estates" (*ST*, §123). Though Locke is not perfectly consistent with this usage (*ST*, §138-140),[147] indeed it would be exceedingly difficult for him to be, but he does nevertheless explicitly integrate the two. And despite his inconsistency, he is not so inconsistent as to explicitly negate this wide definition of property. About this conceptual integration, we can ask: what is accomplished? What does Locke do by integrating these concepts under the definition of property? A few things. First, it elevates property. By linking them together, Locke suggests that the rights to life, liberty, and estates are relatively equal in force and importance. Below, I will

[146] Andrzej Rapaczynski, "Locke's Conception of Property and the Principle of Sufficient Reason," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42, no. 2 (1981): 308.

[147] See also Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 247–48.

suggest that Locke takes this back slightly, with liberty and property retaining the ability to be alienated to a limited degree, given other strict conditions, while the right of life cannot be alienated in such a way. But still, by linking the concepts together like this, Locke elevates liberty and property in a significant and novel way. Together, their preservation becomes the purpose of civil society (*ST*, §124). Likewise, a systematic threat to property, understood here in the broad sense, becomes the origin of the right to revolt (*ST*, §222). Government is dissolved if there is a systematic, general, and arbitrary threat to citizens' lands just as if there is a systematic, general, and arbitrary threat to their lives. Much has been of the elevation of "mere life" in modern political thought, but this is not all that has been elevated. Alongside mere life, for Locke at least, is both property and liberty. And Locke, though clearly also intending the property required for preservation, also understands the value of property beyond what is required for mere life. In other words, property is also valuable beyond its necessity for survival. This is true even before the introduction of durable currency, where there are greater limits imposed on acquisition. The limit of acquisition is not what I require for basic existence, but is what I can enjoy: "As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils" (*ST*, §31). My property is mine for "any advantage," not just its advantage to my survival. Again, Locke clearly thinks property and liberty are required for mere life, but property and liberty are valuable beyond their contribution to basic existence. Locke's tying together of these concepts, then, does not imply that property and liberty are second-class rights that only achieve their status as a result of the right to life. After all, Locke lumped them together under the name of "property," not the name of "life."

There are, of course, potential problems with Locke's tying property and person in such an ontologically intimate way. Perhaps most powerfully problematic is that Locke also seems to

allow for the alienation of labor (*ST*, §28).[148] If Locke is serious about the ontological connection between person and property, it would seem impossible for the person to be alienated from their labor. If it is truly part of ourselves, it would seem to be an unalienable right in the same way life is unalienable (*ST*, §23).[149] If property and life are interchangeable, how can Locke suggest labor to be alienable, as he seems to, and also suggest, as he certainly does, that labor is the legitimate origin of property? This seems to be a problem for one of the great early defenders of capitalism. Capitalism, as Macpherson notes,[150] requires alienation. Without it, we are unlikely to see growth. But much of the force of Locke's argument seems to rely upon this ontological connection between the person and their property, which, again, is problematic because Locke makes labor the legitimate origin of property. These positions seem to be in tension, but Locke appears to want it both ways.

Though the purpose of this discussion is not necessarily to defend Locke, I will suggest a few ways Locke could have worked to resolve this tension. First, as is offered by Rapaczynski,[151] Locke may only have in mind perfectly free labor. As is implied by his discussion of the changes that occur as a result of durable currency, the relationship between labor and property becomes complicated. One of the ways in which it becomes complicated is that we develop the concept of the wage-laborer. Unlike the slave, the wage-laborer contracts his labor in exchange for currency. This "servant" is not under the absolute or arbitrary dominion of his employer

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[148] See, for instance, Ibid., 220; Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 202–51. For the opposite view, see Peter Laslett, "Market Society and Political Theory," *The Historical Journal* 7, no. 1 (1964): 153; Alan Ryan, "Locke and the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie," in *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 523–37.

[149] See also Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 219.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Rapaczynski, "Locke's Conception of Property and the Principle of Sufficient Reason," 308.

because there exists a contract between them that was freely entered into by the laborer (*ST*, §85). This is not yet satisfactory because the worker seems to be alienating himself from his labor. However, it is not a complete alienation. The worker still receives property of a kind as a result of the contract, and, furthermore, this property is agreed upon by both parties. Though this muddies the waters a bit, this is a possible source of resolution to this tension between the ontological connection between person and property on the one hand, and the Locke's suggestion that labor can be alienated.

Macpherson also makes much of this alienation of labor. If Locke is serious about the value of labor and its relationship to property, it is inconsistent for Locke to hold that it is alienable when life is unalienable.[152] Though Macpherson is right that Locke seems to allow for the alienation of labor while simultaneously holding life to unalienable (*ST*, §23), the critique is not as far-reaching as Macpherson makes it to be. Labor is not alone in being alienable. Liberty, too, is partly alienable. In moving out of the state of nature, we give up some liberties, especially those related to punishment (*ST*, §130). But this does not mean we wholly give up our liberty, only those liberties that we are so likely to abuse and undermine other liberties. Furthermore, as a result of consenting to join civil society, the enjoyment of our liberty becomes more secure (*ST*, §123-124). And since law increases, rather than circumscribes, freedom (*ST*, §57), we can safely assume that we have greater freedom in civil society than we were likely to have in the state of nature. So, we do alienate a part of our freedom, but it becomes increased and more secure as a result of that alienation.

[152] Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 219–20.

The same is true of the alienation of labor. After the introduction of currency, we are seemingly allowed to sell our labor, which weakens the connection between labor and property. However, just as in the case of liberty, this alienation is not as problematic as it may first seem. First, the alienation is not complete. I may not be able to keep all that I mix my labor with, but this is only because the commons becomes virtually nonexistent after the introduction of currency (*ST*, §36; §51). The elimination of the commons means the inability to gain property if we limit ourselves to the mixing theory. Consensually agreeing to wage labor is Locke's solution. Labor still gives a title to property—it is not simply separated from the mixing requirement. Thus, as in the case of liberty, we alienate part of the right, but not all of it. Labor remains a title to property. Secondly, as in the case of liberty, our property becomes increased and more secure after the move to civil society. Our enjoyment of property is limited and threatened in the state of nature to a greater degree than it is in civil society (*ST*, §123). Though labor's title to property may be more direct in the state of nature, it is not very secure. The primary goal of civil society is to protect that enjoyment of property.

As to the amount of property, Locke famously juxtaposes the lot of an Indian King and a day laborer in England. Despite there being greater natural abundance in the Americas, a King there is "clad worse than a day Labourer in *England*" (*ST*, §41). Locke's direct point is that labor is the primary source of value. However, we can also extend this to his comments about the effects of introducing currency. The day-laborer is still better off—better off in the sense of enjoying a more materially comfortable existence—after alienating his labor. Locke hedges this point very far. The comparison is not between the average citizen of England and the average inhabitant of the Americas. It is between a day-laborer in England and a *king* in the Americas. The average citizen of an economically advanced nation lives a more comfortable life than even

the leader of an undeveloped tribe.[153] The security of civil society and the incentives created by the introduction of durable currency makes everyone more enriched.

Lurking behind this discussion of alienation is also the crucially important role of consent. As is the case with liberty, where we must consent to give up the natural liberty we possess in the state of nature for greater and more secure liberty found in civil society, consent also affects the alienation of labor. Regardless of the benefits to alienating our labor, we must also consent to this arrangement, and do so in two ways. First, we must consent, even if only tacitly, to the original compact. We do this by continuing to enjoy the benefits of that compact (*ST*, §119). Second, we must consent to the more specific agreement of selling our labor in exchange for wages (*ST*, §85). We must consent to both the general agreement that makes possible the benefits of alienation, and also the specific contract that outlines the purchase of our labor in exchange for currency. Thus, though we alienate our labor, we do not do so completely, there is great benefit to it, and we must consent to that alienation.

Still, regardless of whether the tension can be successfully resolved or not, the important point for the present purpose is that Locke holds property to be ontologically connected to the person. If the acorns or apples that I pick are stolen from me, it is equivalent to taking the hand that picked it. Human beings require property and freedom in order to preserve themselves, and for the same reasons they have a right to protect their body from harm, they have a right to protect their property. This intimate connection helps explain why Locke believes we have a right, in the state of nature, to kill a thief, even if the thief does not harm the victim in any other way (*ST,* §18). To steal from someone undermines preservation both directly and indirectly. It

[153] I am, of course, working on Locke's assumption, not my own, that the tribes of the Americas were undeveloped.

directly undermines preservation by taking the sustenance required for preservation. But it also undermines preservation indirectly by putting someone under the arbitrary rule of another. Locke chooses to focus on this indirect, rather than direct, form. When someone steals from me, they violate my liberty by wielding an illegitimate force over me. And, as we learn in the previous paragraph, freedom is primarily to be valued because of its being a necessary condition to preservation:

> To be free from such force is the only security of my Preservation: and reason bids me look on him, as an Enemy to my Preservation, who would take away that *Freedom*, which is the Fence to it: so that he who makes an *attempt to enslave* me, thereby puts himself into a State of War with me. He that in the State of Nature, *would take away the Freedom*, that belongs to any one in that State, must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away every thing else, that *Freedom* being the foundation of all the rest. (*ST*, §17)

Here, freedom does not have the romantic connotation that it has elsewhere, including in some of Locke's other writing. It is a means to an end, and that end is mere life. Freedom is not some final flowering of the rational person that finds her own way to knowledge and happiness. In this chapter I have pointed to how freedom is also that for Locke, but here, freedom is understood as a necessary means to survival. This example serves as another illustration of this ontological connection between property and the person. We need goods to survive, and theft is a twofold threat to preservation. Furthermore, it also bolsters Locke's sometimes definition of property as life, liberty, and estate. The above example shows how closely related they are for Locke, even if he is inconsistent in tying them together in every instance in the *Second Treatise*.

Conclusion

What does the above do for us in terms of understanding leisure and our turning away from leisure? The most likely explanation for why we forgot leisure is that we became dissatisfied with the injustice of aristocracy. Allowing a class of people to enjoy freedom from labor at the

expense of everyone else became, not only distasteful, but intolerable. This is certainly part of the explanation, but it is incomplete. Even Aristotle, for reasons discussed in Chapter One, would likely find this situation problematic. He may not go so far as to say it is unjust, but he would certainly prefer if everyone had access to leisured existence. The explanation is incomplete because it fails to address the question at the level Aristotle did. Any argument for leisure, such as Aristotle's, argues at the level of human fulfillment. If leisure is worth having, it is because it is useful, if not necessary, for fulfilling the best aspects of our nature. To ask whether it is fair or unfair for some to have leisure while others do not is to ask a somewhat different question. The response to Aristotle on this level is insufficient because it ignores and refuses to address Aristotle's most basic point: leisure is necessary to the flourishing of the human being. Focusing on labor as the legitimate origin of property is to avoid the most important question.

Even worse, focusing on the question of justice through the lens of the legitimate origin of property avoids the question of human happiness by also assuming an answer to that question. To say that an aristocracy is unjust is also to say that there is something lacking about the lives of those that inhabit those regimes. This can take a number of forms. For instance, it can be said that the life of the aristocrat is unhappy or unfulfilled in some serious way. In addition, or separately, it can be said that the laborer is corrupted in such a system, and all must be made to share in the burden of work. The argument for aristocracy being unjust is insufficient if it cannot say that the life of leisure is incomplete.

The purpose of this chapter was to show that we not only have an incomplete picture of the question when we focus on labor as the legitimate origin of property, but we also have incomplete picture of Locke when we do so. I have argued that Locke saw this, and gave an

account of human happiness that includes labor. If we are to be happy, on this view, we must be self-creators. There are a number of obstacles to that self-creation, including religious tradition and natural desires. We must take control of our lives, which means taking responsibility for own ideas and gaining moderation in terms of food and drink, but it also means taking control of our material needs. An aristocracy is not the best regime, not just because it means some will be oppressed, but also because the aristocrats themselves are unhappy. As we saw, for Locke, their "freedom" from labor does not include or even imply a higher order of living. It is the ground of an irrational lack of self-control, full of "dice and drink." To give someone freedom from labor is akin to putting a child in a candy store with no supervision. Rational self-control, and self-creation, is found amongst those who work. This includes physical labor, but this is also marking of the intellectual virtues. The highest expression of our intellectual nature is not the settled enjoyment of the truth, but it is in "hawking and hunting." This does not mean all work is equal, but this is what explains the injustice of unfree labor. Work is only marking and part of the industrious and rational, who are the happy among us, when the work is part of rational self-creation. This is a crucial part of why slavery is unjust, according to Locke. It is because the slave's work is not part of rational self-creation, as the slave is not allowed to benefit from the product of that labor, whether it is in consuming that product directly, or receiving currency in exchange for that work.

Seeing this aspect of the argument in favor of work allows us to better see and compare its relationship with leisure. It allows us to better see how the arguments in favor of each are commensurable and can engage with one another. This is not, of course, the end of such an engagement, but the pointing to the grounds of that engagement. And once we see this, we need to add another wrinkle to the "debate" between leisure and labor: the possibility that there is

some overlap between these contenders for the best life. Since labor also has arguments in favor of it as an end to itself, we can wonder whether the commensurability between these two lives may also involve some coherence and compatibility. It is to this possibility that we now turn—to Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE: DEMOCRATIC ART – VOCATION & HOBBIES

Introduction

The highest example of leisure, as it comes to us from Aristotle, is of a thorough and demanding way of life. It requires an education and the opportunity and ability to devote oneself to the useless. The leisured in Aristotle's ideal regime must still engage in utilitarian activity from time to time, most notably in politics. However, the ideal regime is structured around cultivating leisured existence for the entirety of the citizenry. Their educations prepare them for this in multiple ways, as we saw in the example of music education. Along the way, the pupils may learn to play instruments, but this is only to the end of better appreciating the forms. Once this is gained, any further playing of music becomes unleisured. In contemporary terminology, the amateur becomes a professional and is no longer leisured. They play for some other reason, whether it is for pay, or even the enjoyment of others. The goal is to be played *to*, not to play *for*. The education is therefore built, not just to the purpose of the cultivation of skills, but also for the purpose of inculcating the proper and highest "employment" of those skills.

A complete response to this challenge must do better than we usually hear from proponents of liberalism. It is not enough to say that systems of privilege which allow some to be leisured over, and at the expense of, others, is unfair. In the very least, the nature and scope of that unfairness needs to be expanded. This is not to say that claims about the unfairness of privilege are not themselves powerful and worthy of being taken into consideration. It is to say that they either are incomplete, or they assume an answer to the question of human happiness without explicitly stating it. The purpose of Chapter Two was to explain the completeness of Locke's thought, and to suggest that if we ourselves do not find such a complete response within early liberalism, it is our fault, not theirs. Locke's response is not simply that privilege is

unjust from the vantage point of natural equality. It is also the case that such a system is at odds with human happiness and fulfillment. And it is not just those doing the work in Aristotle's ideal regime that Locke finds to be miserable. It is also, and perhaps equally, the case that the aristocrats in the ideal regime are incapable of consistent and durable felicity. Without the opportunity and ability to take the radical responsibility for their lives that Locke prescribes, they become deluded and remain child-like. Locke denies that they will engage in higher pursuits, but instead will engage in simple and corrupt sport. Moderation is, of course, important to Aristotle, but Locke finds such a virtue to be improbable, if not impossible, in those that do not become self-authors. The reliance on a class of workers keeps them from this self-authorship. Furthermore, the self-authorship is not just a means of gaining the moderation that makes possible higher virtues, but that self-authorship is itself worthy of devotion. Intellectual virtue is a continuance of self-authorship rather than simply made available by moderation. Locke's response to the challenge of leisure, then, is not a tearing down, or a doubting of the possibility, of the ideal, but the creation and defense of another.

The elaboration of these two ideals was the purpose and intent of the first two chapters. There are multiple options of what to do at the end of their being placed side-by-side. One option would be to compare and make a case for which is more defensible. This would be a noble undertaking, but the overriding concern and theme of this project is leisure as a challenge to liberal democratic life, but also, in keeping with Tocqueville's concern, not just with the comparative natures of aristocracy and democracy, but also with an art of democracy that moderates some of its tendencies, and perhaps also elevates it. It is in keeping with this concern that I instead go the route of analyzing and putting to question two other phenomena: vocation and hobbies. Vocation and hobbies are worthy of this analysis and questioning because they

have the potential for both moderating and complementing democracy without contradicting it. They are perhaps a way of incorporating elements of leisure into liberal democratic life. This incorporation will, and must be, incomplete, but the extent of its incorporation remains a question worth asking and answering.

The following will analyze vocation by addressing what I take to be both its advantages and disadvantages, both in relation to leisure and also internally. The case of vocation becomes largely an interaction with Weber's thought, while the discussion of hobbies extends more widely. Vocation has the advantage of sharing with leisure the feature of being done for its own sake. Like activities undergone by those that are leisured, vocation, by definition, is also undertaken for more than utilitarian reasons. Those of us working for a paycheck, and just a paycheck, cannot be said to have a vocation. This relationship can also be understood as part of Locke's understanding of the calling, especially the "particular" calling, but this is more explicit in Weber. Whereas Locke focuses on the useful, even when the use is indirect, Weber is much clearer about this feature of vocation. This tension between means and ends found in vocation—the fact that we devote ourselves to it while also requiring that it support us—also becomes a threat to vocation, as we will see, and it is a threat that Weber himself recognizes. A second challenge is that vocation requires *choice*, but can say nothing about choice-*worthiness*. On this, Weber goes beyond Locke. Industriousness seems to be inherently valuable on Locke's account, whereas a Weberian vocation simply requires that we choose it for its own sake—it does not require, and cannot require, that it be worthy of that devotion. Weber denies the possibility of rationally choosing between ultimate values, and this choosing of ultimate values is part of the choice of a vocation. This it does not share with Aristotelian leisure, as it is not enough for something to be *chosen* for its own sake, but must also be *worthy* of that choice.

Hobbies are also an interesting case, as they make an explicit claim to being leisure. For reasons that should now be obvious, Aristotle would be unlikely to count most of our "leisure" as leisure. Still, "free time" does have advantages and claims to worthiness, even if it must also serve the purpose of recuperation. Rest from and for work is what Aristotle calls "play," but I will address the promises and limitations of "serious" play. Despite the always present limitations, there is a defense of some hobbies as being worthy of devotion, even if, or precisely because, they primarily serve as diversions. They allow for inhabitants of liberal democratic regimes to escape, even if only temporarily, the useful. Even vocation, which understands itself as transcending the useful, is still done for sake of utility as well. Hobbies offer a clearer break from utility. This is why hobbies deserve a hearing as part of the art of democracy. It is perhaps the one, or at least the largest, slice of liberal democratic life that allows us to be free from utility, with no, or at least much less, guilt. There remain limitations and challenges, however. In much the same way as vocation, there is little education in what activities are worthy of being undergone as hobbies, and, even further, there is an explicit denial that such a standard exists. A defense of one hobby, fly-fishing, is given in what follows, as is an example of an indefensible hobby, this one coming from the novel *Tristram Shandy*.

Promise of Vocation

There is a specter haunting this project—the specter of Max Weber. If we are open to the challenge of leisure, it is because the rhythms of the life of work and labor seem heartless or unfulfilling. This partly explains Weber's attempt to find the elevation of work's origin in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. He ends his analysis by arguing that the religious foundations of such an elevation are no longer part of our psyche. Without such a foundation, we cannot expect lives devoted to a work ethic to be fulfilling. Weber suggested other

foundations may have taken its place,[154] and I have attempted to lay bare one possible foundation in the ethical and epistemological thinking of Locke. For Locke, rational self-authorship is our means of becoming and being happy, and this is only accomplished through work. This work is often cognitive or even moral, but as we saw, Locke also prescribes physical labor—even for the gentry.

Weber also examined the calling, or vocation, in two separate lectures: one on science as a vocation and the other on politics. In important ways, Weber is aligned with Locke, but in others, he steps beyond. He does this more fully in the vocation lectures, which is why I am turning there instead of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The latter largely describes the movement and change in values that I argue finds its peak in Locke. The vocation lectures, meanwhile, go beyond the Protestant theology that Weber largely finds to be dead, and attempts to describe, and also prescribe, an idea of the calling that attempts to transcend both Protestantism and capitalism. It retains and radicalizes Locke's emphasis upon instrumental rationality, self-control, and self-creation, but it gives up the question of whether such a life is inherently valuable.

In the following, I will work through the possible promises of vocation, particularly in the ways it overlaps with Aristotelian leisure. Though this discussion is not limited to Weber, I will rely upon Weber's simple but elegant definition of vocation. In "Politics as a Vocation," Weber finds vocation to be both a "living 'for'" and a "living 'from'."[155] Though he initially states vocation to be *either* a living "for" or "from," Weber notes that, as a rule, it is usually both,

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[154] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: And Other Writings*, ed. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York: Penguin Classics, 2002), 120–21.

[155] Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2004), 40.

especially in a "society based on private property."[156] As such, in the following, I will work on the assumption that vocation is both a living for and a living from.

Breaking apart this definition, we will start with the easiest component: living from. In a democratic society, all require work to support themselves materially. Tocqueville argued that this is even true of those that are wealthy. Weber claims something similar: "Experience tells us that consciously or unconsciously, the concern of the well-to-do man for the economic 'security' of his own existence is a cardinal issue for the entire conduct of his life."[157] Even with significantly more security than most, the wealthy constrain their decisions with economic concerns. They may have great advantages, but they are still likely to involve themselves in activity that supports them materially. Thus, at least in democratic societies with private property, all vocations are effectively a living from. This is different from the concern of Aristotle, who, like many Greeks, held labor to be corrupting (*Politics*, 1337b10-11). For Aristotle, labor is corrupting because the activity itself is harmful to both body and soul. Aristotle may have thought that "living from" was less elevated than "living for," since the inferior is always for the sake of the superior (*Politics*, 1333a22-24, 33-36), but the question that will later become a focus is whether combining means and ends corrupts the elements of vocation that are undergone as an end in itself.

"Living for" is a more difficult component to analyze, but it is the most important aspect of vocation, as it is what separates it from other experiences of work. First, vocation requires devotion. The ultimate example of this devotion, according to Weber, is the great artist that

[156] Weber, 40.

[157] Weber, 42.

accomplishes nothing else other than their work.[158] Though this *complete* devotion is not required, choosing the activity of one's work at the expense of other components of one's life is a necessary feature of vocation. Weber discusses this in the context of scientific vocations, but he also states this is true of other vocations such as politics.[159]

This devotion takes on a specific form—devotion to vocation as an end in itself. Consider the example of Weber's scientist.[160] Echoing many contemporary experiences with academia, Weber asks the would-be scientist: "Do you believe that you can bear to see one mediocrity after another being promoted over your head year after year, without becoming embittered and warped?" The response usually received, Weber tells us, is: "I live only for my 'vocation.'"[161] Though the scientist must obviously eat and have shelter, the true scientist, the one with a vocation, would pass up much better chances for material success in order to continue their work. Necessity is the true test. If you no longer required a salary from your work, would you continue it? Only those that answer affirmatively can be said to have a vocation.

Vocation has clear linkages with leisure in this way. Leisure is the purest form of doing something for its own sake. Even the political life, which has its own charms, is not leisured because it has some end beyond itself. There is overlap with vocation here. A partisan of vocation may argue that it would be difficult to separate the academic scientist from the leisured one. Both are motivated by and devoted to their activity, and are so to the extent of valuing that

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[158] Weber, 10. See also Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 13.

[159] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 10.

[160] The term translated as "science" is *Wissenschaft*, which is often broader than English usage of "science." As Owen, Strong, and Livingstone note in their edition of *The Vocation Lectures*, *Wissenschaft* can refer to any body of knowledge. It is therefore often better to render it as "scholarship" or "studies." See Weber, 1.

[161] Weber, 7. I will later address Weber's commentary on this interaction: "I, at least, have found only a handful of people who have survived this process without injury to their personality."

work as an end. If the academic scientist would continue their activity even without the burden of necessity, the partisan of vocation presses, why should we hold leisure to be superior?

Vocation is linked with leisure in another way. Just like leisure, not everyone is capable of it. And here, I do not mean technical skill required of multifarious careers, though this too is required. Instead, I mean particular virtues of character. When speaking of the vocation of politics, Weber stands firm that not everyone is capable of undergoing a life of politics as a vocation: "an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility are not absolute antitheses but are mutually complementary, and only when taken together do they constitute the authentic human being who *is capable* of having a 'vocation for politics.'"[162] Not everyone with a job or career has a vocation. This we already know from the above—not everyone is devoted to their work as an end. Not many pass the test of necessity. In the realm of politics, perhaps the best example of this is in American political history in the form of the "Boss politics" of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, aside from the psychological question of whether someone understands themselves as "living from," is this question of capability. Being capable of vocation adds another discriminating condition.

Again, it is the combining of the ethics of conviction and responsibility that makes one capable of the vocation of politics. It is the uneasy blend of the intransigent idealist, and, either, the bureaucratic pencil pusher or the power obsessed political profiteer. Vanity is the source of both dangers, but has radically divergent consequences in the respective cases. The intransigent idealist is the more likely danger, and though Weber has some sympathy for this position, he has little patience with it. Weber, reasonably, connects an ethics of conviction with religious zeal.[163]

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[162] Weber, 92.

[163] Weber, 83.

This idealist does not care for the consequences of his actions, only with the justice of his principles. The archetype of this position is a "mere child": "it is *not* true that nothing but good comes from good and nothing but evil from evil, but rather quite frequently the opposite is the case. Anyone who does not realize this is in fact a mere child in political matters."[164] The childish idealist cannot understand, or refuses to out of self-righteousness, either the consequences of their actions, or that occasionally acting against their principles will sometimes lead to a desired result.

Not only do the principles of this childish idealist have their own dangers when taken too far, Weber doubts the sincerity of their strongest adherents: "I suspect that I should come to the conclusion that in nine cases out of ten I was dealing with windbags who do not genuinely feel what they are taking on themselves but who are making themselves drunk on romantic sensations."[165] The outward self-righteousness belies their supposed sincerity, and this is due to vanity. The zealot does not achieve enough distance from himself and becomes intoxicated by his own principles. Despite a concern for a principle, it is only the zealot himself that is served and aggrandized. He may not achieve power due to his stridency, but he retains the pleasure of feeling righteous. At its height, the ethics of conviction leads to the demagogue, who is concerned solely with the impression he makes, and is not concerned enough for the outcome of his actions.[166]

The lack of distance from oneself is also responsible for the danger at the opposite pole. The politician who ascribes too much to the ethics of responsibility has a self-intoxication of

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[164] Weber, 86.

[165] Weber, 92.

[166] Weber, 78.

another sort—an intoxication with power, regardless of the justice of outcomes. Whereas an ethics of conviction is the result of a vanity of passion, the ethics of responsibility is due to a vanity of the mind. The strict adherent of the former finds self-satisfaction in the rightness of their principle, while, in the case of the latter, she finds it in her self-interested cleverness. This archetype strives for power for its own sake. Power is required in politics, and it sometimes finds those willing to serve at its altar without also serving at the altar of principle.

Weber often associates the ethics of conviction with an other-worldliness. Those acting from conviction often use religious language, and their motives are often, though not always, religious in nature. The ethics of responsibility, meanwhile, is associated with a concern for consequences in this world. It is utilitarian. Inhabiting either or both of these categories is acceptable on Weber's view. Weber's views on religion are complicated, but in this context, he does not take issue with those concerned with the salvation of their souls. Though, as we will see, those with a political vocation need to combine the two, there is a characteristic danger to combining them in the wrong way. As Turner notes, there is a third category of value in Weber's system, and it involves attempting to use other-worldly values as a goal for this world.[167] In more familiar language, this is the attempt to create the kingdom of God on earth. This is another way of formulating the dangers listed above, especially those associated with the vanity of conviction. Those not sensitive to the ethic of responsibility mistake an impossibility, often but not always linked with religious ends, for a practicable vision. Aside from not wishing to dirty oneself with compromise, those who mix other-worldly ends with this-worldly goals have a mistaken understanding of that which is achievable. Weber thought Christianity, and those who live in the

[167] Stephen Turner, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16–17.

wake of its dominance in the West, were particularly susceptible to making this mistake,[168] but it seems to be an all too human temptation.[169]

It is only through a certain kind of abnegation of the self, a rejection of vanity, that someone can achieve vocation through this proper combination of conviction and responsibility, mediated by a "sense of proportion."[170] However, though the possibility of such a combination may seem shaky, and indeed Weber does find it to be a treacherous line to walk, the two ethics are not, strictly speaking, exclusive. In fact, Weber goes so far as to call them "mutually complementary."[171] The key to this position is, again, the issue of vanity. Without distance from oneself, our politician acting from conviction does not, truly, have conviction. Vanity corrupts conviction into self-righteousness, which keeps the politician from ever achieving anything in accordance with their supposed principles, saying "The world is nasty, not I."[172] Those without responsibility and proportion to go along with conviction are therefore traitors to their own principles. Refusing to use their reason alongside passion interrupts any possible welcome progress. Someone with true conviction, meanwhile, understands that good things sometimes come from the bad, and that bad consequences sometimes arise from good motives. They retain passion, but attain enough distance from themselves to push away the self-righteousness that keeps zealous children from achieving anything worthwhile. In contrast to this creature that Weber finds so disdainful, those that show true conviction by incorporating responsibility and proportion are worthy of great respect:

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168 Turner, 17.

169 Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 86–91.

170 Weber, 76.

171 Weber, 92.

172 Weber, 92.

> I find it immeasurably moving when a *mature* human being—whether young or old in actual years is immaterial—who feels the responsibility he bears for the consequences of his own actions with his entire soul and who acts in harmony with an ethics of responsibility reaches the point where he says, 'Here I stand, I can do no other.' That is authentically human and cannot fail to move us. For this is a situation that *may* befall *any* of us at some point, if we are not inwardly dead. In this sense an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility are not absolute antitheses but are mutually complementary, and only when taken together do they constitute the authentic human being who *is capable* of having a 'vocation for politics.'[173]

Conviction is not itself without responsibility because it becomes a traitor to its own cause. But this is also true of responsibility. Without principle, without heart and passion, an ethics of responsibility becomes power politics. It seeks to be effectual, but with no guiding vision of the end being sought. It is a blind thrashing about that creates and destroys without concern. Without the concern associated with conviction, the ethics of responsibility is therefore irresponsible in the extreme. Whereas vanity corrupts conviction into self-righteousness, vanity corrupts responsibility into an aggrandizement of power, which is the more familiar, even if not ultimately more common or problematic, form of vanity in politics.

So, a political vocation requires this uneasy, but complementary, combination of conviction and responsibility. However, we should not limit such an analysis and prescription to only political vocations. Though it is true that Weber thinks different vocations have somewhat different requirements—and this will be discussed in what follows—it remains that the requirements for a political vocation have import for vocation generally. This is because the relationship between the two ethics represent the inherent tension between aspirations and possible outcomes. Different vocations may have varyingly distinct challenges and corresponding methods of overcoming those challenges, but the overriding tension between the

[173] Weber, 92.

two, and the need to achieve a resolution between them remains. For instance, in politics, vanity is the "deadly enemy."[174] Distance from oneself is the method of resolving conviction and responsibility. This is less true in the sciences: "in the case of the scholar, repugnant though it may be, [vanity] is relatively innocuous in the sense that as a rule it does not disrupt the business of scholarship."[175] Even more than being relatively innocuous, it is an "occupational disease." Vanity does not cause as much of a problem in academia, but is near inherent to the psychology of the scholar.

Despite these differing dangers, the combination of conviction and responsibility remains necessary. Conviction in the sciences takes the form of passion and inspiration. Inspiration, Weber contends, is as necessary to the scientist as it is necessary to the artist.[176] Weber uses the same terminology of "intoxication" to describe the inspiration of the scientist as he does to sketch the conviction of the man with the political vocation.[177] The passion of Martin Luther King, Jr., then, is inherently related to Plato's "mania." Inspiration is not wholly up to us, as it depends upon fate and natural talent that not all have.[178] But cultivation of passion and inspiration is also required, as not all who have this natural talent become scholars. It is in this way that the development and maintenance of conviction in the vocation of science is a skill that needs to be honed.

So much for the "heart" of the scholar, and now onto the "head." The ethics of responsibility has some overlap with vocations of science, as both incorporate power. Scholars

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[174] Weber, 77.

[175] Weber, 77.

[176] Weber, 9.

[177] Weber, 10.

[178] Weber, 10.

have seemingly always faced innumerable irrational obstacles on their way to acquiring even minimal employment in their field. This it shares with many other careers. But the irrational and often unjust obstacles are felt all the more for scholars, as it is in direct contradiction with the rationality that is supposed to be at the center of the scientist's way of life. Though politics is also about rationality, especially in the modern world,[179] the irrationality found in the life scholars, insofar as it is their employment, is a grave offense to the scholar's identity. This makes the pain of seeing "one mediocrity after another being promoted over your head year after year"[180] particularly acute, but, more importantly, it is corrupting. Even for those that claim to live only for their vocation, Weber has "found only a handful of people who have survived this process without injury to their personality."[181]

We may be tempted to push aside this concern over "personality," but given the weight Weber places on personality, this is no small indictment. Having a "personality," which requires inspiration and great devotion, is often synonymous with having a true vocation.[182] The two, personality and vocation, have similar characters and also the same origin in Protestant theology.[183] Like a vocation, a personality needs to be created and cultivated. We are not born with them. It was Protestant theology that created the concept and experience of personality, and, for the most part, only those who inherit that world are thereby capable of creating a personality.[184]

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[179] Weber, 77.

[180] Weber, 7.

[181] Weber, 7.

[182] Weber, 10; Harvey Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 146.

[183] Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 144.

[184] Goldman, 145.

A personality, for Weber, is systematic unity of our inner lives. It is a tight coherence of our way of thinking and behaving in the world with our "ultimate values."[185] So far, this does not seem like a radical departure from many other possible comportments, and it is unclear why only those that inherit a Protestant worldview would be capable of personality. A coherence between our values and our way of thinking and acting has a basic name that finds form in seemingly all cultures—we call it "integrity." The key difference is that the "ultimate values" are chosen by the individual. It is not enough that we have ultimate values and that we act and think in line with those values. We must also make a conscious choice between possible values. Those with true personalities need to be free of external influences, *including those of nature*. According to Weber, nature cannot be the source of ultimate values, and it must not be understood to be such by those with a personality. Having a personality involves a form of self-denial—a denial of natural impulses.[186] It is a use of *reason* to derive the laws that direct us toward our values. Still, it is not a form of Kantian pure reason that constrains our choice. Weber rejects this as a possibility, and claims that some form of arbitrariness and "faith," rather than reason, is always the foundation of this decision. Everything we derive from those principles can, and must, be rational, but there is no rational resolution to choosing between these incommensurable first principles. Still, regardless of the exact nature and origin of the personality, the above demonstrates the importance of the personality to Weber, and also its relation to vocation. Thus, claiming that the means of attaining a livelihood as a scholar is a threat to personality is the same as claiming it is a threat to the possibility of science being a vocation.

It is worth noting that Weber's conception of personality is much like Locke's self-

[185] Goldman, 142–45.

[186] Goldman, 142.

authorship. Both require radical self-control and responsibility. Both also understand this self-control and responsibility to be against nature. This is clearest in Weber, but we see it in Locke as well. Nature furnishes us with the goal of felicity, but does not furnish us with the means of acquiring it. This is wholly up to us, and we must reject and overcome nature to achieve it. Weber radicalizes this notion by extending authorship and responsibility to the level of ultimate values. Locke still wants to retain industriousness as inherently valuable, but Weber does not think it can be rationally defended against any other ultimate value. Weber's self-creation, found in personality, therefore deepens and expands upon Locke's.

The irrationally unjust nature of some elements in the life of the scholar also implies that those that achieve advancement are often not the best examples of those that can be said to have a vocation. We must also examine and describe this figure. Like the "power politician," this example of an academic is successful in achieving advancement, most often through the rungs of university administration. Weber's analysis makes us wonder, however, the extent to which this person has a vocation. The success attained comes at a cost. Weber implies that their status is unlikely to have been due to the quality of their work, but due to factors unrelated, and perhaps antithetical, to the "inspiration" required of the scientific vocation. Thus, those obsessed with career advancement are also corrupted out of achieving a vocation, though in a different way than the scholar that authentically seeks a scientific vocation. The failure and disappointment of the struggling young scholar makes her jaded, despite engaging in the very activities that mark her vocation. She may have the outward look of someone with a vocation, but the practical roadblocks create a psychological obstacle that thereby corrupts the inspiration and passion that is needed. Meanwhile, the advanced scholar, while no longer facing practical roadblocks, has voluntarily given up the activity, and also thereby inspiration, of their supposed

vocation.

Aside from the practical preconditions to scholarly life, which Weber finds a similar example in art, there is also the question of progress in the sciences.[187] This is even more unique to and characteristic of the sciences, as art is not affected by progress as deeply. Techniques and styles may change, but art does not necessarily get better. Despite different material and style, Matisse does not surpass Raphael. We can speak of a "history" or "development" in art, so long as we do not include within those terms a sense of progress. Meanwhile, Einstein surpasses Newton. Though some anti-realist philosophers of science may disagree, Weber holds that all science becomes, and even "*cries out*," "to be surpassed and rendered obsolete."[188] It is not only the fate of scientific work, but it is also its goal. This inherent component of science becomes another threat to science as a vocation. Weber describes the threat in the form of asking the following incisive questions: "What meaningful achievement can he hope for from activities that are always doomed to obsolescence? What can justify his readiness to harness himself to this specialized, never-ending enterprise?"[189] This challenge is particularly cutting to those who pursue science as a true vocation, as an endeavor undergone for its own sake. He cannot simply rely upon the satisfaction associated with practical outcomes of his work, since this would belie doing the work for its own sake. Salvation is found in tempering and moderating romantic illusions about the nature of science. Only the religious and "overgrown children" believe in the power of science to either get closer to God or ascertain the "meaning" of the world.[190] Like the

[187] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 11.

[188] Weber, 11.

[189] Weber, 12.

[190] Weber, 16.

politician who must temper his conviction with an ethic responsibility, the scientist must fully face the necessarily progressive nature of his work. But as is also the case with the politician, this tempering is also a trueing. The politician that understands that messy means are often required if there is to be any hope of achieving anything resembling his goals, and who also understands that there will be disappointments along the way, and yet says '"Nevertheless!' despite everything,"[191] is the one who has true conviction. The same is seemingly true of the would-be scientist. The tempering of expectations is a trueing of what it means to engage in science for its own sake. Though Weber's position is certainly controversial, and the question of the veracity of his position must be bracketed for the purposes of this project, Weber follows Nietzsche in deriding the false optimism of the "overgrown children" that see the life of science "as the road to *happiness*."[192] We need to be careful of how far we take this side of Weber's critique, however. As a scholar himself, Weber is clearly also alive to the promises of this way of life. The problem, as he understands it, is that naivety is both an intellectual error and also destructive to the personality of the scholar. The inevitable disappointment that will result will ruin any hope for science as a vocation. Science must be done for its own sake, but needs to be tempered and trued by realistic and often disappointing expectations. Science does not result in the quiet and content contemplation of the meaning of the world. As Weber' wife, Marianne, later recounted, when asked of why he engaged in the life of the mind, Weber responded: "I want to see how much I can bear."[193]

The above demonstrates that, despite the differences between vocations, which create

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[191] Weber, 94.

[192] Weber, 17.

[193] Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984).

their own obstacles and challenges, vocation not only has a universal definition, the promises and challenges of distinct vocations also share the same categories. In all cases, it seems, the challenges revolve around the resolution of the respective ethics of conviction and responsibility. The doing of something for its own sake may seem to belong first and foremost with the ethics of conviction, but this is not the case. Consider again the example of politics. The extreme form of responsibility may be concerned with power and the triumph of consequences, regardless of what those consequences are, but an overdeveloped sense of conviction is usually the result of vanity. As such, those acting from conviction are unable to have the required distance from themselves in order to actually engage in politics for its own sake. Both conviction and responsibility are required, but, in this way, those who lean toward responsibility may actually be closer to vocation than those who lean too far in the opposite direction. The policy wonk is at least dedicated to the activity of politics rather than "mere" principles.

Lockean Labor and Weberian Vocation

Lockean labor, as defended in previous chapters, has significant overlap with vocation, at least as it is characterized by Weber. Even further, I will argue that the Weber's conception of vocation is, in many ways, a rational working out of Locke's notions of labor and a calling in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. This is not to say the two would not have disagreements, and these points of disagreement will be discussed, but the concepts overlap more than not. First, both require an education and cultivation. As we saw, the entirety of Locke's education is aimed at the preparation for a calling, and such a calling requires particular virtues of character. In particular, much of Locke's education is aimed at rational self-control. Even if the means of

achieving such a state often require a paternalistic guide, the end goal is rational self-control.[194] A calling also requires intellectual virtues, as someone who requires a calling needs to understand, and appreciate, the utilitarian calculus often involved in choosing an immediate unease with a later, and greater, release of unease. These virtues are not exhaustive, but are representative of the kinds of characteristics required of those training for a calling.

Though Weber does not often write explicitly of particular virtues such as rational self-control, they are very much implied. Having a personality, which is required of those that have a true vocation, requires a constancy of our inner lives with our ultimate values. And as we saw, this requires self-denial of a kind. It is a denial of many of our natural drives and impulses in order to aim at goals that are likewise not demanded of us by nature, but are imposed on us by our very selves. We choose our ultimate values, even if this choice is not precisely rational. The laws that we must create in line with those values, however, are very much rational, and are part of Weber's famous analysis of the increased rationalization and demystification of the West. This creation of the personality, because it involves the choice of values and the rational direction of one's interior life in line with those values, necessarily includes great self-control. It requires the denial of other impulses in favor of a law-abiding and rational existence.

The personality, because it is a creation, is also remarkably close to the rational self-creation described and defended in Chapter Two. For Locke, we are responsible for far more than directing our lives in a rational manner. We are also responsible for the rational ordering of the simple ideas given to us through sensation and experience. This creation is all the more important when it comes to our moral ideas, as mixed modes are capable of demonstration.

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[194] See, e.g., Rita Koganzon, "'Contesting the Empire of Habit': Habituation and Liberty in Lockean Education," *The American Political Science Review* 110, no. 3 (August 2016): 547–58.

Moral ideas are not subject to any outside concrete reality, but are explicitly and completely abstract notions created in our minds. We can, and ought to, determine our values through reason and deny our natural impulses when they contradict those rationally constructed values. In fact, though Weber does not mention or include Locke in his analysis, we can say that Locke represents the secularization of the Protestant moral ideal that Weber thought was beginning to reign in Europe.[195]

There are important differences between Locke and Weber, however. Most importantly, and this particular issue will become of great importance in the ultimate comparison of leisure and vocation, though both conceptions focus on the need for self-direction and creation, they are to different ends. Weber denies the possibility of reasoning between ultimate values. What is important is self-creation, so long as it operates with an eye to conviction, responsibility, and proportion. This position is worked out in Weber's discussion of science as a vocation:

> The assumption that I am offering you here is based on a fundamental fact. This is that as long as life is left to itself and is understood in its own terms, it knows only that the conflict between these gods is never-ending. Or, in nonfigurative language, life is about the incompatibility of ultimate *possible* attitudes and hence the inability ever to resolve the conflicts between them. Hence the necessity of *deciding* between them. Whether in these circumstances it is worth anyone's while to choose science as a "vocation" and whether science itself has an objectively worthwhile "vocation" is itself a value judgment about which nothing useful can be said in the lecture room. This is because positively affirming the value of science is the *precondition* of all teaching.[196]

Both Weber and Locke require choice. Weber requires us to choose a particular vocation over another. Locke also requires choice throughout his ethical and epistemological writings. As we saw, Locke prescribes a rational and radical self-creation. However, Locke would be unlikely to

[195] Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 131.

[196] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 27.

call Weber's "decision" an actual choice, as Weber is pessimistic about a rational resolution to "deciding" between ultimate values. While Locke requires choice and self-creation, he still holds onto the possibility and promise of rational resolution. He believes a complete and fully demonstrable ethical system is possible, for instance. Also, as we saw, he requires that we ourselves reach rational conclusions about the external world. We need to think through and demonstrate these conclusions ourselves for them to be considered knowledge, but it is still knowledge, and not an arbitrary choice between possible conclusions. For Weber, those of us that inherit the rationalized and demystified world created in large part by Protestantantism must choose a vocation, and choose it for its own sake, in order to create meaning in our lives, but there is no ultimate justification of whether such dedication to that particular vocation is warranted. We can use "reason" if we wish, but is, in the end, unfit for the task.

Despite these differences, which are not insubstantial, there are important ways in which Weber's account of vocation is a coherent and consistent working out of Locke's notions of labor and a calling. This should be somewhat unsurprising, as Locke's notion of a calling is, in many ways, precisely the account of secular vocation that Weber hoped to be taking root in Europe and America. The hope Weber has for vocation is that it will create meaning in an increasingly demystified and potentially meaningless world. As such, he requires that vocation be weighty and done for its own sake. This also means that it cannot simply be understood in terms of money-making. Vocations, in the modern world, must obviously support us materially, but this cannot be their only, or even primary, role. This is why he takes issue with Benjamin Franklin, and his influence, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[197] There is a danger

[197] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 11.

now that the religious foundations underlying the value of a calling have, for the most part, washed away. Money and wealth can be served as ends, which Weber, understandably, finds to be inadequate. As we saw in Chapter Two, Locke also understands labor, work, and the calling to be valuable beyond their material utility. They of course also serve those ends, but they have a crucial importance besides. In this way, we cannot understand Locke's attachment to labor to be simply a part of some "possessive individualism" that serves enrichment over all else. Furthermore, though Locke's relationship with religion is complicated and full of controversy, Locke provides a justification for labor, as described and defended in Chapter Two, that does not require the inclusion of God or the afterlife.

So, there is a coherence between Locke and Weber here, but Weber develops the notion further by describing the psychological state of those actually attached to vocation. Locke tells us something of the promise and necessity of labor and a calling, but Weber develops more completely the inner desires and, also, the possible challenges of those that dedicate their lives to a vocation, especially in light of the secularization of the West.

Vocation and Leisure: Points of Confluence

As Weber notes, we in the West are required to have a vocation: "The Puritans *wanted* to be men of the calling—we, on the other hand, *must be*."[198] Even if the religious foundations of the value of vocation have crumbled away, the need for a calling has been internalized to the point of not needing to be consciously sought after—it is firmly settled in each of our characters. There is some benefit to this, as even if we value something like Aristotelian leisure, vocation is our best hope for integrating components of such a life. In what follows, I will connect more explicitly

[198] Weber, 120.

the points of overlap between vocation and leisure.

First, both vocation and leisure are achieved, and these kinds of achievement are related. As argued in the Chapter One, leisure is not simply the absence of work or other responsibility, but itself requires virtues. It not only requires material preconditions to make removal from work possible, but it also requires the virtues of character to moderate the attraction of the life of means. Furthermore, it requires intellectual virtues to make such moderation desired in the first place. In order to desire leisure, it needs to be recognized for what it is: a way of life that ought to be sought after as an end. It is the proper end to the lives of work and labor. Also, leisure assumes a particular set of weighty activities that are desired for their own sakes. Philosophy, for instance, is not possible without such intellectual and moral virtues.

Vocation demands similar virtues. For instance, the moderation required to push away the use*ful* in favor of the use*less* in leisure is much the same as the need to combine conviction and responsibility in a vocation. Weber's "power politician" does not properly have a vocation without a settled conviction. This is similar to one of Aristotle's critiques of the Spartans. The Spartans, who certainly have elements of moderation and courage, only have those virtues for the end of military success. At some point, they lost an understanding of the true end of military might, and now seek it for its own sake. In this way, they do not have true moderation or courage because military success is not rightly understood as a means to the ends of peace and leisure. Likewise, Weber's power politician seeks power for its own sake, and is not guided by conviction. Aristotle and Weber certainly use different language, but the problems and proposed solutions have overlap. Vocation is not, and cannot be, pure career success. Translating such an analysis to a language more characteristic of Aristotle, the power politician is obsessed with the means to the point of neglecting the ends. Mistaking the means as an end is both a moral and

intellectual error. Whereas Weber would call it a failed resolution of conviction and responsibility, Aristotle would deem it an intellectual failure that demonstrates a lack of true moral virtue, since the excellences of character are not aimed at the proper target. Moderation and courage are not themselves without being aimed at leisure and peace.

This overlap of requiring virtues leads to the most important way in which vocation and leisure are connected—both are best understood as ways of being. Leisure as a way of being was thoroughly defended in Chapter One, so I will focus my attention here on vocation. Vocation as a way of being is clearly seen in the ethics of conviction. The young would-be scientist has this psychological state of living for the sake of their vocation. Weber thinks this spirit, too, needs to be moderated, and the practical preconditions of living "from" some vocations create their own challenges, but this conviction element is still required in a vocation.

Outside of the psychological state of conviction, vocation as a way of being finds its strongest form in its relation to personality. Remember, personality is often synonymous with having a vocation, is required in the service of a vocation, and has the same Protestant origins. A personality is a systematic and rational unity. This was all discussed above. However, there is an additional component of this unity: it is a "wholeness," and not simply an aggregate of individual acts. This too arose within Puritan theology, where salvation was not the result of any single act, but the result of a settled and coherent way of life. It is therefore a radical turning of the soul.[199] Though there were elements of this found in earlier Catholicism, it was not fully worked out and developed until the Puritan focus on personality. This is not only a unique form of Christianity, but it is unique among all religions. Weber claims aspects of Hinduism get close—the caste

[199] Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 147.

system is like a system of vocation and working toward God within your own sphere of life. However, such a life is imposed upon you instead of being created and cultivated.[200] It is only with the Puritans and those of us that inherit their world that are fully capable of personality in this way.

Another area of overlap between leisure and vocation is that they are both aristocratic. I argued in the Chapter One that there is an important sense in which Aristotle is an egalitarian when it comes to leisure. The best political society, on his account, is one in which the most possible people are given the opportunity to cultivate leisure. There is a sense of tragedy involved, as a class of people must be relied upon to provide the material means to allow such a condition to exist, but Aristotle does attempt to expand the sphere of the privileged as far as he thinks is practicable. Still, despite being an egalitarian in the sense of trying to provide the means of leisure to the most possible, leisure, even in Aristotle's figuring, remains an aristocratic, or elitist, achievement. This is partly true because it is exclusive—many, if not most, are kept from participating simply by the class into which they are born. However, more importantly, it is aristocratic in the sense that leisure is an achievement and not given to someone based on either birthright or natural dignity. Leisure is a way of life that is *achieved*. It requires certain preconditions, such as the material means to free oneself from work. But those material means are not alone sufficient. Moral virtues must be developed, most notably moderation, to avoid the temptation of serving wealth and might as ends. Also, intellectual virtues are required, both in the service of understanding which activities are worthy of doing for their own sakes, and also in the practice of those very same activities. For instance, intellectual virtue is required to see the

[200] Goldman, 153–60.

worth of philosophy, and it is also required in the activity of philosophy. The same is true of other appropriate leisured activities, such as the skilled appreciation of beautiful music. Aristotelian leisure is, therefore, noble in both the low and high senses of the word. In the ideal political community, only a particular class is given the opportunity to be leisured. Aristotle may have expanded the sphere as much as he thought possible, but by virtue of birth alone, a whole class is kept from this way of life. However, even more importantly for the present discussion, leisure is also noble is the higher sense. The birthright itself is not a guarantee. The birthright is an opportunity to be leisured, but the individual must still develop and practice the virtues necessary for leisure, as well and be capable of engaging in the few activities that are worthy of being practiced for their own sake.

Vocation is not aristocratic in the lower sense. The very concept and experience of vocation is a modern development, and it has arisen alongside the loosening and eventual destruction of claims of birthright. In other words, virtually everyone in a liberal society has the opportunity to pursue vocation. Certainly, there may be unequal access to education and other goods that improve the chances of achieving some vocations, but there are no formal barriers stipulating that those born into one class become, say, millworkers, while those of another class become, say, physicians. So, it is not aristocratic in the way Nietzsche describes older forms of nobility. The greatness of someone with a vocation does not stem from an inherent and internal beauty and goodness. Vocation is a kind of way of being, but it is one that is shaped and created—it is not a quality with which someone is born. Vocation as a way of life must be *wrested* from our natural state. For the Protestant theologians that created vocation, our natural being is sinful and must be overcome. Our being may become noble and worthy, but unlike old forms of

nobility, it is does not find its goodness inherent and natural to itself.[201]

Vocation, therefore, has this democratic component of there being no birthright or inherent goodness associated with one class over another. Despite being democratic in this way, however, vocation is aristocratic in the sense that one must become worthy of a vocation. Regardless of particular path chosen, some virtues or characteristics, such as self-control, instrumental rationality, and the combination of conviction and responsibility are required. Beyond these, individual vocations will have their own forms of education that combine technical skill, and, likely, character virtues. Being a nurse, for instance, requires much more than technical skills such as placing an IV. And those character virtues may be more demanding than even the technical one.[202] This is why someone like Weber, who found much to praise in vocation, and prescribed it as a way of creating meaning in a world that was quickly becoming demystified, also thought vocation would be a rather rare accomplishment. We all want a vocation—we even feel that we need[203] one—but it is still an accomplishment, and a difficult one.

This component of vocation, as being aristocratic, helps separate it from other ways of valuing work. Not all exaltations of work and labor are elitist. In fact, they are typically the opposite: many arguments for the value of work and labor explicitly focus on its democratic nature. They are a case for the *dignity* of labor rather than its worth as an elite ideal. On this account, there are not substantive and qualitative differences between kinds of work and labor; it is simply to be valued over not working and laboring. It is prescribed as something that should

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[201] Goldman, 166.

[202] Goldman, 165–68.

[203] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 120.

be a universal human experience, rather than an opportunity for some to separate themselves from others. Vocation may therefore be democratic in that there are no formal barriers, and it may also not be capable of prescribing some activities as worthy of vocation over others, but it can, and does, differentiate between *ways* of working and laboring. Those who argue for the dignity of labor may place the average fast-food worker on the same level as the physician. Partisans of vocations are unlikely to do so. The fast-food worker is unlikely to be devoted to their work as an end in the way the physician does. We may be able to imagine a person in such a situation as capable of conviction, but we must also admit that most, if not all, fast-food workers do not share the conviction of the politician that dedicates their life to the pursuit of a set of policies.

Vocation and Leisure: Points of Divergence

In its most common contemporary use, leisure is intimately connected with choice. It is equivalent with one specific form of freedom: freedom from necessity. Leisure is that empty vessel of time that we have when we are not working or doing something for some other sake. As I argued in Chapter One, however, the fullest sense of leisure cannot be understood in terms of simple freedom from necessity. Such freedom is a *precondition* to Aristotelian leisure, but they are not synonymous. Leisure requires material means, but it also requires virtues, and implies particular weighty activities, such as philosophy and educated appreciation of music. Contemporary understandings of leisure do not imply particular activities. Leisure is simply whatever is chosen outside of the bounds of work. It also does not require virtue. Water-skiing is a leisure activity according to contemporary usage, but we should have severe doubts as to whether Aristotle would consider it as such.

Contemporary usage also seems to imply doing something for its own sake. We work in

order to support ourselves and our family, but we choose to water-ski, not for some other sake—we do not benefit materially from the activity—but because it is enjoyable on its own. However, Aristotle would reject even this. Here, "leisure" is better understood as "play." Play, on Aristotle's account, is for some other sake. It is not only done for the sake of pleasure, but for the sake of rest. Aristotle would doubt the water-skiers claim that they are engaging in their "leisure" activity for its own sake, but instead as a form of rest, which is itself done for the sake of work.

This difference is the greatest point of departure between Aristotelian leisure and Weberian vocation. Both leisure and vocation are both understood as being done for their own sakes. However, there are different usages at work. In vocation, the "for its own sake" is meant psychologically. When we say that a doctor does her work for its own sake, we mean that that is how she understands her motivations and also her identity. It is not simply for the material reward, but she understands her work as being valuable, not just to others but also to herself, in a way that transcends a material utility calculus. We remain agnostic, however, about whether being a doctor is actually worthy of such devotion. What is important to our, and Weber's, understanding of vocation, is the psychological motivation and self-understanding of the work. We may have some hazily-defined limit as to what is and is not an acceptable as a vocation, but the range is wide—nearly infinitely so. Not only does the doctor have a vocation, but so does the banker. Even the water-skier that turns professional would be said to have a calling by most, and even Weber would not seem to have any grounds for denying such a claim. As Strauss would put it, if Weber denies that the water-skier has a vocation, it is merely a noble example of Weber not following through with his principles.[204]

[204] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Revised edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999),

Aristotle, too, understands leisure as an end in itself, but the interior understanding and devotion is not sufficient, or even marking of true leisure. It is not enough that the doctor understands herself as doing her work for its own sake—it needs to be worthy of such devotion. As we saw, Weber thinks there are virtues and qualities of character that are required in order to have a vocation. Cultivating and maintaining meaning in our work requires virtue. However, Aristotle may reply that such virtues are meaningless or valueless unless directed in specific directions. This is, again, the foundation of his critique of the Spartans. They may display courage and moderation, but to what end? Victory on the battlefield is worthy, but not as an ultimate end. War is for the sake of peace and work is for the sake of leisure. Such virtues are not as valuable if they are only practiced for undeserving ends. When ill-directed, Aristotle doubts whether such virtues are virtues at all (*Politics*, 1334a26-28). Aristotle's concern is less with what is consciously chosen as an end as is what is actually deserving of being treated as such. Vocation's inclusion of devotion, while lending it an important point of overlap with leisure, ultimately has a different implication.

Both Weber's and Locke's account of vocation and calling have this element of choice. But Weber's conception is more thoroughly subjective. Though he seems to take issue with the position that he attributes to Benjamin Franklin, that of seeking wealth for its own sake,[205] he explicitly denies the ability to choose between ultimate values.[206] Locke is the more complicated case, as we saw. He is unwilling to give up the idea of ultimate values, and comes closest to prescribing bourgeois life. But even here, choice is a necessary component. As we saw, Locke

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[205] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 9–13.

[206] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 27.

requires ideas and goods to be freely chosen. It is not enough that our ideas correspond with reality, but we need to think through them and discover them ourselves to be considered true knowledge. Likewise, even if Locke wants to say that some lives are more deserving, he does require that we freely choose them using our own reason, rather than relying upon tradition.

Pathologies of Vocation

As has already been hinted, vocation also has a number of problems—both in terms of its status as an answer to the challenge of leisure, and also in terms of its inherent tendencies. The most important issue with its overlap with Aristotelian leisure, that it employs a psychological rather than an objective understanding of devotion, was discussed above. Now we need to address some its inherent pathologies—some of which are separate from the question of its continuity with leisure. We must also address these issues if we are to take seriously vocation as a replacement for leisure, or a complement fitting of the art of democracy.

The first problem stems from the above issue of choice. Cultivating such characteristics is not easy, but rational control of oneself in the service of an eventual calling is, for Locke, the explicit purpose of education (*Thoughts*, §201). The concern here is: self-control in the service of what? Since Locke and Weber refuse to definitively argue that one vocation can be better than another, we are left with the possibility that the professional water-skier has as much of a vocation as the public servant. Aristotle's education at least has the virtue of limiting the range of worthy activity and prescribing certain ways of life over others. Without such an education, Aristotle may argue that we will end up with more water-skiers than public servants. To some extent, this criticism is unfair—it places a standard upon Locke and Weber that they themselves did not choose. Weber would argue that there is no ground to judge one vocation over another. Unless we can demonstrate that such ground exists, the criticism is moot.

A second possible problem associated with vocation is that of pursuing wealth as an end. Neither Locke nor Weber recommend such a path, but it is clearly a danger in a market-based world that is dedicated to vocation. Locke himself argues for a political society in which the industrious and rational are benefited over the covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious (*ST*, §34). The job of the policymaker is to incentivize the industrious in an attempt to make all more rational. The end goal is not wealth, but the self-control and rational industry found in the process of making wealth. The potential problem is that the very virtues that Locke prescribes are useful as means to wealth. Even further, Locke wishes to incentivize the practice of those virtues even more by creating political societies that make those virtues the foundation of all wealth. So, even if Locke does not want us to seek wealth as an end, he desires and creates a world in which the temptation to such a devotion to wealth could not possibly be greater. Both Locke and Weber suggest various means of avoiding such temptation, but the temptation is both present and strong—perhaps irresistibly so. In this way, it is analogous to Locke's worries about leisure. Locke denies the Aristotelian optimism that, given the opportunity and education, people will use freedom from occupation in noble ways. He seems to find much of the aristocracy to be dedicated to drinking and gambling instead of philosophy and music. This is part of his defense of educating the young, from an early age, in lives of work and labor. However, this type of argument is easily mirrored back at Locke. If drunkenness and gambling are temptations too great to avoid for those that have the privilege of being free from occupation, why should we assume that those educated for a calling will not use that very education in the service of wealth? Sure, self-control is part of that education, but so is moderation part of the education of leisure. If we think the moderation in leisure will be unsuccessful in leisure, we must also admit that, in the very least, it will not be universally

successful in the case of vocation. Again, both Locke and Weber do argue for virtues and characteristics that will help undermine such temptation, but we must also admit they will be imperfectly successful.

Thomas Mann on Bourgeois Domination

We've seen that vocation allows for a wide range of choice, perhaps too much so. But in-line with the above concern for the potential danger of the concern with wealth, there is also the opposite problem: perhaps the range of choice is not as wide as is claimed. Vocation allows for a wide range of choice, and for reasons discussed above, this can be a limitation, both generally and more specifically when compared to leisure. But as is seemingly always the case with freedom of choice, not all choices are perfectly free or equal. On the one hand, this would seem to be an advantage, as it takes something away from the Aristotelian critique. However, it can also be an even greater limitation than perfectly free choice if the callings that are worthy of devotion are discouraged. The direction encouraged and incentivized by liberalism will be the subject of what follows. More precisely, I will address and analyze those callings that are left out and discouraged, and ask what is lost in that discouragement.

Vocation arises alongside of and is intimately connected with the bourgeoisie. The values of this class are nearly coterminous with those of vocation, with its emphasis upon work, commerce, and instrumental rationality. Thus, the rise of vocation is also the rise and domination of bourgeois cultural values. One possible problem with this development is that some vocations do not fit so readily or easily into bourgeois life. Bourgeois values condition such choices and make some paths easier than others. The challenge here is with those that find or create themselves to fit vocations that fit uneasily with such a value system. The work of Thomas Mann, especially in the novellas *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice*, two works that are

noted for complementing one another,[207] is particularly instructive here. Mann is a forceful and nuanced commentator on bourgeois culture and vocation, and the relationship between those values and the life of the artist were one of the most sustained themes throughout his writings, beginning with his first novel, *Buddenbrooks*. Furthermore, Mann understood vocation and a calling in much the same way as Weber. A calling, for Mann, is something chosen for its own sake, and is also a form of self-creation.[208]

The calling of the artist may seem odd as an example of the challenges of vocation, as it is not a life chosen by many, and the artist always seems to have an uneasy relationship with dominant values. However, we can, and will, extend the analysis to other paths, including that of the scholar. Also, though it may be true that the artist is nearly always a troublesome figure, its relationship with the bourgeoisie is unique. In other words, the artist's uneasiness with the bourgeoisie is different from its uneasiness with Medieval aristocracy. Finally, I will address the possibility that the character of Aschenbach represents a danger to all holding a vocation, not just those who are artists. It is perhaps not just Aschenbach's particular longings that get suppressed and sublimated, but the radical self-control emphasized in having a calling perhaps belies vocation's promise of being supportive of and necessary to felicity. Radical self-control may keep us from expressing and nurturing longings that are natural and necessary.

Mann's most forceful posing of the problem is found in *Death in Venice*. The protagonist, Aschenbach, is an artist, but worships at the altar of Apollo rather than Dionysus. He is a model of self-control and has become a thoroughly bourgeois figure. The problem is not that of an

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[207] Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 187.

[208] Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice: And Seven Other Stories* (New York: Vintage Books, 1954), 94; Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 14; Goldman, 132.

unconstrained artist living amongst the bourgeois who reject him. Aschenbach is not a bohemian. Though an artist, Aschenbach has adapted his life to fit the rhythms of the productive classes. He is a productive artist, and also a successful one. The problem, therefore, is a different one. As Goldman puts it, the problem is the "Apollonian denying the Dionysian, which eventually takes its revenge."[209] The self-control of Aschenbach is destructive of his art, and eventually, his life. *Eros* is necessary in the artist, but Aschenbach does his best to repress it. This is destructive of his art because his passion becomes abstract. He does not portray real characters, but abstractions of those characters.[210] His art is rational in the extreme. This becomes destructive of his life because, in the end, when the repressed Dionysian takes its revenge, Aschenbach is not able to control his desire for Tadzio, a boy staying in the same hotel as Aschenbach in Venice. Aschenbach desires the boy, but loves an abstract idea of the boy, which becomes even more dangerous. The repressed Dionysian desire overflows, and Aschenbach cannot indulge in a way that does not destroy him. His desire for Tadzio is represented in his indulging in strawberries while trailing the boy and his family through Venice: the strawberries are overripe, and their consumption kills him.[211] A cholera epidemic is quietly sweeping through Venice, infecting the food and water of the city. Aschenbach's overly Apollonian nature therefore unravels itself in the end. He is unable to control himself, and his desire cannot be indulged in a manner that is either satisfactory or non-destructive. By the time he gets to the strawberries, they are over-ripe. A better relationship with the Dionysian would be more satisfying. It is also destructive, as his overripe desire destroys him.

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[209] Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self*, 202.

[210] Goldman, 203.

[211] Mann, *Death in Venice*, 71.

Among many other things, *Death in Venice* shows the destructive potential of enveloping particular lives into bourgeois callings that fit only uneasily into such a framework. The radical self-control makes for a good banker, but not a good artist. The radical self-control helps the artist belong to the world, which Mann sincerely finds valuable, but the artist also requires some distance from that world. Otherwise, art is destroyed along with the artist. Mann does not seem to be without hope, however. The hero of an earlier work, *Tonio Kröger*, displays many of the same, and also opposite, tendencies as Aschenbach, but finds a resolution in the end, even if not an emphatically happy one.

The key characters of *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice* are remarkably similar. Both men are writers, come from prestigious bourgeois backgrounds on their father's side,[212] and have artistically inclined mothers from "swarthy" parts of Europe.[213] Also, in both stories, the protagonists have a love for a boy that causes them suffering, even if, in the case of *Tonio Kröger*, the love is of a peer and is not overtly sexual. Still, both boys are fourteen years old,[214] which is unlikely to be a coincidental point of similarity coming from a writer as precise as Mann. Finally, Tonio shares with Aschenbach a need to be in control of himself, and a feeling of shame that his work is often at odds with such self-control.[215] The word translated as "wanton," and the feeling of being wanton, figures largely in both works.

Despite these striking similarities, the novellas end in vastly different places: Aschenbach is destroyed and Tonio becomes reconciled with himself, his work, and, importantly, with

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[212] Mann, 77.

[213] Mann, 79.

[214] Mann, 78.

[215] Mann, 79.

bourgeois life. Both Tonio's resolution an Aschenbach's destruction are, respectively, the success and failure of each reconciling themselves to their calling. What is it, then, that allows for Tonio's resolution, when Aschenbach is destroyed? First, Tonio is able to achieve distance from the bourgeois, despite needing time and immense struggle to achieve it. Tonio's love for the bourgeois finds form in his love for his friend Hans Hansen. Hans is well loved by all—a figure built for his time. The difference between the two is seen in the comparative way they walk: "Tonio's walk was idle and uneven, whereas the other's slim legs in their black stockings moved with an elastic, rhythmic tread."[216] Hans moves easily in the world, and does not share, nor does he need to, Tonio's inner conflict over his identity and the worth of that identity.

Aschenbach clearly felt the same inner desire to be loved for the same qualities, and to be a man fit for his time and place, but Tonio does not completely fold himself into the bourgeoisie like Aschenbach does. At the end of the novella, Tonio is confronted with Hans, and his other adolescent object of desire, the similarly blonde Ingeborg Holm, after being separated from them for most of his adult life. Whereas Aschenbach would have been destroyed by this reunion, Tonio keeps a distance and is able to preserve himself and his vocation. Aschenbach's love of Tadzio begins with a quiet appreciation, but he gets bolder as the story continues. Others begin to wonder about Aschenbach's attachment, and he no longer attempts to hide his desire. He follows Tadzio through the streets and colors his hair to appear younger and more attractive.[217] There is a seemingly similar account of Tonio watching and longing for Hans and Inge. However, despite his longing, Tonio remains apart. He is tempted to speak to them, but "they would not understand him, they would listen like strangers to anything he was

[216] Mann, 77.

[217] Mann, 69–70.

able to say. For their speech was not his speech."[218] There is a gulf separating Tonio from the strong, beautiful, blond, and blue-eyed. Unlike Aschenbach, Tonio is able to recognize this unbridgeable gulf through an awareness of his own self. He does not speak to the couple, and he does not take part in the dance that ensues. He is entranced by the scene, and wishes he could be part of it; but he returns to his room. Tonio's voluntary separation is not easy:

> He was exhausted with jealousy, worn out with the gaiety in which he had no part. Just the same, just the same as it had always been. Always with burning cheeks he had stood in his dark corner and suffered for you, you blond, you living, you happy ones! And then quite simply gone away. Somebody *must* come now! Ingeborg *must* notice he had gone, must slip after him, lay a hand on his shoulder and say: "Come back and be happy. I love you!" But she came not at all. No, such things did not happen. Yes, all was as it had been, and he too was happy, just as he had been. For his heart was alive. But between that past and this present what had happened to make him become that which he now was? Icy desolation, solitude: mind, and art, forsooth![219]

Unlike Aschenbach, Tonio returns to his room and is happy, despite the burn of his longing. He pens a letter to his bohemian friend, Lisabeta, while there:

> I stand between two worlds. I am at home in neither, and I suffer in consequences. You artists call me a *bourgeois*, and the *bourgeois* try to arrest me… I don't know which makes me feel worse. The *bourgeois* are stupid; but you adorers of the beautiful, who call me phlegmatic and without aspirations, you ought to realize that there is a way of being an artist that goes so deep and is so much a matter of origins and destinies that no longing seems to it sweeter and more worth knowing than longing after the bliss of the commonplace.[220]

Aschenbach becomes a Hans or Ingeborg, and the artistic adoration of the beautiful revolts within him, and he is unable to contain or healthily direct his longing. Tonio remains apart. He finds bliss in the commonplace without becoming common. He is also part bohemian, but cannot abide their simple derision of the bourgeois.

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[218] Mann, 130.

[219] Mann, 131–32.

[220] Mann, 133.

In the end, their loves represent different temptations. Aschenbach's Tadzio is a temptation to the Dionysian in spite of his completely bourgeois existence. Tonio's Hans and Inge are temptations to the bourgeois life—in many ways, a temptation to become Aschenbach. Still, despite their longings being in opposite directions, they represent the same problem: how to navigate a world in which you do not and cannot belong. More specifically, it is how to have a vocation that does not readily fit the model of the bourgeois vocation that Locke and Weber have in mind. Arschenbach's reaction is to completely envelop himself into accepted forms of vocation. He is an artist, but works as a technician. He is a model of self-control. However, his work is not true art, and is too abstract. And, in the end, his self-control destroys him, as his sublimated desires revolt and express themselves in destructive ways. Tonio is able to reach a resolution, even if not one that is completely satisfactory. Poetry, as Tonio learns from a young age, distances himself from others, especially those like Hans. Furthermore, poetry makes him feel "wanton" and "inappropriate" at times because of its necessary inclusion of the sentimental and the passionate.[221] He succeeds because he is able to have a foot in the bourgeois life without being a complete member. He dresses like everyone else, and is able to find the everyday beautiful, even if he cannot fully experience it. Still, he is not destroyed because he recognizes that he cannot be a full member while also being an artist. When questioned by the police, he cooperates, but also does not tell them that he is the son of one of the most respected members of their city.[222] Even when his freedom is at stake, he resides between worlds. He does not flee, but he does not give in. This is not an easy existence. He enjoys watching the lives on Hans and Inge, but it is painful to not be them or interact with them. Tonio can be a lover of Hans, but

[221] Mann, 79.

[222] Mann, 114–17.

unlike Aschenbach, he will never be the beloved of those like Hans and Inge. Because of this status as lover and never beloved, Tonio necessarily suffers,[223] and, we are led to believe, will always suffer. Still, even at the height of this pain, Mann says he is happy,[224] and Tonio also tells Lisabeta as much in the last line of the novella: "'Do not chide this love, Lisabeta; it is good and fruitful. There is longing in it, and a gentle envy; a touch of contempt and no little innocent bliss.'"[225]

Despite fitting within the modern creation and exaltation of work and labor, some vocations, especially that of Tonio, become a kind of curse.[226] However, all vocations have this element of being a curse. They are undergone for their own sake, which means their activity may sometimes prove antithetical to our own personal interest. This contradiction with our personal interest and welfare, and perhaps even safety, is substantially more present in the vocation of the poet than it is in the banker, but we can imagine that this conflict will, at least occasionally, occur in all possible vocations. Furthermore, though the artist may be the archetype of the vocation that struggles to fit in with the bourgeois life that itself created the value of vocation, other callings have not so different experiences. You scholars, especially, may feel the same sufferings of a Tonio.

Finally, the threat of becoming like Aschenbach is transferable if we expand the scope of the problem. The banker may not require, from his vocation's point of view, the ability to express sentimental longings. The case of the artist brings this problem into starker relief, but

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[223] Mann, 78.

[224] Mann, 131–32.

[225] Mann, 134.

[226] Mann, 99.

Mann makes us wonder about the naturalness and universality of longings that do not readily fit into the radical self-control of bourgeois vocation. Aschenbach's sublimation is extreme, but moderate forms of it may be universal.

The Hesitant Aesthete: The Fly-Fisherman

Another challenge of vocation is the simple fact that we require our vocation to also be the means of securing our subsistence. More precisely, a vocation may be corrupted, in comparison to Aristotelian leisure, by the fact that it is also done, even if only incidentally, for some other purpose. Even if primarily done for its own sake, it is also done for some other end—namely, the securing of material needs. Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett[227] famously demonstrated that introducing material rewards to activity can ultimately negatively affect the perceived value of that activity. In their experiment, they found that rewarding children for their drawings eventually led to less enjoyment of the activity of drawing on the part of the children, and they even produced less impressive work. Meanwhile, those who were not rewarded continued to enjoy the activity, and produced better drawings than those that were rewarded.[228] Thus, there is some evidence that the activity of the social worker is less pure by virtue of it being done, to some extent, out of necessity. However, though corrupted in a limited sense, I contend that it still shares, to a substantial degree, in the concept of leisure. Though other ends are involved,

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[227] Mark R. Lepper, David Greene, and Richard E. Nisbett, "Undermining Children's Intrinsic Interest with Extrinsic Reward: A Test of the 'Overjustification' Hypothesis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 28, no. 1 (October 1973): 129–37.

[228] Of course, the conclusions of this study did stir up controversy. See, e.g. Bobby J. Calder and Barry M. Staw, "Self-Perception of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 31, no. 4 (1975): 599–605.. Still, more recent work has confirmed the findings of Lepper et al: see Shu-Hua Tang and Vernon C. Hall, "The Overjustification Effect: A Meta-Analysis," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 9, no. 5 (October 1, 1995): 365–404. and Edward L. Deci, Richard Koestner, and Richard M. Ryan, "Extrinsic Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation in Education: Reconsidered Once Again," *Review of Educational Research* 71, no. 1 (2001): 1–27.

and this may alter the nature of the activity, it is still primarily done for its own sake.[229] But rather than address further challenge, I will turn to another aspect of liberal life that does separate itself from utility to a greater extent. Liberal life is not entirely composed of work, but also "leisure" of a kind, and this too must be addressed.

Thus far in this chapter, I have argued that an understanding of liberalism as completely avoiding or rejecting the question of human excellence and felicity is incomplete. We may have forgotten leisure, but it has been suggested that elements of Aristotelian *schole* have been in enveloped and cloaked in other forms. This was the point of the discussion of vocation. Vocation is not a perfect substitute for leisure, as we saw, but it is nevertheless true that that there is overlap in the two ways of life. Now I would like to explore the possibility that it is not just vocation, but also hobbies that allow us to incorporate elements of leisure into our lives. In this way, I am suggesting that the very concepts that Aristotle takes pains to separate from leisure, occupation and play, have become leisured.

Analyzing hobbies and play is also useful because we often use leisure as a synonym for play. Though I have made the claim that vocation incorporates elements of leisure, we would never confuse or interchange those terms. Studying play, though, allows us to see if the overlap in concepts is justified. As I will argue, though, much of this usage is unjustified. Aristotle's critique largely holds up to contemporary usage and experience. Play is very often simply pleasure and rest that is aimed at recovery from occupation. However, and this is important, this does not completely explain the role of hobbies and play in contemporary life. I will also argue that some forms of "serious" play do in fact incorporate elements of leisure, even if imperfectly.

[229] For a powerful case for what kinds of work might be considered worthy of vocation, see Russell Muirhead, *Just Work* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004)..

There remains a problem of mixing means and ends, but it is less problematic in the case of hobbies, as they are only useful in a secondary and abstract way.

So, there is some truth in our conflating leisure and play, but there is still important work to be done in analyzing and picking apart the details. I will start with an example of one activity that *does* incorporate some the substance of leisure: fishing.[230] The attachment many, though certainly not all, have to fishing goes beyond play as understood by Aristotle. The activity of fishing is pleasurable but not merely pleasurable in the way that eating a sugary food is pleasurable. It is pleasurable in much the same way the Locke finds labor to be pleasurable. It is often mixed with pain and strenuousness, but there is pleasure to be found in the straining. Further, fishing can be a source of rest, but is not necessarily so. The fly-fisherman who wades in the fast rivers of Wyoming, Montana, and Washington is not often at rest when fishing. If there is a rest, it is of the variety that Locke describes the rest found in learning a trade. It is an easing of one part while straining another. Thus, the fly-fisherman in a swift stream may be "resting" the parts of himself that he uses in his job as an accountant, but he is far from complete rest.

The case of fishing is also instructive because we can separate *ways* of fishing in the same way Aristotle separates ways of experiencing, enjoying, and playing music. On the one hand, there is the weekend fisherman who owns a boat with a large engine and comfortable seating. This fisherman is likely motivated by rest and pleasure. His boat and equipment serve to ensure both comfort and success with a lower requirement for skill. Of course, this is a generalization,

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[230] For another defense of fishing as a worthy activity of leisure, see Mark Kingwell, *Catch and Release: Trout Fishing and the Meaning of Life* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2004). Kingwell argues that fishing uniquely, though obviously not exclusively, allows for theoretical reflection. For a related treatment of hunting, see Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Hunting*, trans. Howard B. Wescott (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986).

but a useful one. This type of fisherman is akin to the listener of music that can only appreciate music as a method of unwinding. This is opposed to the cultivated and educated enjoyment of music that includes understanding and appreciating beauty. Consider again the fly fisherman. He ties his own flies and he wades in cold rivers seeking trout—an elusive, picky, and beautiful fish. When pushed, most fly-fishermen will admit that their method of fishing is not the most effective. This, I think, is a sign that this activity is a serious contender for leisure. Because of its difficulty and, typically, its lack of success, it cannot be defended on grounds of utility. As novelist Thomas McGuane writes,

> What happens to the chronic smeller of flowers, watcher of birds, listener to distant thunder? Certainly, he has lost efficiency as an angler. Has he become less of an angler? Perhaps. This is why fishermen are such liars. They are ashamed of their lollygagging and wastage of time. It's an understandable weakness. In some of today's brawny fish camps, flowers and birds can raise eyebrows.[231]

Other forms of fishing require less effort and are more effective. It is only within very specific contexts that fly-fishing is clearly more effective than putting a worm on a hook. Most fly-fishermen will tell you that being on the water during these moments is special, but that is far from the only time you will find them wading in a strong current. They remain, and not because they have good reason to suspect those conditions will suddenly occur. They may have hope, but these conditions are relatively predictable. For instance, warm and humid late evenings in mid-summer are often the few chances to catch many and large fish in streams in the Midwest. And indeed, you are likely to find many fly-fishermen on the stream during those hours. However, you will still find almost as many fishermen in the middle of a sunny day in August, in which your chances are severely diminished. What is more, this is not rare knowledge—nearly

[231] See also Thomas McGuane, *The Longest Silence: A Life in Fishing* (New York: Vintage, 1999)., xii.

everyone on the water understands their chances. They hope to defy the odds, but they still understand them.[232] What is more, the fly-fisherman has a sense of disgust with those that take the utility of fishing seriously. On this, McGuane says of the true fisherman, "progress is toward the kinds of fishing that are never productive in the sense of the blood riots of the hunting-and-fishing periodicals. Their illusions of continuous action evoke for him, finally, a condition of utter, mortuary boredom. Such anglers will always be inclined to find the gunnysack artists of the heavy kill rather cretinoid, their stringer-loads of gaping fish appalling."[233]

Also anti-utilitarian is the fly-fisherman's relationship with time. McGuane's most famous essay, "The Longest Silence," is premised on the idea that fishing demands its participants "waste" much time. As he describes elsewhere, "Angling is extremely time consuming. That's sort of the whole point. That is why in our high-speed world anglers, as a kind of preemptive strike, call themselves bums, addicts, and maniacs. We're actually rather quiet people for the most part but our attitude toward time sets us at odds with our own society."[234] Fishermen disappear for hours, days, or even weeks on end, and more often than not, return with little to show for it. Fishermen are well-known as liars, but perhaps not to the end of boasting, but because they feel the intense need to justify their activity on the grounds of utility. And the truth just does not cut it.

Even if you find the rare fly-fisherman that only casts during peak conditions, you can

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[232] McGuane would take issue with this point about fully understanding the odds: "I'm afraid that the best angling is always a respite from burden. Good anglers should lead useful lives, and useful lives are marked by struggle, and difficulty, and even pain. Perhaps the agony of simple mortality should be enough. But probably it is not. As they say in South America, everyone know that they are going to die; yet nobody believes it. Human lapses of this kind enable us to fish, fornicate, overeat, and bet on the horses." McGuane., x.

[233] McGuane, 121.

[234] McGuane, *The Longest Silence*., xiii.

buy fish in a supermarket, even salmon and trout, for less than the cost of equipment and effort required to catch the same fish with fly equipment. Furthermore, trout typically inhabit cold rivers that are not easily maneuvered by large boats. It therefore requires wading in these cold and often fast rivers that have slippery gravel bottoms. For these reasons, the typical fly-fisherman is not often at rest, and their activity cannot be explained by utility.

What, then, is the psychology of these people who are often found on the water before dawn and after midnight, who wade in swift and cold streams, and who receive little compensation in comparison to their effort? The activity cannot be explained by simply referring to pleasure, rest, or even utility. It may have some of each, but not nearly enough to explain their attachment. There are a few things to consider. First, many fishermen recognize the beauty of the skill of talented fishermen, or even of the fish they chase. It is not easy to artfully cast and present a fly underneath overhanging branches. The fly cast is also well noted for its rhythm and timing. For these reasons, the activity could be said to partake in beauty. There are romantic portrayals of this in pop-culture, including the film *A River Runs Through It*. The expert is better adept to the aesthetic appreciation of a cast, but the film, and its success, demonstrates that even non-practitioners can sense its beauty. Aristotle may complain that the activity is limited in its value for the same reason that the activity of a musician is. The primary value in music is to be found in the recognition of and appreciation for the form of beauty, not in the creation or demonstration of it. Still, the activity is required on the way to recognizing its beauty for the same reason that music education is useful for the later artful appreciation of music.

Aside from the activity itself, the fisherman may contend that the trout, the fish sought by most fly-fishermen, is itself a beautiful creature, and this beauty is revealed in and through the skillful catch and release of the fish. Aside from its physical beauty, the trout is elusive. They

only inhabit cold and clean waters. They are very often the first fish to be killed off by pollution. Also, despite being predators, they do not have the boldness of a bass that will eat seemingly anything and everything that appears to be both moving and able to fit into its mouth. Trout do not exhibit this behavior, and most often found in shaded, and therefore hard to see, water-columns, and only exit them in rare circumstances. A fly-fisherman may occasionally complain about the difficulties this causes, but he will also admit, upon better reflection, that this is part of the draw of the activity, and also the beauty of the trout.

This last point is seen by an analysis of the method of fly-fishing. We have already noted its difficulty and relative lack of success, and have suggested that its primary attraction cannot be utility, but is instead beauty. The cast is a looping arc, and requires perfect timing if you wish to accomplish more than a tangled pile of line that travels no more than three feet in front of you. Aside from the visual beauty of the cast, though, there is also the moment that the whole process of casting is aimed at: the strike. Dry-fly fishing aims at getting a trout to come to the surface of the water to take the fly. Again, this is rarely the most efficient. The vast majority of a trout's feeding is done below surface. So, why do it? Because it is beautiful to watch an elusive creature gracefully rise to the surface and take a fly by rising above the water level without breaking its surface. You fish on the surface because you want to see the fish strike. It is enjoyable because it is a challenge, but also because you want to see something beautiful. Further, the angler is in part the creator of that beauty. The angler tied the fly that attracted the trout, found a seam in the current that looked to be a good place for fish to feed, and artfully casted the fly to that precise spot. As novelist Norman Maclean writes, "One of life's quiet excitements is to stand somewhat apart from yourself and watch yourself softly becoming the

author of something beautiful, even if it is only a floating ash."[235] There is an element of competition between the angler and the fish—the fisherman must trick the fish into taking the fly. But that is not the essence of the relationship. The angler needs the fish to be beautiful and elusive and difficult to catch if the activity is to have any meaning whatsoever. The angler requires this of the trout because the catching of the fish would otherwise not be beautiful and neither would being the "author" of its catch. This is perhaps why Maclean finds dry-fly fishing to be the Godliest: "our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others. He told us about Christ's disciples being fishermen, and we were left to assume, as my brother and I did, that all first-class fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were fly fishermen and that John, the favorite, was a dry-fly fisherman."[236]

The promise of hobbies, such as fly-fishing, is that they are sometimes able to push away the question of utility. This is part of the philosopher Mark Kingwell's argument for fly-fishing as a serious leisure activity. It is a rare activity that allows us to escape the feeling that we should do something productive, and instead focus on an activity that is worthy on its own.[237] Though I will later take issue with the extent to which this point is true, many hobbies have this character of successfully leading us away from the useful and into the profoundly useless. This is best seen in the way hobbies can fundamentally alter our experience with time. Instead of the constant awareness of the discrete movement of time found in the world of work that can never fully escape the needs of utility, the doing of something for its own sake found in hobbies like fly-

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[235] Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 43. For a philosophic rather than poetic account of the fly cast, see Kingwell, *Catch and Release*, 131.

[236] Maclean, *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories*, 1.

[237] Kingwell, *Catch and Release*, 196.

fishing has an experience with time that is wholly different. Because of its extraction from utility, time is no longer a measurement for the fisherman. This is how Maclean describes the losing of a fish: "Poets talk about 'spots of time,' but it is really the fishermen who experience eternity compressed into a moment. No one can tell what a spot of time is until suddenly the whole world is a fish and the fish is gone. I shall remember that son of a bitch forever."[238] Fishing is a "long silence" shocked by a moment that makes everything else disappear. The accountant, as accountant, does not experience his work in this way. There is no other interpretation of the crude "Gone Fishin'" sign. It is the precise antithesis of "Be Back in 5 Minutes." The fisherman cannot tell when he will return, because he himself does not know. A specific time of return would not be helpful, because it is not possible to live up to his word. Furthermore, the "Be Back in 5 Minutes" sign comes down when the clerk returns, but the fisherman is always "Gone Fishin'."

Beyond this experience with time that suggests the doing of something for its own sake, many hobbies have serious claims to being deserving of this level of attachment. Though not a complete argument, I have suggested ways in which the activity of fly-fishing deserves the attachment many of its devotees give to it. Much of it partakes in beauty, from the tying of flies, the casting of line, the strike of the fish, and the actual fish itself. In fishing, and in nearly all hobbies, devotion is required in order to achieve this beauty, but it is both present and achievable. There are costs to this devotion, and these will be discussed in what follows, but the reward is there for those that are willing to pay the cost.

[238] Maclean, *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories*, 44.

Limitations of Hobbies

As is the case with vocation, there remain potential limitations, despite the various kinds of promise in the example and experience of hobbies. The largest potential limitation is that there is never a full release from utility. I made the argument that fly-fishing does escape the realm of means in important ways, but I also hinted that the escape was not complete. The activity remains at odds with what is often expected of it. When returning from a trip, a fisherman is expected to answer a specific set of questions. The question confronting the fisherman is never about how beautiful his cast was, but it is instead: how many fish did you catch? And, how big were they? Even if such questions are not internalized, which they likely are to a varying extent, the fisherman still confronts the standard of utility, and must defend the egregious amount of time he spends on the water on these grounds. Locke has convinced us that even our recreation should be useful. The playing of sports is not just about the enjoyment of competition, but we also defend it on the grounds that it keeps us in good physical condition. As mentioned above, the creeping standard of utility is one explanation of why fishermen lie. He is confronted with a measuring stick that he himself does not use, so he must make something up in order to defend his time spent as worthwhile.

Furthermore, this need to defend fishing, or whatever hobby, on the standard of utility, runs the risk of threatening what makes the activity valuable in the first place. It is not just that the fisherman must confront others who use a different measuring stick than they do, but this measuring stick can be internalized. This may indeed be how the fisherman initially defends the activity to himself. Many first-time fishermen think they will feed themselves on their catch, and believe there will be a gain from their new hobby. For reasons described above, the fly-fisherman is likely to find out very quickly that this presumption is far from correct. However,

the yardstick of utility may force the fly-fisherman into less noble forms of fishing, including fishing with wet flies rather than dry, or even giving up fly-fishing altogether in favor of more successful methods. Such a change would indeed be reasonable, at least according to the standard of utility. But what this does is transform the activity from something done for, and worthy of being done for, its own sake, into something done for some other sake. And their activity would not look altogether distinct from outsiders. They are both fishermen. And yet, when compared to the standard of leisure, they are quite different. The first, because he engages in his hobby for its own sake, and because it is, arguably, worthy of such devotion, fares well against the standard of leisure. The second, however, does not. Not only is the activity no longer worthy of such devotion, the fisherman no longer understands himself in such a way. Thus, the standard of utility is a threat to many hobbies. It affects the activity itself, and also the way in which the practitioners of those hobbies understand the relationship between themselves and their hobby.

Another potential limitation of hobbies is shared with vocation: there is no education for what is and is not worthy of devotion. I have suggested reasons why fly-fishing may be a deserving hobby, but this does not mean all are equal. The focus is on choice and personal preference for what one enjoys, not on what is and is not worthy of doing for its own sake. There is thus a danger of devoting oneself to a rather silly activity. Much of what was said in the section on vocation applies here, so I will focus on a specific component: the solipsistic nature of many hobbies. Consider the example found in the character of Uncle Toby in Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*.[239] This novel should be of interest to us, if only

[239] Hereafter referred to as *Tristram Shandy*.

because of its constant reference to, and satire of, Locke's theories addressed in Chapter Two. Locke's theory of the association of ideas is turned against him, and the problem portrayed well represents the danger of hobbies. The narrator's uncle, Toby, becomes devoted to a new hobby: the building of fortifications. However, both the choice of hobby and the resulting obsession is solipsistic. Toby previously suffered a groin wound in a battle. His building of fortifications, then, was not the result of free deliberation, but is only of interest to him because of his personal connection and history, even if not a happy one, with military strategy. Though he eventually attempts to simulate a current siege, he begins by simulating the battle in which he suffered his wound. Toby, obviously, does not understand his obsession as simply solipsistic—he thinks the building of fortifications is of the utmost importance. He finds it to be a great service to the public, as they can be educated and informed about fortifications, which is, to Toby and his attendant Trim, obviously valuable. No one dares tell him otherwise. Even his brother, the ultra-rational Walter, who is always pained by Toby's constant and long speeches on fortifications, has too much love for his brother to hint that his work is unimportant. Walter does prove unable to hold his tongue during one of Toby's long speeches, but quickly asks for forgiveness when he sees the effect of his cruelty:

> He rose up hastily from his chair, and seizing hold of both my uncle *Toby*'s hands as he spoke:–Brother *Toby*, said he, –I beg thy pardon; forgive, I pray thee, this rash humor which my mother gave me.–My dear, dear brother, answer'd my uncle *Toby*, rising up by my father's help, say no more about it;–you are heartily welcome, had it been ten times as much, brother. But 'tis ungenerous, replied my father, to hurt any man;–a brother worse;–but to hurt a brother of such gentle manners,–so unprovoking,–and so unresenting;–'tis base:–By heaven, 'tis cowardly.–You are heartily welcome, brother, quoth my uncle *Toby*–had it been fifty times as much.–Besides, what have I to do, my dear *Toby*, cried my father, either with your amusements or your pleasures, unless it was in my power (which it is not) to increase their measure?[240]

[240] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Modern Library edition (New

Walter, despite feeling his brother's activity and obsession to be worse than useless, is unable to confront his brother with this fact. Felt even more strongly than his belief that the building of fortifications is not worthy is the belief that his brother must be allowed to find his own way to satisfaction.

Not only is the origin of the hobby to be found in a painful page of Toby's own history that is of no interest to anyone but himself, his hobby-horse[241] becomes the touchstone of everything else in his life. For example, during the birth of the narrator, Dr. Slop gives a speech on the virtues of forceps in making births safer. Toby interrupts this speech by saying he wished Dr. Slop had seen "what prodigious armies we had in *Flanders*."[242] This is also portrayed near the end of the novel in Toby's attempt to woo his neighbor, Widow Wadman. The widow had already been in love with Toby for months. Toby finally begins to sense this attachment, and also begins to return those feelings. Widow Wadman, however, had a concern. Because of Toby's wound, it was unclear whether he would be able to father children. After a series of attempts to ask the question indirectly, she finally asks him where exactly he was wounded, and provocatively tells him she would like to see and touch the very spot. He responds by having Trim retrieve a map so that he can point to Namur, the sight of the battle that saw him wounded.[243] Toby's hobby-horse becomes the point of association for everything else, even to the point of distracting him from a woman asking him about his "fitness" for marriage.

York: Modern Library, 2004). 2.12.

[241] The term "hobby-horse" has an interesting history. Sterne, no doubt, is aware of its usage in Shakespeare as a term for a prostitute. See William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann, 3rd ed. (New York: Arden Shakespeare, 1996). 4.1.

[242] Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. 2.18.

[243] Sterne. 9.26.

Uncle Toby's failings are meant as a satire of Locke's theory of the association of ideas. However, it is also a commentary on the psychology of those with hobby-horses. Hobbies have a way of being imperial over our other concerns, and these obsessions run the risk of becoming our only point of association for everything else. To some extent, there is some benefit. If a hobby is worthy of serious devotion, we should be sympathetic to those who take it is seriously and devote themselves to the activity. However, not all, or even many hobbies have this character. This becomes an even greater danger, as we have internalized the belief that nearly nothing can supersede personal preference. This position is posed as a rhetorical question by Sterne's narrator: "so long as a man rides his Hobby-Horse peaceably and quietly along the king's highway, and neither compels you or me to get up behind him,--pray, Sir, what have either you or I to do with it?"[244] It is Uncle Toby's prerogative to devote himself to military fortifications. If his own hyper-critical brother does not have the heart to undermine him, who else will?

The obsessive quality of hobbies can often be a problem, but so too can its opposite. Uncle Toby, as an aristocrat, has the time and resources to obsess over the building of fortifications. He does not have a trade or job, and so he has the means of pouring himself into the activity. This is not experience most of us have with our hobbies. Consider, instead, the example of a hobby that we may admit is worthy of the kind of devotion that Toby gives to his fortifications. Let us say that this hobby is poetry. Unlike Toby, our poet must work in order to make a living. Our poet works a full-time job, and must relegate her writing to evenings and weekends. There is an obvious problem of time and energy. One reason why many of our

[244] Sterne. 1.7.

chosen hobbies are not impressive is that we require them to be a respite from work. Serious activities are not, by definition, rejuvenators of energy. If they are to be worth doing at all, they require the time and energy that we devote to work. The above example of fly-fishing operates as a kind of middle ground. It serves something of the function that Aristotle conceives play serving: it is rest that makes us better able to return to work. Fishing removes us, even physically, from the everyday. It requires that you escape, and, in this way, can serve as a break from work. But that is not all that it is. It also demands great effort. The escape itself takes effort, and so does the activity of fly-fishing. The fly-fisherman is very far removed from the fisherman that falls asleep in his boat with a beer in his hand. Fly-fishing does not allow this orientation to the activity. These are distinct human beings.

Because of the demands of work, fly-fishing is the best we can reasonably hope for. It is demanding and beautiful, but can be restful. We cannot hope for the accountant to become a poet. The highest activities are too much, at least for enough of us for it to be worthy of discussion, which is partly why Tocqueville found America to be lacking in the arts and sciences. On this, Tocqueville argued: "there is no denying the fact that, among civilized nations today, few have made less progress in the higher sciences or produced a smaller number of great artists, illustrious poets, and celebrated writers than the United States,"[245] and "It is impossible to imagine anything as insignificant, dull, or encumbered with petty interests—in a word, as antipoetic—as the life of an American."[246] The causes of such an antipoetic spirit are multiple, but one is the simple material fact of the need for occupation. The law of inheritance divides wealth and makes nearly everyone part of the industrial and commercial classes. Even if

[245] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. 2.1.9.

[246] Tocqueville. 2.1.17.

individuals become wealthy, they must keep working because fortunes are not stable enough. And all this without the moral motive to work, which Tocqueville also examines.[247] Occupation means the higher activities are nearly impossible. Tocqueville does not go so far as to say art will not exist in democratic societies. Despite the force of the law of inheritance, and the concomitant need to make all things equal, nature revolts. The more talented will gain wealth and the human mind simply cannot completely succumb to the realm of the material. The mind is naturally drawn to the "infinite, the immaterial, and beautiful."[248] Still, their leisure is never secure or complete in the way that it was for the aristocracy. Tocqueville suggests that the genius will be able to transcend the material, but only incompletely. And if the genius finds herself weighted down with material concerns, what of the non-genius?

The question is not whether genius arises in democracy. It can, and Tocqueville knew this. America has Twain and Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy. The question is over the leisured appreciation of those works. An aristocracy not only supports artists, it also supports the cultivation of their appreciation. The creation of beauty is not enough—there must also be someone there to recognize it. This is the peak of Aristotle's discussion of education at the end of the *Politics*. The point is not to play beautiful music, but to recognize and appreciate that beauty. It is here that the current critique is aimed. If a genius, the accountant can become a writer. But if not, she is very unlikely to cultivate a leisured appreciation of art. Such an appreciation, both Aristotle and Tocqueville would agree, requires a significant education. Not only does a democratic system distract from such an education, it fosters its precise opposite. Even if the human mind naturally seeks out the infinite, the immaterial, and the beautiful, it

[247] Tocqueville., 2.2.18.

[248] Tocqueville., 2.1.9.

needs to be attuned to each. Democracy makes us much better attuned to their opposites. Indeed, it requires that attunement. The human mind seeks out the immaterial after the material has been secured, but such security is difficult to attain. We should find beauty in a liberal democratic world, but will not find many worshipping at its altar. There is a symphony, but the hall is empty.

The highest activities require a devotion that most us cannot give them. Poetry can be a vocation, but as a hobby, it is problematic. It requires an education, and its pleasures are often not as immediate as the pleasures of other hobbies. This is why I claim fly-fishing is the best we can hope for. Though it is not best understood as restful or relaxing to the extent other pastimes are, it is restful in the way Locke describes: it complements our vocations by stressing and relaxing the parts of us that are, respectively, relaxed and stressed in our occupations. Furthermore, its pleasures are more forthcoming. A kind of education is certainly required to experience the peaks of the sport. You cannot immediately achieve what Maclean calls "becoming the author of something beautiful." Still, many of the charms of fly-fishing, and many other sports like it, show themselves, or at least tease us, from the beginning. Someone who has fished for thirty years may be better capable of appreciating the beauty of a cast, and also the beauty of skillfully catching a beautiful creature, but it does not take a savant to immediately sense the attractiveness of catching a Brook trout in a remote stream. This experience is worthy on its own while simultaneously goading you into getting better and undergoing a more thorough education in the sport. This is not always true of poetry. Nineteenth century Romantic poetry, with all of its allusions and references that require an impressive education simply to decode it, does not always admit of initial pleasure. This is a problem for those that must work. We *can* choose hobbies that are fulfilling and elevating, but

we *need* them to be accessible. And this limitation partly explains why many of our hobbies lack seriousness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to assess the ways in which vocations and hobbies can be an important element of what Tocqueville calls the art of democracy. Vocation, as conceived by Weber, accepts and also radicalizes the life of work and labor that is prescribed by Locke. It radicalizes the self-authorship of work and labor into the choice of ultimate values. This contradicts the Aristotelian concern over choice-worthiness, but in the radicalization of self-authorship, it demands the psychological experience of doing something for its own sake. In the same way that religion is useful in a democracy because it lifts, even if only for a moment, the concerns of the average denizen above the temporal and material, vocation elevates work above its relationship with material gain. Vocation does so imperfectly, but all forms of the democratic art have limitations. Religion is limited temporally, as people do not spend all of their time practicing their faith. It is the exception, not the rule. Vocation has the advantage of being the primary activity of those who have the ability and privilege to have one. Its limitation is not temporal, but in the extent of that elevation. Religion allows for a near complete break from the material in rare moments, while vocation imperfectly raises concerns above the mere material for a greater period of time. It is limited in the extent that it can pierce the material, as vocation must always also be the source of material needs and comfort. This tension and threat is seen in Weber's analysis of science as a vocation. The practical concerns of the scientist are not merely an annoyance, but also threaten the worthiness of the activity, and even the personality of the one engaging in it. This is not a necessary outcome, but it is a danger that is always and necessarily lurking.

Meanwhile, hobbies offer a cleaner, though not complete, break from utility. We require hobbies to be useful in an indirect way, but this is a substantial move and improvement from the direct utility required of a calling. The indirect requirement of utility keeps the accountant from becoming a poet, but it does not keep her from fly-fishing, and that is not a small thing. Hobbies have the danger of being completely unserious, or in the case of Uncle Toby in *Tristram Shandy*, of being solipsistic, but serious play is a real option, even if we do not, and cannot, *require* play to be serious.

Vocation and hobbies do not meet the level of Aristotelian leisure in terms of a break from utility, but that is not the only weighty question we can ask, nor is it the only standard by which we can judge them. We can also judge them for their potentiality as democratic arts. And as to the dangers of unserious vocation and hobbies, there is nothing from Weber's point of view that requires us to choose the serious from the unserious, or to even give a rational defense of the existence of those categories; but in the same way that Strauss admires Weber for not being completely consistent in his theory of the incommensurability of values, we can still ask liberal and post-liberal citizens to choose wisely, even if we have no grounds for the asking. This, too, is part of the art of democracy. The opportunity for serious work and play is there for the having, even if that opportunity is imperfectly and non-universally taken.

CONCLUSION

Rather than recapitulating the arguments that have composed each of the previous chapters, I would like to put them together in a new way, and also defend the approach I have taken in addressing the challenge of leisure. The questions so far have regarded where we have been, at least in terms of ideals. Aristotle's ideal regime may not have been realized, but his arguments in favor of and in explanation of leisure reflected and shaped classical Greek aims. Likewise, a close reading of Locke's moral ideas on labor, as well as of Weber's on vocation, may not give us a complete picture of our current view and experience of work, but Locke does provide the most impressive and thorough case for a regime dedicated to work. Locke's defense of work is certainly not the only one, but it has perhaps the best combination of persuasiveness and influence. In other words, the average nineteenth century laborer did not have the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in mind, but that it is not the point. The point is that our attitudes, even if we are not always or even often aware of it, have philosophical justifications. And any attempt to defend or even compare those attitudes without addressing those justifications will be unsatisfactory if we hold any hope for rationality in social thought. As Hartz argues, the "task of the cultural analyst" is to "drive a wedge of rationality through the pathetic indecisions of social thought."[249]

So much for a defense of the approach I have taken, and now for a new cut at explaining and defending the movement of the dissertation. This attempt at putting together and reconstructing the arguments will also be more polemical than the previous chapters, where I intentionally sought to be measured. This will take the form of addressing the following

[249] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1991), 63.

questions which have received attention in popular outlets such as *The Guardian*, *Politico*, and *The Atlantic*. These questions are: How far are we from achieving a world without work? What will such a world look like? And, what are the roadblocks to such a world? This possibility of a world without work has been the source of much thinking and publishing, with articles such as "Post-work: the radical idea of a world without jobs,"[250] and "Automation will mark the end of our work-obsessed society."[251] These are often thoughtful pieces that explore the possibility, and perhaps the coming reality, of a society that no longer works much or at all. This line of thinking, of course, is not all that new, even within the modern tradition. Perhaps most famously, Marx, in *The German Ideology*, writes of a communist society where we hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, and criticize after dinner. And all this without *becoming* the hunter, fisherman, herdsman, or critic. None of those activities are our jobs or careers or vocations.

Despite often being thoughtful, these contemporary pieces are limited, and limited in telling ways. First, most thinking about this question sits within a vaguely Marxist ideology. It is, and will remain, largely unconvincing to the liberal world for this reason. If liberal societies are to be convinced of leisure over labor, it is unlikely to be because of or in favor of a communist utopia. Secondly, this line of thinking is limited because it has little to no conception of what will be done in the absence of labor. Post-work thinking typically begins and ends with the absence of work. It is simply a void. The only common positive suggestion is intensive democratic

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[250] Andy Beckett, "Post-Work: The Radical Idea of a World without Jobs," *The Atlantic*, January 19, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jan/19/post-work-the-radical-idea-of-a-world-without-jobs.

[251] David Frayne, "Automation Will Mark the End of Our Work-Obsessed Society," *The Guardian*, February 24, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/feb/24/automation-end-work-obsessed-society-dystopia-jobs.

political participation.[252] Instead of work, the vaguely Marxist and Frankfurt School dream is to spend time organizing with others, attending town-hall meetings, and participating in various committees. To this, the liberal responds: I would rather toil.

The imagination of this post-work existence not only lacks the necessary creativity, it is such by principle. The wish to get beyond labor is for the purpose of increasing freedom and autonomy. The Marxist is still a liberal in this respect. Freedom from work gives us a greater ability to control and direct our own lives. They cannot prescribe activity or give direction to life in this imagined society, as the entire point of it is to be direction-less. In this way, the thinking behind these essays remains firmly attached to the very tradition that elevated the life of work and labor in the first place. Elevating labor and ascribing to it the sole legitimate origin of property can be said to be done in the name of freedom. It frees us from the unjust system of aristocracy and allows everyone to direct their own lives as they see fit, rather than have it dictated to them. The post-work theorist has the same goal of freedom, but thinks automation gets us to the same place, but without the dreaded toil required of Lockean liberty.

Given the progress of automation, it is difficult for many to understand why we still work. At worst, they remain clueless as to why most remain attached to labor, or, at best, they offer unconvincing explanations. In general, we can say there are three possible explanations for why we still work. First, the technology is not yet ready. Automation is improving, but it is not quite ready to replace most human workers with robots. Some go so far as to suggest that such a point is an impossibility. Most notably, Hubert Dreyfus argues that artificial intelligence is

[252] David Moscrop, "Will Robots Set Us Free?," *Boston Review*, February 7, 2018, http://bostonreview.net/philosophy-religion/david-moscrop-will-automation-set-us-free?__prclt=loiaZMl5.

grounded on a fundamentally mistaken understanding of how the human mind operates. As such, automation will never be able to replace human beings.[253] However, most do not follow Dreyfus to this conclusion, and state that the technology is possible and, probably, inevitable. We must only wait for it to achieve its potential.

The technological explanation, though, is unable to account for a simple fact: the level of material comfort that could already be guaranteed using current technology and automation is clearly above the level Aristotle thought necessary for citizens in the ideal regime. We would perhaps still have to do *some* work, but not anywhere near what we do now. So, even if the technological explanation does carry some weight, it does not carry much, and must be supplemented, if not completely replaced.

The second explanation for why we have yet to move beyond labor boils down to the position that we are immoderate with wealth. Much of the explanation of Frankfurt School falls within this category. However, instead of blaming the proletariat for their moral failings, they predictably blame capitalist elites for inculcating a desire for ever greater consumer goods in the lower classes.[254] Though this explanation may seem overly simple, it shares much in common with the view of Lockean liberalism that suggests its primary goal is unbounded capitalistic wealth.[255] Along these lines, we could explain our continued labor in the following way. Instead of a specific level of material comfort, we desire *more* material comfort. We desire more material comfort than we already have, and more than our neighbors. Even if we accept the possibility of

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[253] Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992).

[254] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).

[255] See especially C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2011).

complete automation, we would still have an incentive to work. We want and demand growth, and continuing to work would be the only way to secure that desire.

A third explanation is that we see work and labor as necessary to either or both moral excellence or happiness. We work not because automation technology is not yet ready, or just because our desire for wealth is unlimited, but also because we find work integral to happiness and moral development. This is the explanation described and endorsed in Chapter Two. We do not realize freedom and autonomy by escaping work, but by doing it. Work is the ground of self-creation. If we lose our job, we lose more than an income, but also our identity and sense of self-worth. Furthermore, on Locke's account, work is not just one of many means of creating ourselves, but is the primary one.

This explanation is not completely separate from the explanation that we are immoderate with wealth. A necessary component of Locke's account of labor is that it secures material comfort. If we are to be self-creators in the way Locke describes, we must also take charge of, and responsibility for, our material and financial needs. And by unbounding our access to wealth, so long as it is done by legitimate means, Locke suggests that the industrious and rational should be able to take advantage of their virtues to the end of having greater comfort. The world was made for the industrious and the rational rather than the querulous and covetous. Locke seems to intend this in a quite literal sense: the industrious and the rational should *have* and *take* the world. Immoderation with wealth, on this line of thinking, has nothing to do with the *amount* of wealth you have, but only the means you use to garner that wealth. In other words, so long as you work for it, rather than gain it through some other illegitimate means, there is no such thing as immoderation. The means may still operate as a bound to amount, especially when combined to our duties to others. Whether we have these duties to others in Locke's view,

though, is a topic of contention.[256] In the very least, if there is a limit to acquisition—if there is immoderation along the lines of amount of wealth—the limit is high, so long as the means are legitimate. All of this is not to say that unbounded wealth is the ultimate goal of Locke's moral system. Its *telos* is a radical and rational self-creation, which includes acquiring property. This *may* involve great wealth, but it need not. The point here is merely that the two explanations may overlap with one another.

On one interpretation of his thought, the move to a post-work world would be welcome to Locke. On this view, work is a means to the end of pleasure, and a painful means at that. And like all means, especially painful ones, it would be better if we could achieve the end without it. If we can achieve material comfort without work, then, we should take that opportunity. Not only would the "leisure" found in this post-work world be welcome, it could largely be composed of various pleasures. This is what post-work theorists imagine us to be doing, at least when we are not taking part in solidarity raising committee meetings.

For reasons described in Chapter Two, this interpretation is mistaken. Work and labor are not simply means to the end of material comfort, but are a necessary part of rational self-authorship. This is one way of interpreting Locke's ontological inclusion of property in the self. Since property comes to be part of preservation, the stealing of property is equivalent to the harming of the body. My property becomes as much apart of "me" as the limbs and their motion that do the laboring. One implication of this, and one possible motivation for Locke's inclusion of property in the concept of personhood, is that it serves to protect the natural right

[256] For the best arguments for such duties, see Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 178–82; James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For the contrary position, see Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*; Jeremy Waldron, "Enough and as Good Left for Others," *The Philosophical Quarterly (1950-)* 29, no. 117 (1979): 319–28.

of property. We can all agree that harming a person's body without just cause is wrong. By making property equivalent to the body, Locke is attempting to securely ground the right to property that is legitimately gained. We do not need the consent of others to gain this right in the same way I do not need to take leave of anyone to move my arms—so long as I am not moving them to confront the nose of another. This interpretation is powerful and likely accurate. However, it does not preclude a supplement: that property is also ontologically attached and inherent to the person because property is a necessary component of self-creation. That is, the natural right to property is not just a right, it is also a responsibility. Chapter V of the *Second Treatise* is not just an elevating of the productive classes, but is also a damning of the idle ones. Locke not only finds some to be worthy of gaining more, but also finds others to be missing something crucial. As we see in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke thinks the gentry need to be educated in a new way. Instead of an education focused on Greek and Latin, he prescribes an education that is dedicated to preparation for a calling. Within this preparation, the pupil needs to learn a trade and make their recreation useful. This is not because the gentry needs greater wealth—the gentry at this point was relatively stable, and the system of primogeniture was secure. The pupil needs to learn a trade because leisure is "dice and drink." Rationality is found in industry, not idleness. In the development of full personhood, work and labor, for both the sake of a rational and materially secure life, work and labor are needed.

It is only because of this account of labor that it can become a serious rival to leisure. Paradoxically, it is also what makes it overlap with leisure. And this is what makes most post-work theories comparatively superficial. They cannot explain our inability to un-attach and forget labor because they do not fully appreciate the arguments in its favor. If work were merely a means to an end, then their confusion would be warranted. It would be, at best, silly if we

continued to work in the face of automation. At worst, it is vicious, because the only possible motivation would be simple greed.

Even if there were a sustained argument as to why this richer account of Lockean liberalism is intellectually tenuous, their account of leisure is not radical enough. As mentioned, there is not much in the way of a positive explanation or endorsement of life after work, even when they quickly reject a bastardized version of life dedicated to labor. This is made all the more strange given their acceptance of freedom as autonomy of personal choice of activity. At the same time they reject and refuse to see the full weight of liberalism, they still accept some of its basic tenets. If we are serious about rejecting work, we need to be more courageous in imagining alternatives, and more demanding in seeing the implications of such a rejection.

So, we need better theorizing as to the possibility of what such post-work life can look like. This is the advantage of turning to Aristotle, who offers the richest explanation of leisure and a life dedicated to only those things that are done for their own sakes. Perhaps most importantly of all, he gives an argument for what activities *deserve* to be undergone for their own sakes. Aristotle offers a thorough account of, not only what composes leisure, but also what leisure itself requires. Leisure, understood as a way of being toward a bounded set of weighty activities, requires material and moral means. It requires material means to give oneself the freedom to push aside the realm of the useful, and it requires moral and intellectual virtues to make that pushing aside possible. In a liberal world, we could say those moral virtues are even more necessary today than they were during Aristotle's time, as immoderation with wealth has gone beyond a temptation and achieved official sanction. We could therefore add a kind of social courage in excepting oneself from the lives of work and vocation in favor of leisure.

Chapter Three addressed the possibility that vocation and hobbies allow us to incorporate elements of leisure into our lives, even if that incorporation is not fully satisfactory. But there was one advantage of vocation that was left unaddressed in that section. Here I mean the liberal achievement of making vocation available to nearly all. Unlike Aristotelian leisure, which required a class of slaves, vocation is thoroughly democratic. It may be objected that this is to apply a standard upon Aristotle's theory that he did not accept, and possibly rejected, Aristotle also sought to make leisure available to as many as possible. The class of citizens is not limited by the natural potential for virtue only found in a stable class of inherited privilege, but by the practical concern that leisure requires material means and physical security. Because of this, Aristotle finds it necessary that a class of people work to support leisure. Again, this is not because this class is inherently worse than others, but because inherited privilege is the best of the imperfect means of achieving leisure. That Aristotle held such a view is made clear by the simple fact that nature imperfectly passes on virtue. The class of slaves in the ideal regime is present not because of a claim for the justice of such an arrangement, but a recognition of our inability to achieve perfect justice. We could also examine his support for labor-saving devices (*Politics* 1253b33-1254a1). They are beneficial precisely because they may exempt more people from labor. This significantly undermines the possibility that Aristotle was sincere about the presence of a class of natural slaves. If it were true that such a class existed, we should feel no reason to exempt them from their slavishness. Educating them for something better would necessarily fail, and we should not concern ourselves with a project that has no hope for success.

For these reasons, and others, I argued that Aristotle can accurately be seen as a kind of democrat. He certainly does not find human beings to be equal, and they are perhaps naturally unequal, but virtue of the soul is exceedingly difficult to see, nature is far from perfect in

transmitting those virtues between generations, and if virtue is inheritable at all, it is only in the form of transmitting greater potential for virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a10-27). The virtues that matter the most, the intellectual and moral ones, require great cultivation beyond what nature gives us.

It is therefore not unreasonable to use the standard of availability in relation to Aristotle and leisure. The fact that vocation is nearly universally obtainable is an advantage, and an advantage that Aristotle would have to recognize. Aristotle's objection would rather center on the relative worth of a life of vocation in comparison to leisure. For reasons discussed in Chapter Three, there are significant areas of overlap between the two lives, but they do still separate at important junctures. It remains important to see, still, that the vocation of today is not equivalent to the toil in fourth-century BCE Athens. As such, we should not strictly apply Aristotle's statements about *ponos*, or toil, to contemporary vocation. Vocation is still done for some other sake, as is marking of Aristotle's account of work, but it also makes a claim to achieving something beyond utility.

The ultimate question of whether vocation supersedes leisure has been bracketed for this project, but I will point to the grounds of where such battles would need to take place, and sometimes show where each side would succeed in their initial attacks. The question of availability is one of those battle sites. It seems decidedly in the favor of vocation, but leisure does have a weighty counter, in part because it can now take advantage of liberalism's weapons. Shedding the military imagery, the obsessions with work and wealth have not only made possible a fulfilling life through work in the form of vocation, but the wealth generated by such a value has also re-made leisure possible for more people. It has done so through the serious hobbies discussed in Chapter Three, but also through making possible a more thorough leisure.

This is what is incompletely imagined by those theorizing a post-work future. There are more roadblocks to such developments than they are able or willing to see, but it is nevertheless true that there exists a possibility for leisure for the very reason that we have rejected leisure. By rejecting Aristotle, we have made his ideal regime possible, and have made it possible on more humane terms than Aristotle was able to seriously address. Because of Locke, we are able to have Aristotle without slavery.

If this discussion seems too remote or abstract, we can address actual examples of these lives today. There are two related branches of this tendency, one less extreme than the other. The less extreme is David Brooks's "Bohemian bourgeois," shortened to "bobo," and we will call the other, more extreme branch, the "idler." The bobo is an incoherent figure that is both comic and serious. They have not dropped out of the workforce, but have fundamentally changed it. Work is part of their identity, and they will often willingly work longer hours. However, they make work look more like play.[257] Their employers pay them to take extended lunch breaks to play squash. The sit on bean-bag chairs and their desks are made from ping-pong tables. While they work long hours, they make labor less like Lockean toil and more like Aristotelian leisure, or even play. They also attempt to make their pleasures useful,[258] and they are not shy of consumption as a pleasure, only they require consumption to be morally justified. Their consumption can even be conspicuous, so long as it has the image of being something more than consumption. The best example is found in their ostentatious kitchens. Their prized possessions are, on the surface at least, useful. A kitchen is obviously of great utility. But they are

[257] David Brooks, *Bobos In Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 138–40.

[258] Brooks, 198–203.

beautiful and the bobos require the materials that make up their kitchens to be environmentally friendly, and the labor that constructed or installed those materials to be unionized. It extremely thoughtful practicality that, in the end, transcends or upsets practicality. This incoherent blending of personalities and values is not just comic, but also serious. These are highly educated persons who think seriously about their actions. Further, I challenge you to deny that the attachments and desires of the bobos do not, at least in part, mark and explain your own attachments and desires.

Despite its attractions, though, it remains an incoherent combination of traditions and values that ultimately speaks of either a sneaking doubt about the foundations of some of those values, or it is a cowardice that refuses to fully admit the rejection of those values. Like the European "atheist" that Nietzsche decries as still a Christian, the bobo seems to want to reject Lockean labor and vocation, but does not have the strength of soul to move on. The bobo cries for sincerity, but that sincerity is clownish, and belied by a lack of self-knowledge.

The other, more extreme, branch of an attempt to live a post-work world is the idler. The idler drops out of the working world, and in so doing, gains the admiration of Whitman:

> How I do love a loafer! Of all human beings, none equals your genuine, inbred, unvarying loafer. Now when I say loafer, I *mean* loafer; not a fellow who is lazy by fits and starts—who to-day will work his twelve or fourteen hours, and to-morrow doze and idle. I stand up for no such half-way business. Give me your calm, steady, philosophick son of indolence; one that doesn't swerve from the beaten track; a man who goes the undivided beast. To such an one will I doff my beaver. No matter whether he be a street loafer or a dock loafer—whether his hat be rimless, and his boots slouched, and his coat out at the elbows: he belongs to that ancient and honourable fraternity, whom I venerate above all your upstarts, your dandies, and your political oracles.[259]

[259] Walt Whitman, *Walt Whitman's Selected Journalism*, ed. Douglas A. Noverr and Jason Stacy (Iowa City: University Of Iowa Press, 2015), 181.

Whitman's loafer has seen a resurgence in recent years, marked by such publications as *The Idler* magazine. Though I have pointed to reasons why this option is limited, the figure of the idler at least allows us to glimpse at what a post-work life may look like. Their example is important because they have dropped out of the workplace for principled reasons. This is seen in Hodgkinson's book, *How to Be Idle*, where a critique of jobs as a modern invention is given.[260] This new wave of idlers has yet to go much beyond a child's account of leisure—"It's time to say no to jobs and yes to fun, freedom and pleasure"[261]—but they often at least point to the possibility of higher activity such as contemplation.[262]

What these idlers seem to imagine is taking the hobbies discussed in Chapter Three, and making them the focus of our lives. In the post-work world, the weekend fly-fisher becomes the "trout bum."[263] Or, instead of increasing their time fishing, they add other hobbies. This is again in line with Marx's vision of hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, rearing cattle in the evening, and criticizing after dinner. The point is to not be defined by any one of those activities. Being defined by one activity is one of the injustices of the capitalist political economy. It makes us fishermen, farmers, and philosophers. To be a complete human being means laboring some, thinking more, and fishing in between. It is not to fish for reasons of utility, but to do so precisely because there is no point to it. In this way, as Oakeshott[264] and Booth[265] aptly recognize, there is an affinity between Marx and the conservative.

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[260] Tom Hodgkinson, *How to Be Idle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 15., ix.

[261] Hodgkinson, *How to Be Idle*.

[262] Hodgkinson, 148.

[263] John Gierach, *Trout Bum* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988).

[264] Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), 417–19.

[265] William James Booth, "Gone Fishing: Making Sense of Marx's Concept of Communism," *Political Theory* 17, no. 2 (1989): 205–8.

The point of this discussion is not to complete a full analysis of the idler, but to see in the example of it an idea of what post-work life may look like if and when it becomes a reality. If leisure occurs for everyone, it will happen because of a certain historical development at the end of a confluence of technological progress, but also just as importantly, the result of a particular political regime. In other words, leisure for everyone could not have happened as a result of Aristotle's ideal regime; it can only occur at the end of liberalism. It could not have occurred in Aristotle's ideal regime because of the turn away from commerce and labor, especially by those with an education. We should not expect great wealth and technological advances from a regime explicitly dedicated to ends not associated with wealth. We can only expect the wealth and technology necessary to come from a liberal regime.

This is still not enough, however, which is why I say it can only come at the "end" of liberalism. The potential leisure that results from wealth and technology will always remain merely potential so long as the moral and political values that made that wealth and technology remain dominant. As Tocqueville noted, there is not just a material aversion to leisure, but also a moral one.[266] The moral aversion is what requires the end of liberalism. Where we lie in the history and possible end of liberalism is a question that is obviously too large for this project. Instead, the current project, in part, has sought to show that the moral aversion to leisure is inherently part of liberalism, at least of the Lockean variety. As such, though statements about the current and future stability of liberalism of this type is outside our bounds, it remains relevant to discuss what opportunities for leisure will arise when and if liberalism does end. This is because, as is the case with all foundings, history matters. The American founding did not

[266] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 642.

arise out of thin air. As every worthy commentator has noted, from Tocqueville to Arendt,[267] the American revolution owes much to the English tradition. It remains distinct in important ways, but we should never expect a founding, even one that is the result of a revolution, to not also incorporate elements of the previous regime. This is important not just for institutional arrangements, but perhaps even more important for character, widely understood.

With this in mind, if we are to attempt to imagine the future possibility of greater leisure, we need to recognize that it requires a rejection of a kind, but also recognize that the rejection itself will take on a particular character as a result of what it does and does not reject. And this is why analyzing Brooks' bobos and the idler are good places to start. In a sense, the bobo does reject elements of Lockean liberalism while still holding onto other elements. Bobos reject much of Locke's understanding of work, by both expanding and contracting its role in their lives, but they are nevertheless firmly attached to industriousness and the growth and consumption that corresponds with it. The idler more strongly rejects Lockean labor, denying its necessary relationship with human happiness and fulfillment, while also accepting the liberal precepts of autonomy and freedom as absence of coercion. If we are to remember leisure, then, it will first be as the bobo and the idler, and not the Aristotelian gentleman.

Future Directions

Despite the great effort, suffering, and occasional joy that has resulted from and has been poured into this dissertation, I also recognize, with both pain and excitement, that I have only arrived at a different beginning. In thinking through where such a project would benefit from turning and adding, I would first like to reject one possibility. This project, as it is now and will

[267] See especially Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

continue to be, makes no attempt at historical completeness, but is rather an attempt at and approach to conceptual coherence. I make no claim to providing a complete intellectual history of leisure and work, but instead have sought to recognize and reconstruct a weighty challenge to contemporary life, and to see how we might respond to it. I care less about the steps we have taken to get here, and more about the implications of those steps.

With this in mind, I propose adding chapters on Marx and Heidegger. Both help us see the complications of a contemporary answer or incorporation of leisure. Marx is, in many ways, the most complicated thinker to fit into this story, as he values *both* labor and leisure. I perhaps treated Marx and his followers harshly in the forgoing, but Marx deserves greater attention than what I have done thus far. The human being is a laboring animal we are told, but Marx also looks forward to the day when we have the time and freedom to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, and philosophize in the evening. Sorting out Marx's thought, and the complicated relationship between labor and leisure within socialism, rather than just Lockean liberalism, will be a primary goal in the development of this project.

Aside from Marx, I also plan to incorporate and confront Heideigger's thought, especially his writings on boredom. Like Weber's account of vocation, Heidegger finds boredom to be a reaction to a particular set of circumstances in a particular temporal context. Weber sees vocation as an answer to the demystification of the world and a shaking of the foundations of our ultimate values. But whereas Weber finds vocation to be a solution to the incommensurability of our highest values, Heidegger is less sanguine. If Weber is a radicalization of Locke, Heidegger is a radicalization of Weber. I think he would argue that vocation is a hiding from the truth of that incommensurability, and that we would be better off confronting more directly. Boredom, which looks something like idleness, is our primary means of

recognizing ourselves to be in this unsettled and unsettling condition. Whereas I have sought to find ways in which liberalism might be reinvigorated through a confrontation with ancient thought, Heidegger is ready to break from liberalism, and suggests that we have already begun that process. Boredom and idleness themselves become a ground of seeing this condition, and also part of imagining what might come after.

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