Philosophical Inquiry in Education

Recognizing Leisure: A Portrait of the Concept through the Educated Self

Givanni M. Ildefonso-Sánchez

Volume 29, Number 2, 2022

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1090409ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1090409ar

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

Canadian Philosophy of Education Society

ISSN

2369-8659 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Ildefonso-Sánchez, G. M. (2022). Recognizing Leisure: A Portrait of the Concept through the Educated Self. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, *29*(2), 80–90. https://doi.org/10.7202/1090409ar

Article abstract

Much of the current available literature on leisure characterizes it as an additional consumer good: a derivative of capitalist society, featured as a commodity and, for the most part, an industry. This paper argues that recovering the concept of leisure from the ancients, with a contemporary focus on culture and the practice of living artfully, will help us create a new understanding of leisure that will break free from the reigning popular focus on "free time." The concept of leisure (scholé) will here be set against an existential backdrop that will situate it entirely within the realm of education, to reveal important connections to what it means to be an educated self and to lead a flourishing collective life in the form of culture. This discussion will conclude with a portrait of the concept that will be of interest to democracy-oriented educators, as we set the groundwork for actualizing the concept in the practice and lives of teachers and students in today's world.

***Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, Volume 29 (2022), No. 2, pp. 80-90**

Recognizing Leisure: A Portrait of the Concept through the Educated Self

GIVANNI M. ILDEFONSO-SÁNCHEZ
LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

Much of the current available literature on leisure characterizes it as an additional consumer good: a derivative of capitalist society, featured as a commodity and, for the most part, an industry. This paper argues that recovering the concept of leisure from the ancients, with a contemporary focus on culture and the practice of living artfully, will help us create a new understanding of leisure that will break free from the reigning popular focus on "free time." The concept of leisure (scholé) will here be set against an existential backdrop that will situate it entirely within the realm of education, to reveal important connections to what it means to be an educated self and to lead a flourishing collective life in the form of culture. This discussion will conclude with a portrait of the concept that will be of interest to democracy-oriented educators, as we set the groundwork for actualizing the concept in the practice and lives of teachers and students in today's world.

Introduction

Current literature on the theory of leisure mostly becomes a topic of interest for those interested in social, political, and economic theory. Most of this research focuses on leisure as an additional consumer good: a derivative of capitalist society and what Veblen (1912) called "conspicuous leisure." In this case, leisure is a commodity but also, and for the most part, an industry. Its discussion in education popularly comprises topics in recreation and physical education in schools. The direction that the current conversation on leisure has taken, then, provides an opportunity to begin formulating a contrasting qualitative aspect of leisure, which necessitates education.

We are most likely to encounter in many texts that the concept of leisure is opposed to work. To begin understanding what leisure is in this sense, we need to begin with associating it with all that is opposed to work, the workday, and all work-related aspects. In this case, then, we end with the broad idea of "free time" as well as the idea of time available to be used freely. The peculiar aspect to note about beginning a conceptualization in this way is that we are first positing work as the centre of life, and even life's regulator. As Josef Pieper (1963) showed in his text, this is the way members in a "culture of total work" think. This is certainly the way most of us have grown familiar with the concept of leisure.

The *idea* of leisure, considered against the background provided by work, is the one that Trend (1992) described as structured, objective, and a phenomenon of social control in the late capitalist society of bureaucratically controlled consumption. This understanding is what has given rise to the very environment responsible for mass entertainment, mass society, and mass culture. Further inquiry into this line of thought takes us to historical accounts of the development of industry and modernization, all the while offering fewer hours of work and more time of "leisure." In this historical account we find the germ of at least two distorting factors that have propelled a misunderstanding of

the "authentic" form of leisure (Marrus, 1974). In the first case, we have become accustomed to think of "work" as the centre of life, and thus we have "work" and all else that is "not work." The second is precisely the thought that leisure is all that is not work, and thus leisure can be pretty much anything: from idleness to hedonistic activities. The problem with this is that all forms of socialization (a game of cards, drinking with co-workers, gossiping with friends, watching a silly movie, acquiring the latest video game, etc.) have been grouped to designate forms of leisure (Marrus, 1974).

There is, however, a different background against which we can begin studying leisure: that of the historical world, understood as a subjective context of time and place (Marrus, 1974). When we consider this existential background, we are locating our subjective selves in a particular life context that not only allows but propitiates, questions, thoughts, and offers possibilities. This alternative background allows for the *ideal* of leisure, acquired through and made possible by education.

The concept of leisure, understood as time for questions relevant to our times and to our world, centres life around time for self-development, growth, and culture, which occurs through education. This understanding allows us to speak of leisure just as the ancients spoke and understood leisure: through the lens of education and culture. This way, a retrieval of the ancient concept of leisure as *scholé* does not become impossible, unfashionable, or anachronistic.

Relating the concepts of leisure, culture, and education, however, does not come without any difficulties. All three concepts can be understood in two ways: "leisure" can be understood in terms of the idea ("free time"), and it can be understood as the ideal (*scholé*); "culture" can be understood in terms of the transmission and reception of unique traits of a particular group of people, and it can also be understood as the creative process and conditions whereby these traits come to be, or simply said, become actively cultivated and produced. Lastly, "education," too, poses a dilemma in itself: it can be understood in terms of structured acquisition of information and knowledge (schooling), and it can also be understood as the development of character, thought, and knowledge/wisdom (formation). The discussion that follows will lead us to unveil a clearer relationship between leisure, culture, and education, highlighting the second understanding of all the concepts above, which should be of interest for today's educators. We will subsequently be prepared to set the groundwork for recognizing leisure through the educated self, even as an initial approximation of the concept.

Leisure, Education, and Living Artfully

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

Across the Platonic dialogues we see that, for Socrates, the sign of wisdom lies in one's ability to recognize one's limited capacity for knowledge. "Stupidity," on the contrary, is part of the character of whoever has never taken the time to question himself and his presumed knowledge. Anyone who examines the content of one's own assumptions will be able to determine the extent of one's actual knowledge.

In the above quotation, Socrates has taken young Alcibiades to a point in which he recognizes that he cannot go forward with his political career due to lack of a worthy education. To Alcibiades' newly acquired state of *aporia*, Socrates asks: "What do you propose for yourself? Do you intend to remain in your present condition, or practice some self-cultivation?" (Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 119). After further discussion on the topic, Alcibiades responds: "I'll start to cultivate myself right now" (*Alcibiades I*, 135). Socrates is content to have made the young aspiring politician recognize that he needs an education that demands specific work – work that requires time, dedication, and intense practice in thinking about his own self before thinking of serving others. Alcibiades needs to transform himself,

re-create himself, through means of a new kind of education. This is the sort of education that Alcibiades had not received and of which he was not even aware; this is the sort of education that will make him "as good as possible" and useful to fellow Athenians through means of the arts of politics. This account of caring for oneself is what Socrates thought he had achieved with his friends during their last conversation right before his appointed death. For this reason, and in accordance with a particular reading of Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates' last words were: "we owe a cock to Asclepius," signaling a gesture of gratitude to the god of healing for allowing his friends to begin a new life through self-cultivation (Madison, 2002).

The ancient ideal of the concept of leisure, *scholé*, looks to time for recognizing the patterns of one's life, and for examining and striving to be a better self, to achieve a higher degree of personhood. Therefore, when we speak of our leisure, we are concerned with our form of being. From Socrates' time to our own, literature, philosophy, and various forms of art have been concerned with making time to engage our world and ourselves in *our own time*: to establish a private life, separate from our public life, and to realize that we have an individual self for which we must care, in addition to our social self. A concern with life and with the way of being in the world necessarily implies a specific consideration of time and space, since these are conditions of our existence: we exist here and now.

The relevance of such critical consideration is that when we realize that, to an extent, time and space can be manipulated, we are responsible for the time that we have for our use. Additionally, the use to which we put our time defines our character and our being. Put differently, we are able to take full care of ourselves in our time of leisure. It is for this reason that the teaching of Socrates in *Alcibiades I* are useful for a discussion of leisure: it is a time for our own education with important repercussions in the active re-creation of our being, our social relationships, and our political engagement, as it points to an educated life, or to what I will now refer as living artfully.

Much has been written about "the art of living" as a primary goal of the educational practice, which leads to living artfully, living well, or living a good life. It is commonly understood as a philosophical attitude towards life, in such a way that we become "responsive to the demands of justice towards others (morality) and the desire for self-improvement (what the tradition characterizes as ethics)" (Hansen, 2008). Living artfully, in this sense, corresponds to getting as close as we can to a virtuous life guided more by the precepts of wisdom than by those of knowledge.

There are two sides to consider when we speak of living artfully. Abrams (2002) discusses two main factions in this debate: the self-fashionists (the private sphere of the art of living) and the democratic philosophers (the public sphere of the art of living). The first group faces a strong critique involving charges of elitism and narcissism, as the critics observe that whoever "self-fashions" is concerned with themselves only and nothing else. This person, so the argument goes, will most likely be wealthy, with spare time to engage in such practices, so "the poor of India do not factor into that discussion" (Abrams, 2002, p. 185). Abrams further writes that the two sides to this argument are not opposed, but that their opposition stems from their inability to see that they are closer than they think, as he concludes that "experimenting with vocabularies and somatic experiences in the private sphere is precisely the tool which will keep political discourse from going stale, and will keep citizens fresh for articulating new social concerns and new areas of human need" (Abrams, 2002, p. 188).

If we admit the thesis that living artfully refers to a constant interaction between the private (ethical) sphere and the public (moral) sphere, in which a person is therefore an active participant – or as Socrates would have it, an active examiner of his/her own life – then we live artfully when we do not just take life for granted and merely occupy a space in the world. Is this preoccupation with living artfully exclusive to a single stratum of society, be it the wealthy person (with all their needs met) or the philosopher (with time for contemplation)? Are the ethical and the moral questions not inclusive of the "poor of India" or, put differently, people struggling to meet their most basic needs? Both questions can be answered, "No." Whoever is intellectually able to think about – and concern him or herself with – living artfully is an educated person. The qualifier "educated," here refers to the type of education with which Socrates was concerned throughout his whole life; that is, the practice of wisdom, not the

acquisition of knowledge. Education steered by wisdom requires leisure (time to think, time to internalize, time to critically process information).

Leisure, as Davies (1989) argues, provides us with an alternative to our ordinary way of being; "it enables us to conjecture a way we would like to be, another way of being, but a way in which we can never totally be" (p. 124). The hesitancy imbedded in this quote bears a resonance to Socrates' teaching, as Infinito (2003) writes:

> In admitting his own inability to have true knowledge, Socrates seems to deny the possibility of ever knowing what virtue, justice and the good are, let alone living in strict accordance with them. The process of looking at the knowledge and culture that one has been given, rationally questioning that knowledge/culture, refusing what does not appear reasonable and searching for an alternative is Socrates' way of life. (p. 76)

Living artfully, then, refers to the life in which one attempts to actively live as good as possible. In seeking this, we first need to consider the life that is the best for us, given our historical situation. A precondition to living artfully is the leisure to consider it in the first place. For this reason I would like to highlight Davies' take when he writes, "if we wish to know what our existence is like and where we actually live, we should turn to leisure which, in coming to us in a time and space of our own, gives us another perspective on being" (Davies, 1989, p. 108). This reconsideration of our being can never be the exclusive provenance of the philosopher or the wealthy person, but rather of the educated self. This implies that there needs to be an evaluation of the present state, and a comparison with an alternative, taking myself into consideration, as well as those who surround me. This is an important contribution to what I would now like to discuss, namely possibilities of being and how leisure contributes to reaching them through education.

In his discussion of the place of ideals in teaching, Hansen (2008) uses the terms "personhood" and "character" interchangeably. Our character is what defines our way of being in the world: it refers to our virtues and vices, our shortcomings, our fears, our way of speaking, our way of addressing others or of handling situations, etc. We are not born with a character, but rather, our character is fashioned through means of experience, formal and informal education, and social laws. The important aspect of this fashioning is that the self being fashioned is not a passive being: we are being fashioned but also actively fashioning ourselves. For this reason, it cannot be a constant action of the world upon us, but rather it is part of our education to guide us to take our time to reassess possibilities and whatever presents itself as available to us. This, as mentioned above, contributes to our ability to live artfully. Now, Infinito (2003) writes that living artfully as such is not only desirable but necessary: "It is valuable to our democracy, and it is crucial to individual liberty, that students be taught how to approach questions pertaining to the formation of themselves and the world and how to assess various answers to them" (p. 76).

Even though living artfully is a necessary educational practice that will aid us in fashioning our character (for the private sphere) and our social self (for the public sphere), this does not mean that it is our sole occupation in life. The possibility is not even available to us. Socrates was aware of this when he suggested that a "poor benefactor who needs leisure," such as himself, should receive free meals in the Prytaneum (Plato, *Apology*, 36d). Living artfully requires leisure, and the whole of our time is not leisure, but rather it is often divided with work and other responsibilities. For this reason, Davies is right in defining leisure as "a divergent form of being, a precarious location in time for our own vulnerable preoccupations" (1989, p. 111).

Living artfully is not something that happens in an uninterrupted manner, nor is it an art to which the whole of our lives should be solely devoted. The important part to stress is that we need to provide for the time to think about and consider our lives while living them, creating them. Infinito, as with other contemporary philosophers of education, writes that we need to educate critical thinkers; imaginative, creative students; democratic classrooms; students who will own and appropriate their

learning, etc. No teacher can single-handedly fashion that type of student, they can only provide for that student to create him or herself accordingly. For this reason, we need to understand that in a society like ours, in which the public sphere is taking hold of our private sphere, leisure time still exists as an educative resource. Caranfa (2010) notes: "Well aware that to teach or to practice this method is very difficult, we should nevertheless make ourselves familiar with it and offer it as an alternative to the 'prevailing noise of learning and teaching chained to narrow, destructive and degrading utilitarian economic models of schooling and education.' Failure to do this is indeed a prescription for the decadence both of human life and of society." Leisure is where the creative aspect of living is conceived and from which we begin the development of our personhood.

John Dewey (1980) writes in *Art as Experience* that the work of art should be *an experience* for it to truly mean something for us. Similarly, we can argue that our experience should be artful. Experience being artful is how living artfully comes into play here, as, according to Dewey, life can be aesthetic or anaesthetic. Life becomes aesthetic when we allow for time to think, for time to be moved, for time to allow life to penetrate us and transform itself into an experience and ourselves into better beings. Conversely, life becomes stale and anaesthetic when it fails to provoke any thought or action on our part. In an anaesthetic life, we simply are. It brings to mind Seneca's words, when he writes to Paulinus:

> So you must not think a man has lived long because he has white hair and wrinkles: he has not lived long, just existed long. For suppose you should think that a man had had a long voyage who had been caught in a raging storm as he left harbour, and carried hither and driven round and round in a circle by the rage of opposing winds? He did not have a long voyage, just a long tossing about. (Seneca, 1997, p. 11)

To exemplify the aesthetic effects of leisure on a life profoundly affected by it, Davies (1989) uses as analogy Rainer Maria Rilke's poem "The Reader." In it, Rilke presents to us a reader so invested in his time of reading that his own self is being transformed as he reads. The reader's mother, Rilke writes, would not even recognize her own son in his time set aside for reading. We will never know, he continues, to what extent the reader was invested in his act until we realize that he is being transformed, while his "features, ordered as they were, remain now forever rearranged." Davies (1989) argues that leisure has a similar effect on whoever takes it seriously: it has a power to bestow upon life (private and public) the aesthetic experience.

Moreover, John T. Lysaker (2008), reading Ralph Waldo Emerson, speaks of the tendency for "self-culture" to denominate an active pursuit of the cultivation of the self, "an ensemble of events and activities that enable what I will call an 'eloquent life,' one that I have in some sense fashioned myself and that expresses who I am in my diversity and, to the degree that they exist, my coherencies" (p. 1). It can therefore be said that the time of leisure, which we use to work individually on our self-culture, consists of a substantial contribution to our general culture.

Speaking of François Henry's ideas as expressed in his 1937 article "Leisure and the Human Person," Brian Rigby (1989) writes: "Finding the word 'leisure' to be tainted with connotations of distraction and entertainment, Henry prefers the word 'culture,' which evidently provides the desired connotations of education and self-development." The concept of leisure in Henry's article has clear resonances with the account shared by the ancients, but to avoid confusion regarding the terms that Henry uses, Rigby writes that this educative idea of leisure becomes clearer when we equate it to "culture." This account will be rendered in a clearer light in what follows.

Pieper (1963) argues that "culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship." Pieper was convinced of the importance of leisure in our lives, but it remains to be seen if his position coheres with what has been proposed up to this point, and if it helps us recognize leisure.

Leisure, Culture, and Education

The previous quote from Pieper, which closes the previous section, may be puzzling, as "divine worship" might appear to confuse the argument. Mary Parr (2009) writes the following:

> Pieper argues that the contemporary concept of leisure itself bears little resemblance to the leisure of Ancient Greece, but it is also likely that translating "kult" as culture, and "musse" as leisure, may have led to some misconceptions of Pieper's meaning. The German word "kult" is associated with divine worship and forms of the word may be translated as "civilizable" and "to cultivate," or "to culture." "The German word *kult* is taken from the Latin *colere*" and *colere* means "to till, cultivate, worship." This is somewhat different than translating "kult" as culture, or "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought." And certainly does not imply a direct connection between leisure and the program category of arts and cultural activities. (p. 84)

This note on translation and word etymology proves to be very helpful in figuring out the connection between leisure and culture, especially in Pieper's work. Nowhere does Pieper define "culture" but rather he clearly states that today "the nature of culture is no longer understood." In the context of Pieper's writing, however, his meaning of the term seems to go hand in hand with the notion of cultivation, as we have come to see in the example of Socrates. His claim that we no longer understand "culture" gives way to a new conception of the nature of man, in that it has come to be understood solely in terms of "work" and "worker," utility, and materialism, all the while neglecting our superior disposition that allows us to transcend our material life of work in order to affirm our humanity and self. In this sense, while Pieper is not explicitly speaking about the amassing and treasuring of traditions or customs that define a particular group or people, his use of the term "culture" supports and enriches the portrait of leisure that has been developing in this text.

Pieper writes:

> Leisure is only possible when a man is at one with himself, when he acquiesces in his own being, whereas the essence of *acedia* is the refusal to acquiesce in one's own being. Idleness and the incapacity for leisure correspond with one another. Leisure is the contrary of both. (1963, p. 46)

The affirmation of one's own humanity, a kind of spiritual activity that one does in his or her time of leisure, amounts to a celebration, according to Pieper. This celebration takes place through one's own appraisal of life and care for oneself in terms of claiming one's dignity as a human being: both as a spiritual being and as a working being. Such realization of our being in this way can only be achieved in leisure. The conditions for such an affirmation demand a spiritual attitude, as well as an attitude in which we are prepared to listen and keep silent. "Leisure is a form of silence," Pieper goes on to say, "of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear" (Pieper, 1963, p. 46). Leisure, then, on this account, facilitates an attitude of affirmation, of openness, of increased awareness that permits a relationship with the self and with one another. It now remains to make sense of Pieper's account of divine worship and its significance to the argument that leisure is an affirmation of self.

Pieper's understanding of leisure as related to worship seems parallel to Socrates' own account of what self-cultivation implies. Socrates' need for silence, solitude, and inner dialogue allows him to listen to "the voice of the god." It is during occasions such as these (which Socrates himself takes care to create for himself) when he does his most profound and serious thinking. This form of self-cultivation, which conceals a divine aspect, carries the person away from a strictly material and utilitarian life to a higher realm in which he is also capable of taking part. This higher realm of being is what leisure can

make available to us. As Pieper notes, the world of work (effort, suffering, activity) is readily given to us in daily life; the world of thought and reflection (the world of leisure) needs to be sought.

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

> In leisure – not of course exclusively in leisure, but always in leisure – the truly human values are saved and preserved *because* leisure is the means whereby the sphere of the "specifically human" can, over and again, be left behind – not as a result of any violent effort to reach out, but as in an ecstasy … the full enjoyment of leisure is hedged in by paradoxes of this kind, and it is itself a state at once very human and superhuman. Aristotle says of leisure: "A man will live thus, not to the extent that he is a man, but to the extent that a divine principle dwells within him." (1963, p. 51)

In what way, then, can Pieper's initial claim that leisure and culture are mutually dependent help us determine the importance of leisure for today's society? Parr (2009) was right to point out that taking Pieper's account of religion and worship, without further reflection or grammatical consideration, could potentially turn into taboo research. However, when we are able to look deep and determine that leisure, in this sense, is discovering our potentiality for overcoming a society that pushes us into becoming merely a "worker" or a "functionary" of the state, we can sense that it is a lack of leisure that has precisely caused these "great subterranean changes in our scale of values, and in the meaning of value" (Pieper, 1963, p. 23). If "culture" refers not only to concrete traditions and customs, but also to values treasured and safeguarded by a particular group or people, then we can begin to see how leisure can, in fact, be a foundation for culture. A culture of total work, writes Pieper, is what has increasingly taken over, making us blind to alternative forms of being and of living. When this happens, we unconsciously end up in *acedia*: a negation of our capacities, of ourselves, and, most importantly, of our time of leisure proper. In this way, we can see our working notion of culture and self-culture develop further. While we can see the interconnectedness of leisure and culture, it remains to be seen how education fits within this conceptual development.

Pieper argues that there are three main ways by which we can change the culture of total work (servile work) and make way for leisure (liberal arts): "by giving the wage earner the opportunity to save and acquire property, by limiting the power of the state, and by overcoming the inner impoverishment of the individual" (Pieper, 1963, p. 59). The first two ways are conditions that depend on others, on political agreements, and on economic conditions, among other circumstances. The third option, however, Pieper regards not only as being the most important but as being the true condition for leisure, irrespective of the first two. He writes:

> The provision of an external opportunity for leisure is not enough; it can only be fruitful if the man himself is capable of leisure and can, as we say, "occupy his leisure," or (as the Greeks still more clearly say) *skolen agein*, "work his leisure" (this usage brings out very clearly the by no means "leisurely" character of leisure). (Pieper, 1963, p. 63)

The crucial aspect is that people need to understand "the power of knowing leisure" (Pieper, 1963, p. 50). In a way, then, our inner capacity of leisure is what facilitates the development and cultivation of individuals and societies. Not that leisure is the repository of all forms of culture, but that it is the absolute necessary condition for it and its overall flourishing. I will now propose that this "power of knowing leisure" and the awareness of creating a time of our own in which we can better understand ourselves and our respective worlds, falls within the realm of our experiences in education.

Recognizing and Visualizing Leisure as an Integral Part of Education

Established in many writings is the thesis that living philosophically is the mark of a well-educated person, in terms of character (good or bad character, wisdom and prudence in his or her choices, ability for foresight, etc.). While indicative of all this is the way the person acts in the world, action is only secondary to the thought that guided the choice to act. The time we set aside to critically ponder, structure, and organize our thoughts, circumstances, and possible actions can determine who we are and what we do. Individually, one's time for leisure helps strengthen relationships with others, just as it helps develop the democratic society that democracy-oriented teachers strive for. It is for this reason that, as presented earlier, a person needs to be educated into habits of setting time for him or herself, and for becoming educated enough to do well with this time.

The way a teacher is educated to, in turn, educate others becomes increasingly important when we qualify "education" as being responsible for the creation of self-culture and of culture. The type of education that has been discussed here is most akin to notions of liberal education. More important, however, than subscribing to a brand of education is the realization of what education is in itself and what its aims are. It is important for educators and future educators to ground a theory of education on life, on living well, and on strengthening the continuance for individual and collective wellbeing. The concept of leisure may enrich such conceptualizations, by which its original significance through education can at last be restituted. I will now consider an artistic approach to what this vision of school and school education would look like.

Scottish artist Kenny Hunter was commissioned an art piece to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the first students coming into King's College, University of Aberdeen. The unveiling of the sculpture, entitled "Youth with Split Apple," during the university's celebration on September 16, 2005, presented, more than the piece of art itself, a clamour to redefine education. The sculpture depicts a young man, lying on the grass, propped up by both elbows, leisurely contemplating the façade of the building of King's College. The university website describes the meaning of the piece thus:

> Kenny Hunter presents an image of classical history modeled from contemporary reality, a study of inner reflection on a lawn of transitory encounters, a work of art absorbed into the life of the University. Lying on the lawn overlooking King's college, Kenny hopes that the sculpture will further enhance the hub of the university as a place of rest, peace, contemplation and discourse. (University of Aberdeen, n.d.)

The sculpture of the youth, graciously embraced by the university as "King's College new student," models for the academic community the true spirit of education. Hunter, who describes the motivation behind his work as an examination "of the darker aspects of the classical tradition, attempting to remind us that the legacy of the historical past is still alive and shaping some of our current mentalities," was attempting a reinterpretation of the meaning of an education (Edinburgh College of Art, n.d.). In my view, Hunter is proposing a model of which it is desirable to emulate. A faithful emulation of the youth with split apple requires that the student arrives to the classrooms of King's College with a leisurely disposition and an improved sense of what education is. Upon leaving the classrooms, the student must carry with him or her the thoughts and discussions shared in class, while taking his or her time to consider them in the outside world, and determine how this new knowledge fits, connects, or helps make sense of his or her own life. There is an exercise of integration operating here with which students must be familiar. This familiarization can most effectively be begun in schools.

It is apt to close our discussion on recognizing leisure in education by referencing Hunter's sculpture. While it has been suggested that leisure can be understood as "one's own time," leisure is something more than time: it is a way of life. Cultivating our character to the extent that we will develop an attitude for or be naturally inclined towards practicing leisure is that about which

philosophers since antiquity have been mostly concerned. Philosophy as a way of life, in other words, allowed for a *cosmic consciousness*, or an awareness of our life amid the lives of others and our undertaking of the world (Hadot & Davidson, 1995). As we have seen with Socrates and Seneca, a philosophical way of life is ultimately dependent on one's capacity for leisure. While we are, according to Pieper, distinguished from other forms of life due to our capacity for leisure, it is not enough to possess it in potentiality; we must possess it in actuality. The actuality of leisure depends on its active cultivation through education: it must be taught and practised.

It is a gargantuan endeavour to try to completely reform education, and impossible to make it happen at once. Transforming the practice of education must be a sustained effort, with increased awareness, and complete buy-in from teachers and teacher education programs. Seeing as things currently are, that goals and practices in schools – along with active vocabularies such as "accountability," "standardization," and "testing," among others – are far removed from the ideal of leisure, we are prompted to ask, along with Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (2012), what is it that makes a school a school. In their study, in considering all the external influences, from politicians to societal institutions, they state that: "Experts and professionals are unfamiliar with free time" (p. 85). In their view, experts and professionals use the school as a place to confer diplomas, focusing on competencies that ultimately look at employability. The teacher, however, "is the one who makes time where there previously was no time (to lose). It is the pedagogue, or the teacher as pedagogue, who undergoes any such pre-appropriation or allocation of time" (Masschelein & Simons, p. 85). Leisure in education would include free time, understood as being in the present time, as living a pause, suspending the active social rhythms of chronological time. "One could start by trying out different ways of giving teachers (including teachers-in-training) the regular chance to engage with content and subject-matter – which implies creating free time for teachers" (Masschelein & Simons, p. 140).

Opportunities in the school year devoted to allowing students the unpressured time to make connections, write reflections, and artfully and actively integrate their own lives to what they are learning in school, are crucial. Reflective practices for integration in the classroom are exercises that can become habitual and will allow students to think about their lives as integral to education. Time for leisure is not an explicit component of curricula in public schools today. Rather, it may very well be a disposition, a practice in everyday dynamics that can take place in the classroom. Teachers are the ones who orchestrate daily educational experiences and community interactions. It is through these interactions that students progressively learn to resolve disagreements, show support of ideas, learn to articulate their views, show empathy, notice strengths in themselves and in others, find their role models, and set their aspirations. Through these practices, students and teachers allow themselves to be released from time, expectations, and assigned realities, to acquire a new and "profound way of seeing," which Gary (2017) argues ultimately allows for freedom.

Educational reform is currently outside the purview of teachers; but the classroom as a space, as well as the time created with students, is the teacher's domain. The teacher, aware of the importance of leisure, will make it available for him or herself, as well as for his or her students. Pausing to consider the self in the present world and current realities, exploring alternative worlds and ways of being, escaping present conditions to articulate thoughts and formulate questions, can be continuously practiced and become a way of life. This way, the goals of education through leisure, as well as philosophy, can be attained.

There is still much ground to cover in terms of the actual place of leisure in today's discussion of education and how to better educate. Is leisure representative of a problem in pedagogy today? I concur with Barrett (1989) in the assessment that "leisure *itself* is not a problem." It only becomes a problem when we fail to recognize the different layers of leisure and when, instead, we focus on the time-passing connotation of the concept, and the idea of leisure as pure relief from work. If we succeed in recovering the meaning of leisure as it was originally conceived, we may realize that it is not only relief, but an educative force of life. When added to our notions of education per se, leisure bestows upon it an intentional celebration of wisdom.

References

Abrams, J. (2002). Aesthetics of self-fashioning and cosmopolitanism: Foucault and Rorty on the art of living. *Philosophy Today*, *46*(2), 185–192.

Aristotle. (1985). *Nichomachean ethics*. In J. Barnes (Ed.), *Complete works of Aristotle: Revised Oxford translation*, Vol. 2 (pp. 1,729–1,867). Princeton University Press.

Barrett, C. (1989). Concept of leisure: Idea and ideal. In T. Winnifrid and C. Barrett (Eds.), *Philosophy of leisure* (pp. 9–19) Macmillan Press.

Caranfa, A. (2010). Contemplative education and the gifts of beauty, love, and silence. *Educational Theory*, *60*(5), 561–585.

Davies, M. (1989). Another way of being: Leisure and the possibility of privacy. In T. Winnifrid and C. Barrett (Eds.), *Philosophy of leisure* (pp. 104–128) Macmillan Press.

Dewey. J. (1980). *Art as experience*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Edinburgh College of Art. (n.d.). "Staff research profiles: Kenny Hunter." Accessed June 10, 2011. http://www.eca.ac.uk/staff_profiles/view/kenny-hunter

Gary, K. (2017). Neoliberal education for work versus liberal education for leisure. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *36*, 83–94.

Hadot, P. & Davidson, A. I. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hansen, D. (2008). Education viewed through a cosmopolitan prism. *Philosophy of education* (pp. 206–214). Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.

Infinito, J. (2003). Education, philosophy, and the art of living. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, *33*, 75–80.

Lysaker, J. (2008). *Emerson and self-culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Madison, L. (2002). Have we been careless with Socrates' last words? A rereading of *Phaedo*. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *40*(4), 421–436.

Marrus, M. (1974). *Emergence of leisure*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Masschelein, J. & Simons, M. (2012). *In defence of the school: A public issue*. J. McMartin (Trans.). Education, Culture and Society Publishers, Leuven.

Parr, M. (2009). Repositioning the position: Revisiting Pieper's argument for a leisure ethic. *Leisure/Loisir*, *33*(1), 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2009.9651431

Pieper, J. (1963). *Leisure: The basis of culture*. A. Dru (Trans.). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Plato. (1997). *Alcibiades*. J. M. Cooper & D. S. Hutchinson (Eds.), D. S. Hutchinson (Trans.). *Complete works*. Hackett Publishing.

Plato. (1997). *Apology*. J. M. Cooper & D. S. Hutchinson (Eds.), D. S. Hutchinson (Trans.). *Complete works*. Hackett Publishing.

Rigby, B. (1989). French intellectuals and leisure: The case of Emmanuel Mournier. In T. Winnifrid and C. Barrett (Eds.), *Philosophy of leisure* (pp. 160–171). Macmillan Press.

Seneca. (1997). *On the shortness of life*. C. D. N. Costa (Ed.). New York: Penguin.

Trend, D. (1992). *Cultural pedagogy: Art, education, politics*. H. Giroux & P. Freire (Eds.). New York: Bergin & Garvey.

University of Aberdeen. (n.d.). "Celebrating 500 years of teaching and learning." Accessed June 10, 2011. http://www.abdn.ac.uk/celebrating500/celebrations.shtml

Veblen, T. (1912). *Theory of the leisure class*. London: Macmillan.

About the Author

Givanni M. Ildefonso-Sánchez (gildefonso@lagcc.cuny.edu), PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Education and Language Acquisition at LaGuardia Community College, CUNY, where she teaches Foundations of Education.