

# Contemplation in Political Philosophy

by

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## Abstract

From yoga and physical fitness to meditation and prayer, from elementary classrooms to neuroscience, contemplation is everywhere. Is there space for contemplation in political philosophy? Philosophy connotes logic.<sup>1</sup> Socrates comes to mind, engaging in rational discourse to reach knowledge, truth, and reality. Contemplation, silent perception of reality and intuition, may then seem at odds with political philosophy. But if we visit our ancestors, the great Greek and medieval thinkers, it becomes clear that rational thought is only half of the process of knowing. They distinguished two modes of knowledge, the *ratio* and the *intellectus*. While the *ratio* encompasses the rational, logical, discursive mode of thought, the *intellectus* encompasses the contemplative, receptive, non-discursive mode of thought. So philosophy, almost habitually reduced to logic and ratiocination, includes *intellectus* if it is to properly seek knowledge and truth. This was true of the founders of political philosophy even if no longer true for us. Contemplation and political philosophy belong together; we cannot have one without the other if we are to fully engage and appreciate the mind.

## Introduction

*We are brought sharply to the arresting and indeed astounding realization—so opposed is it to everything we are in the habit of thinking about contemporary man—that contemplation is far more widespread among us today than appearances would indicate. The significant features of contemplation can be*

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<sup>1</sup> Philosophy is defined as the “investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods” (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/philosophy>).

*attained without anyone's being conscious of it by that name. With this as clue, more and more new forms of achieving contemplation manifest themselves.*<sup>2</sup>

When I studied abroad in Dingle, Ireland, last May with a Washington and Lee Spring Term Abroad course, the class took “theology tours” around the Ring of Kerry several days with Brother John, a Catholic Brother from Dingle who now lives in Dublin. These tours were a part of our immersion into Irish culture and also aided in our understanding of Irish history, since Ireland’s past and present are largely shaped by its native religion of Catholicism. These days with Brother John turned out to be favorites for most of the class of 23, which at first seemed surprising considering the range of religious and nonreligious backgrounds from which we all came. The first day of the tour began at the crack of dawn, and so most students were groggily listening to their headphones on the bus or “resting” their eyes despite the glorious weather. But by the end of the day everyone had fallen in love with Brother John and the tour he had led, and it all boiled down to one crucial component: contemplation. Brother John was extraordinarily gifted at explaining contemplation and inspiring people to contemplate. His aim was not to convert, but to inspire awareness, and he began by just encouraging us to engage in conscious sensorial contact with nature, which entailed long blocks of silence during which the class would individually explore the site while experiencing the nature around us through sight, sound, smell, touch, and, yes, even taste. Whether it was a holy well, a rocky beach, or a medieval castle, these stretches of silent conscious and conscientious sensorial contact allowed for one to forget about time and lose oneself in the uniqueness and beauty of nature. This peace, harmony, and awareness in turn inspired a deeper level

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<sup>2</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Happiness and Contemplation*, (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 82-83.

of mindfulness and contemplation—my mind was alert and so too my body and I was no less thoughtful by giving room to simple apprehension. So although Brother John was not a secular or academic figure, the manner in which he conducted the tour certainly led us to deeper mindfulness and awareness of the interdependence of all things that exist in the universe.

This contemplative experience with Brother John prompted several questions. Is contemplation something historic and old-fashioned (Brother John is probably in his 70s or 80s) that was common amongst ancient monks and philosophers but that has now ceased to remain relevant in an age of nonstop busyness, technology, and science? Or is it something new and trendy, commanding audiences and inciting discussions, academic and non-academic alike, throughout the world? Is it something predominantly Eastern, achieved only through practices such as yoga and meditation or religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism? Or can it be found in the Western tradition as well? Can it be integrated into other experiences, like those that involve technology or physical activity, or even into the classroom? And what are its benefits?

### Contemplation In Current Culture and Fitness

*The Greeks—Aristotle no less than Plato—as well as the great medieval thinkers, held that not only physical, sensuous perception, but equally man’s spiritual and intellectual knowledge, included an element of pure, receptive contemplation, or as Heraclitus says, of “listening to the essence of things”.*<sup>3</sup>

Let us start with the prevalence and relevance of contemplation in our current culture. Contemplation is everywhere. One sector in our culture where contemplation has particularly gained popularity is that of exercise and fitness. Allow me to begin with the

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<sup>3</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 28.

basics: a simple definition in a location common to us all. The online Merriam-Webster dictionary defines contemplation as a “concentration on spiritual things as a form of private devotion”, “a state of mystical awareness of God’s being”, “an act of considering with attention”, and “the act of regarding steadily”.<sup>4</sup> This is not the last word on what we mean by such weighty words. But to continue. It may be easy to stereotype contemplation as a practice that can occur only when the body is still and steady, leaving the mind free from distraction. Of late, more and more sports instructors, fitness gurus, and active thinkers are finding that an active body can actually be helpful for an active brain, the sort of brain we exercise in the academic gymnasium.

By far the trendiest form of contemplative physical exercise is yoga. For the moment we will say for simplicity’s sake that yoga is just physical. If you think it is, I recommend a few yoga classes. As Michelle Higgins of the *New York Times* pointed out, yoga retreat weekends have become common, and “yoga is becoming an amenity many hotels and resorts just can’t do without.”<sup>5</sup> Why? Not for physical fitness alone. There are lots of ways to stay “healthy.” Precisely because yoga is contemplative and meditative, practitioners find it difficult to replace it with just any generic hotel gym workout. Hence, the hotel industry has been accommodating.

Yoga like dance is not without a “logos.” Because both yoga and dance are graceful and related in many ways, it might not be surprising that various forms of dance and dancers have integrated contemplation into the athletic art. Jonah Bokaer, whose solos Alastair Macaulay of the *New York Times* calls contemplative, is one such dancer

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<sup>4</sup> Merriam-Webster, "contemplation." Last modified 2012. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contemplation>.

<sup>5</sup> Higgins, Michelle. "Rolling Out the Yoga Mat." *New York Times*, sec. Travel, February 02, 2010. <http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/travel/07pracyoga.html>.

and choreographer.<sup>6</sup> Macaulay commends his use of silence and stillness in his current program, "Curtain," and describes his contemplative choreography: "As he balances and paces; wraps one hand around his neck and with that impulse propels himself into a turn; and bends over to wrap one hand behind his ankle, you feel that his nature is *calmly investigative*." (Emphasis added.) There is plenty to do and plenty to learn. That said, dancers have to learn how to get out of their heads as much as they need to get into their heads. Rising ballet star, Silas Farley, described the contemplative nature of dance as the primary factor that drives his passion for ballet. When *Vogue*'s Gia Kourlas interviewed him, Farley explained, "You're somehow restoring order, creating a beauty and a harmony... You can help put the world back together in some small way every night."<sup>7</sup> Note the reference to number and proportion. Those "reasons" are not on the surface. Beauty and harmony, for which the unconscious mind hungers,<sup>8</sup> are found in contemplation,<sup>9</sup> and, as Farley shows, dance can serve as a medium. But although the contemplative natures of yoga and dance may not come as a shock, they are by no means alone in their unique blends of physical exercise and contemplative thinking.

Take Kristen Ulmer, a former U.S. Ski Team member. She runs a ski camp, called Ski to Live, that aims to transform the way you ski by transforming the way you think and live.<sup>10</sup> She does not lecture on the specific physics or techniques of skiing. Instead,

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<sup>6</sup> Macaulay, Alastair. "Exploring The Space With Stillness." *New York Times*, sec. Dance, August 02, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/03/arts/dance/jonah-bokaer-at-jacobs-pillow-dance-festival.html?pagewanted=all&\\_moc.semityn.www](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/03/arts/dance/jonah-bokaer-at-jacobs-pillow-dance-festival.html?pagewanted=all&_moc.semityn.www).

<sup>7</sup> Kourlas, Gia. "Great Expectations." *Vogue*, sec. Dance, October 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Brooks, David. *The Social Animal*, (New York, New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2012), *viii-ix*.

<sup>9</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 74.

<sup>10</sup> Ulmer, Kristen. Ski to Live, "Kristen Ulmer: Powerful mindset training for sports and life." Last modified 2012. <http://kristenulmer.com/about>.

she invites Zen. With the help of a Zen Buddhist meditator, Ulmer helps her campers realize that you do not have to understand every technical aspect of skiing, nor must you be able to put into words that which you understand. By doing this she demonstrates the power of contemplation in skiing: "I start with mind set, and move far, far beyond into the nature of physical brilliance and innate consciousness." Participants come to realize that not only can mindfulness improve your skiing, but skiing beyond "mind set" can in turn foster mindfulness and contemplation. Writing for the *Wall Street Journal*, Brigid Mander testifies to Ski to Live's transformative experience, describing her and some of the other participants' encounter with the mountain's most difficult terrain on the last day: "Fear was given a nod, then let go as we found different voices to replace it with. And we dropped one by one, for a perfect descent."<sup>11</sup> Thad Ziolkowski attests to this phenomenon in surfing, as well, on the *New York Times*'s "Lives" Column.<sup>12</sup> As an adolescent struggling with his parents' messy divorce, he found that surfing helped him to think through the chaos, "with all matters weighed on the scales of its [the sea's] rigors and ecstasies." And when he decided to take up surfing again in his 30s after a long hiatus, "surfing set about saving me once more, this time from bad habits accrued in adulthood." As with Ulmer's skiing, surfing contemplatively allowed Ziolkowski to notice the so-called unconscious mind, where habits are formed, and to attain deeper awareness of one's fears, habits, and self.<sup>13</sup> Note for the moment how awareness of

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<sup>11</sup> Mander, Brigid. "Mind Over Mountain?" *Wall Street Journal*, sec. Travel, March 09, 2012.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203960804577243212097674148.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Ziolkowski, Thad. "After the Agony of Youth, the Ecstasy of Surfing." *New York Times*, sec. Lives, April 27, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/magazine/the-ecstasy-of-surfing.html?ref=lives>.

<sup>13</sup> Brooks *viii-ix*.

awareness is seeping into cultural commentary. Remember, we are considering how mind is either more or other than calculation, ratiocination, logic all subsumed into a category “Reason.”

Moreover, contemplation is not for mild or moderate exercise alone. It is exercised in rigorous bodybuilding and professional sports training as well. In an editorial for *Outside Magazine* on Mark Twight’s Gym Jones, “a new type of facility devoted to mutant strain of fitness that combines elements of powerlifting, gymnastics, endurance sports, and military-style calisthenics,” Nick Heil explains that Twight’s approach to fitness-training emphasizes that the role of the mind may be even bigger than the role of the body: “Changing your body is just mechanics; it’s changing your mind that presents the real challenge.”<sup>14</sup> We are not detained here by the absence of definitions of mind. That is not our purpose. The point is that the basic operations of “body” are of mind. The reverse is also true. Twight underscores mind-body unity and awareness by showing that fitness training is ineffective unless the mind is deeply engaged. Heil quotes him as saying, “The muscle we are interested in training is inside the skull.”

Further evidence of the power of contemplation in intense sports-related endeavors can be found in Iten, Kenya, where Brother Colm O’Connell, an Irish priest, has become “the most successful running coach in history.”<sup>15</sup> He started at St. Patrick’s in Iten in 1976 with absolutely no running or fitness experience, and has since coached high school pupils on to 25 world champions and four Olympic gold medals. Analysts have

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<sup>14</sup> Heil, Nick. "The Hell On Earth Fitness Plan." *Outside*, December 10, 2008. <http://www.outsideonline.com/fitness/strength-and-power-training/The-Hell-on-Earth-Fitness-Plan.html?page=8>.

<sup>15</sup> Caesar, Ed. "The Irish Priest Who Trains Olympic Gold Medalists." *Outside*, July 09, 2012. <http://www.outsideonline.com/fitness/running/road-running/Father-Knows-Best-20120801.html>.



tried to uncover the Brother's hidden coaching secrets, but, as *Outside's* Ed Caesar notes, "O'Connell detests pouring over data, and he doesn't put much emphasis on technique, either." So how is he so successful? Contemplation, according to Peter Rono, whom Brother O'Connell coached to a gold medal at the 1988 Olympic Games: "He told us that you can't win by strength alone—you have to win with your head and the heart, spiritually. It's more than training technique. That's why he has produced so many great runners."

Contemplation and mindfulness (the names for awareness and attention are varied) is a hot topic, indeed, and, as we have seen, there seems to be no end to discoveries that are changing the way we think about ourselves. Coaches, athletes, and ordinary people trying to come back to themselves, to self-knowledge as is fitting of all endeavors that follow the Socratic dictum "know thyself," all conclude that contemplation is a necessary component of physical exercise. They go one further. Mindfulness, awareness, contemplation are disciplines that require movement. They are a product of physical exercise. Physical activity stimulates deeper mindfulness. How exciting that contemplation and mindfulness need not be restricted to one realm of activity. They bridge the disjointed compartments of a life; it creates a path of peace and harmony.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> I have entered the thesis with sources from culture deliberately. For it is important to note that the revolution in contemplation and awareness began with individuals searching for time, space, and awareness of the present moment. Allan Bloom wrote of education, *Attention to the young, knowing what their hungers are and what they can digest, is the essence of the craft. One must spy out and elicit those hungers. For there is no real education that does not respond to felt need; anything else acquired is trifling display* (*The Closing of the American Mind*, 19).

But how does one spy out the particular hungers of the current generation of students? If the purpose of the university is to respond to the needs of the student, we must begin by



## Contemplation in Academia and Education

*All purely worldly goals, whether their name be “the classless society” or “prosperity” or “the solitary soul of sylvan glades, who in his integrity is sufficient unto himself,” or on the other hand less pretentious programs, such as “muddling through life” or, still more vulgarly, “having a good time because tomorrow we’ll all be dead”—all these secularized formulas represent, if they are conceived or sought as ultimate goals, varieties of loss and despair. They all agree on one point: they do not carry their reasoning far enough, to the ultimate conclusion that man’s thirst can be fully quenched only by nothing less than “the whole good.”<sup>17</sup>*

Thus far we have seen that mindfulness and contemplation are cultural-wide phenomena. Politics is surely culture. Political philosophy is in the tradition of Aristotle a study of the regime. From the panoramic view taken, let us provisionally say that the two distinct characteristics of contemplation are that (1) it is not logical<sup>18</sup> and (2) one must experience it to understand it.<sup>19</sup> A few thoughts from Bhante Gunaratana in *Mindfulness in Plain English* allow us to grasp what all of this might mean. He writes:

The practice must be approached with this attitude: “Never mind what I have been taught. Forget about theories and prejudices and stereotypes. I want to understand the true nature of life. I want to know what this experience of being alive really is. I want to apprehend the true and deepest qualities of life, and I don’t want to just accept somebody else’s explanation. I want to see it for myself” (26).

Direct experience with reality is not identical to a theory of reality. We run the risk of mistaking our theories for lives actually lived. Because contemplation is in some decisive

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seeking to understand the needs of our time and culture. And so I purposefully begin with current cultural research before presenting traditional academic sources.

<sup>17</sup> Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 40.

<sup>18</sup> “This sort of intuition can only occur when you disengage the logic circuits from the problem and give the deep mind the opportunity to cook up the solution” Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness In Plain English*, (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2011), 19.

<sup>19</sup> “Therefore, some of the experiences of meditation just won’t fit into words[...]It is not something that you can learn in abstract terms, or something to be talked about. It is something to be experienced” (Gunaratana 14).

sense experience, it does not fit neatly into a theoretical box. As a consequence, some people mistakenly assume that it ought to be no part of the university or academia. After all, without a theory or definition, how do we know that all of this mindfulness talk isn't some faddish, new age hocus-pocus? Those unacquainted with the contemplative movement in higher education may be surprised to learn that it may be the single most compelling transformation in higher education we have seen in decades. That might even be modest. Recently, a growing number of education groups and academic groups have been promoting the integration of contemplation into the basic, time-tested and enduring disciplines in the academy.

One of the pioneers of contemplation in higher education is The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (The Center), founded in 1997. In a world of social action, The Center aims to show that all action should be coupled with contemplation. Contemplation is the principal component of conscientious action. If we take our bearings by the Center's mission statement, we learn that: "The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society works to transform higher education and integrate contemplative awareness and contemporary life in order to help create a more just, compassionate, reflective, and sustainable society."<sup>20</sup> The Center is non-sectarian. It promotes secular practices that are compatible and indeed historically consistent with faiths of all kinds. Moreover, mindful attention is required of all teachers and students whether they be scientists or humanists. We should be cautious not to say The Center promotes Buddhism in the classroom.

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<sup>20</sup> The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, "About Us." Last modified 2012. <http://www.contemplativemind.org/about>.

The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE), an initiative of The Center, promotes the integration of contemplation specifically into the university by offering grants to promising contemplative course proposals and hosting conferences and retreats for professors interested in discussing contemplative education. It also teaches those who do not have contemplative practices of their own how they may cultivate them and integrate them into teaching and scholarship. Since their beginnings, both The Center and ACMHE have received an overwhelming surge of professors and universities interested in integrating contemplation into their curriculum. Last year (2012) Denver, Colorado hosted the first ever International Symposium for Contemplative Studies. Contemplative Studies is slowly becoming an established, respected, scientifically backed discipline with oversight from respected academic authorities.

Contemplation is not simply one more feature in a diverse community of learning. It has become the hub of liberal arts and sciences; it is the mode of integration. We see evidence of this in one university that is contemplative through and through. Naropa University, located in Boulder, Colorado, was actually created to be a contemplative university. Founded by a Buddhist from Tibet in 1974, the university seeks to “combine contemplative studies with traditional Western scholastic and artistic disciplines.”<sup>21</sup>

In a 2010 volume published by the Academy of Arts & Sciences, an independent policy research center, the center’s authors underscore the efficacy and ubiquity of contemplation in education. Often absconded from one another in their respective silos, contemplation is the first movement to integrate disciplines in our arguably fragmented “multi-versities.” *Science and the Educated American: A Core Component of Liberal*

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<sup>21</sup> Naropa University, "History of Naropa." Last modified 2012. <http://www.naropa.edu/about-naropa/history/index.php>.

*Education* seeks to clarify the misunderstanding that science is at odds with the liberal arts and the humanities more generally. Moreover, they explain that our society must stop seeing all education solely as a means to an end—a profession—and recognize the rich value inherent in education, particularly the liberal arts:

If we wish to put Humpty Dumpty back together again and assert the value of a citizenry that possesses the mental equipment to grapple with complex problems in both nature and society and to contemplate seriously what it means to be a human being and how one might want to live one's life, then we might start by[...]giving some attention to both the sciences and the humanities and their proper relationship to one another in this context (Randel 9-10).<sup>22</sup>

Don Randel, one of the authors, proposes contemplation as the proper goal for liberal arts education and sees the intersection of the sciences and the humanities as a possible path to attaining that goal. The scholarship is growing so quickly it is difficult to keep pace. Keep in mind that I barely scratch the surface by bringing a few examples to light. For example, Jack Finnegan connects contemplation in higher education and our everyday life: "Contemplation in this view is a political, counter-cultural stance that is needed in our postmodern times."<sup>23</sup> Calling the contemplative a "political realist," he details the value of contemplation in the home, in the workplace, and in society.

Contemplation itself does not propose political partisanship. Consider, for example, someone who most scholars of political philosophy would say is "conservative," as is said of all students and students of students of Leo Strauss. As James V. Schall, former professor of philosophy at Georgetown University, wrote of

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<sup>22</sup> Randel, Don M. *Science in the Liberal Arts Curriculum. Science and the Educated American: A Core Component of Liberal Education*. Edited by Jerrold Meinwald and John G. Hildebrand. Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Finnegan, Jack. "Contemplation in Everyday." *The Furrow*. 58. no. 5 (2007): 270-279. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27665535>.

contemplation,<sup>24</sup> “There are things beyond politics and without which politics cannot be politics.”<sup>i</sup>

Contemplation then is not just a buzzword within the higher education and academic world; it is getting a lot of attention in elementary and middle school classrooms as well. And for good reason. The reforms there are wide and deep. A recent feature article in the *Scientific American* magazine announced: “Scientists, politicians and celebrities are remaking schools as gyms for the brain where teachers build the mental brawn for attention, perseverance and emotional control.”<sup>25</sup> On his NPR talk show, “On Point,” Tom Ashbrook informed listeners about this new movement to teach contemplation to young students, which is being called “social and emotional learning” (SEL).<sup>26</sup> According to Ingrid Wickelgren, an editor at Scientific American Mind whom Ashbrook interviewed, new scientific research is finding that by introducing mindfulness into elementary classrooms, teachers can equip young children with the tools to increase self-control, reduce anxiety, and build character.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, there are many different approaches and initiatives for instilling mindfulness in young students. Goldie Hawn’s MindUP program incorporates mindful listening, seeing, smelling, tasting, and movement (similar to Brother John’s “conscious, sensorial contact with nature”) in the classroom to

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<sup>24</sup> James V. Schall, Foreword to *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, (San Fransisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 11.

<sup>25</sup> Wickelgren, Ingrid. "Schools Add Workouts for Attention, Grit and Emotional Control." *Scientific American*, September 12, 2012.  
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=schools-add-workouts-for-attention-grit-emotional-control>.

<sup>26</sup> Ashbrook, Tom. "Reading, Writing And Character." *On Point* (blog), August 07, 2012.  
<http://onpoint.wbur.org/2012/08/07/reading-writing-and-character>.

<sup>27</sup> *Scientific American*, Ingrid Wickelgren. "The Education of Character: Carefully Considering Craisins." *Streams of Consciousness* (blog), September 14, 2012.  
<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/streams-of-consciousness/2012/09/14/the-education-of-character-carefully-considering-craisins/>.

help increase awareness in children.<sup>28</sup> Yoga 4 Classrooms® promotes yoga and mindfulness training as an “effective and cost-efficient way to promote healthy brain development and function, and to foster stress resilience.”<sup>29</sup> The program touts benefits for the bodies, minds, and spirits of children, and features testimonies from teachers and principals claiming that Yoga 4 Classrooms®’s curriculum also reduces bullying. In his book, *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough also lends support to the new SEL movement. Debunking what he refers to as “the cognitive hypothesis,” Tough “sets out to replace this assumption with what might be called the character hypothesis: the notion that noncognitive skills, like persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence, are more crucial than sheer brainpower to achieving success.”<sup>30</sup>

So why the sudden push for contemplation in education? What’s wrong with the current system? Yes, that’s a loaded question—but Samantha Smith’s article for *Forbes* magazine sheds light on one possible answer. She features 11 college “drop-outs” who found that the mass, mindless shuffle to college was not for them. Smith notes the problems with the current university format: they are huge; they allow little customization; and they rarely feature integration between classes and experience—to repeat, they lack experiential knowledge. I’ll have considerably more to say about this later in my essay. Like the Academy of Arts and Sciences, Smith also finds, “There’s rarely a conversation about whether a college degree is going to be helpful or required for

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<sup>28</sup> Hawn, Goldie. The Hawn Foundation, "MindUP Curriculum." Last modified 2011. <http://www.thehawnfoundation.org/curriculum>.

<sup>29</sup> Yoga 4 Classrooms, "About Yoga 4 Classrooms." Last modified 2012. <http://www.yoga4classrooms.com/about-yoga-4-classrooms>.

<sup>30</sup> Paul, Annie Murphy. “School of Hard Knocks.” *New York Times*, Sunday Ed., sec. Book Review, August 26, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/26/books/review/how-children-succeed-by-paul-tough.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/26/books/review/how-children-succeed-by-paul-tough.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all).



personal goals.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, we could argue that universities neglect the contemplative aspects of mind, the cultivation of which is essential to the very aims of education. They may deliver information to their students; they do not actively, explicitly, and consistently across disciplines offer contemplation as the experiential component of knowledge<sup>ii</sup> that mindfulness offers.<sup>iii</sup> While some universities, particularly small liberal arts colleges, are addressing these omissions, the fact of the matter is that most universities fit Smith’s model. A new push for contemplation in education may at the very least open the circle for a conversation about personal goals and, more importantly, the human condition. We have no intention of sounding hyperbolic or disparaging. After all, that today’s universities see contemplation arise within is a credit to them. I am speaking here only of emphasis and attention. That being said, the genesis of contemplation does not sit well with some academicians and their administrators. They say that contemplation in and of itself may not be rational or logical. But as we can see it is mind and thus essentially a part of “life of the mind.” Ironically, or so it seems, social media is turning some universities to contemplation. Oddly enough, technology may come to the aid of the rational Western university. MOOCs, for example, are challenging its existence. (I will elaborate on this later.) Contemplation, nonetheless, is present because the Internet is a vehicle for education.

### East vs. West

*It is essential to begin by reckoning with the fact that one of the foundations of Western culture is leisure.*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Smith, Samantha. "11 Students Of A Different Education." *Forbes*, September 27, 2012. <http://blogs.forbes.com/samanthasmith/>.

<sup>32</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 19.

I said earlier that contemplation and mindfulness should not be reduced to a religious intervention into a rational secular university. We must address this, however—that the growing numbers of Americans seeking to integrate contemplation into their lives are turning to the Eastern tradition to learn the practice. Is the West depleted? Steve Jobs notably credited Zen meditation and his pilgrimage to India as an essential factor to his ability to innovate and change the world through his products.<sup>33</sup> More celebrities have been following his lead. In a recent *Forbes Life* magazine travel article, Richard Nalley exposes the allure of Bhutan, a small Asian country which draws Hollywood stars like Brad Pitt, Cameron Diaz, Eva Mendes, and Jennifer Lopez to its Himalayan country every year. Boasting an extraordinary Gross National Happiness,<sup>34</sup> the exclusive country attracts wealthy travelers seeking “to meditate, trek, or recharge.”<sup>35</sup> The Bhutanese are a highly religious people (predominately Buddhist) and spend much of their time meditating or contemplating in the mountains.

Famous American innovators and Hollywood celebrities are not the only Westerners looking East; in a contribution to the *New York Times*'s “Lives” column, Tarquin Hall, a Brit, tells the story of how he and his Indian wife Anu finally got pregnant.<sup>36</sup> After trying for five years with the help of London's top fertility experts, they decided to try the Eastern way. On a trip to Delhi, they visited the tomb of Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin, one of Delhi's most revered saints, and shortly after they found the

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<sup>33</sup> Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> “In 2006, *Business Week* rated Bhutan the happiest country in Asia and the eighth-happiest in the world, based on a global survey” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan>).

<sup>35</sup> Nalley, Richard. "Land of the Mountain Gods." *Forbes Life*, Summer 2012, 76-86.

<sup>36</sup> Hall, Tarquin. "Delhi Baby." *New York Times*, Sunday Ed. edition, sec. Lives, July 08, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/magazine/trying-to-become-pregnant-the-eastern-way.html?ref=lives>.



saint's contemplative method to be successful. And as I mentioned earlier, people like ski instructor Kristen Ulmer and programs like Yoga 4 Classrooms® began by looking to the Buddhist or Hindu traditions. (Yoga is traditionally a Hindu practice.)

Despite the seeming consensus that the Eastern tradition holds the answers for those seeking meditation and contemplation, the Western tradition is replete with well-regarded contemplatives and contemplative practices, both secular and religious. And where are they to be found? In the canon of Western political philosophy. In an article for the *New York Times*, English philosopher Simon Critchley recounts examples, referencing Aristotle, who defined the good life as “the *bios theoretikos*, the solitary life of contemplation,” and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who declared that the soul finds complete happiness in “the simple feeling of existence” “where time is nothing to it.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Buddhism and Hinduism are not the only religions with contemplative traditions. The Roman Catholic tradition contains many contemplative practices. Many find praying the Holy Rosary to be a very meditative experience that often leads to clarity and awareness. Indeed, the closing prayer of the rosary reads:

Let us pray. O God, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that *meditating* upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord.

(Emphasis added.) The rosary is not the only Catholic contemplative tradition. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) website, meditative prayer is an ancient Christian practice and an essential form of Christian prayer: “By meditating on the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts, spiritual writings, or ‘the great

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<sup>37</sup> Critchley, Simon. “Happy Like God.” *New York Times*, sec. Opinionator, May 25, 2009. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/25/happy-like-god/>.

book of creation,' we come to make our own that which is God's."<sup>38</sup> Summarizing the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the USCCB explains meditation on Sacred Scripture as an important form of meditative prayer. This form of meditation divides into four components: reading (lectio), meditation (meditatio), prayer (oratio), and contemplation (contemplatio). Just as Bhante Gunaratana<sup>39</sup> and German philosopher Josef Pieper<sup>40</sup> define contemplation as a deeper awareness of reality, the Catholic Catechism describes contemplation of the Sacred Scripture similarly: "By God's action of grace, you may be raised above meditation to a state of seeing or experiencing the text as mystery and reality."<sup>41</sup> A prime example of this contemplative prayer is St. Dominican's Nine Ways of Prayer, which involve various postures and poses for prayer and have been compared to yoga.<sup>42</sup> Although Catholic contemplative prayer may evoke images of ancient monks and saints or even of Irish Brother John, the Catholic contemplative tradition is still very much alive in the Church, and various pockets of the Church have recently been making efforts to further restore and revive this integral part of the Catholic life. In 2010, the Vatican paid tribute to the Community of Taize after the death of its founder, Brother Roger Schutz, who integrated Catholic and Protestant devotions and beliefs.<sup>43</sup> The Taize

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<sup>38</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "What Is Prayer." Last modified 2012. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers/what-is-prayer.cfm>.

<sup>39</sup> "Meditation brings the mind to a state of tranquility and awareness, a state of concentration and insight" (Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, 8).

<sup>40</sup> "Contemplation is a loving attainment of awareness. It is intuition of the beloved object[...]This is the first element of the concept of contemplation: silent perception of reality" (Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 73).

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 38.

<sup>42</sup> Stagnaro, Angelo. "Yoga for Jesus." *Catholic Herald*, September 6, 2012. [http://m.realclearreligion.org/#/home/1\\_100250470/](http://m.realclearreligion.org/#/home/1_100250470/).

<sup>43</sup> Allen Jr., John L. "Another tribute for Taize from the Vatican." *National Catholic Reporter*, August 11, 2010. <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/another-tribute-taize-vatican>.

community draws followers from all Christian denominations and particularly attracts a large following of young people. Hundreds of thousands of young people make pilgrimages to Taize each year, located in the Burgundy region of France. The community highly values silence, meditative singing, and meditative prayer; their website reads:

Three times a day, everything on the hill of Taize stops: the work, the Bible studies, the discussions. The bells call everyone to church for prayer. Hundreds or even thousands of mainly young people from all over the world pray and sing together with the brothers of the community. Scripture is read in several languages. In the middle of each common prayer, there is a long period of silence, a unique moment for meeting with God.<sup>44</sup>

Another Western example of contemplation is the labyrinth. Originating from Greek mythology, labyrinths have become popular in the gardens of churches of Christian denominations and on secular campuses. They mimic the journey the mind takes during contemplation, winding down to the center of the maze just as the mind winds deeper and deeper into consciousness in contemplation. St. George Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, recently built a labyrinth, as have many others in the area—further evidence of current, not just historical, examples of contemplation in the Western Christian tradition.

Underscoring the universal nature of contemplation, Thomas Merton,<sup>45</sup> a contemplative Catholic monk and priest, pioneered interfaith dialogue with prominent Eastern religious leaders, including the Dalai Lama, the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Japanese philosopher D.T. Suzuki.<sup>iv</sup> All parties found contemplation to be the common ground between Zen Buddhism and Christianity. They made their studies

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<sup>44</sup> The Taize Community, "The value of silence." Last modified 2001. [http://www.taize.fr/en\\_article12.htm](http://www.taize.fr/en_article12.htm).

<sup>45</sup> Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, "Thomas Merton." Last modified 2013. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Merton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Merton).

and practices known to the world. Consider books such as Merton's *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* and Hanh's *Going Home: Jesus and Buddha As Brothers*.<sup>46</sup> This is all not to say that contemplation must be prayer, whether tied to Eastern or Western traditions. As I have noted, many athletes, philosophers, neuroscientists, educators, and ordinary people are finding contemplative practices such as mindfulness meditation and yoga beneficial for the body and brain without Buddhism or Hinduism. Why should we shy away from our history of Western contemplative practices because men and women of faith have for centuries embodied them? Is a "believer," as we refer to persons of faith (disparagingly I might add), ruled out of the court of Reason because they contemplate? That may be true in practice, but not within the West's philosophical self-understanding. The very sources of Western rationalism are contemplative!

### Where Are We?

*Nothing and no one is lost.*<sup>47</sup>

An interlude and a proposal. Contemplation is a relevant and prevalent practice in our current culture. People are finding physical activity and exercise to be both enhanced by contemplation and conducive to contemplation. Academic groups are also discovering the significance of contemplation in academia, and education groups have begun to

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<sup>46</sup> Amazon, "Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers." Last modified 2013. <http://www.amazon.com/Going-Home-Buddha-Brothers-ebook/dp/product-description/B001UFP4T6>.

Curiously, although Merton's Wikipedia page introduces him as "a keen proponent of interfaith understanding" who "pioneered dialogue with prominent Asian spiritual figures, including the Dalai Lama, the Japanese writer D.T. Suzuki, and the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh," neither Suzuki's nor Thich Nhat Hanh's Wikipedia pages so much as mention Merton's name. The Eastern bias is prominent.

<sup>47</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 84.

promote contemplative practice in all levels of education, from elementary school to the graduate levels. Although many of the recent surges in contemplation have driven people to search for guidance in the Eastern traditions and religions, the Western tradition provides a long lineage of contemplative thinkers, writers, and philosophers, both secular and religious, who encourage contemplation as an important means to develop deeper awareness. That is my purpose here, to show that the West is not enjoying some illusory romance with the East. To do so, let us now dive into a deeper analysis of contemplation. How does one engage in it? And exactly how does it provide all of these supposed benefits of deeper awareness, better self-control, and a closer mind-body connection?

#### Contemplation: Half of the Knowledge

*The faculty of mind, man's knowledge, is both these things in one, according to antiquity and the Middle Ages, simultaneously ratio and intellectus; and the process of knowing is the action of the two together.*<sup>48</sup>

In *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, German philosopher Josef Pieper begins with the Western foundation of rational thought and contemplation. He traces back to philosophers of Greece and the Middle Ages, such as Aristotle and Plato, who differentiated between two modes of knowledge: the *ratio* and the *intellectus*.<sup>49</sup> The form of *ratio* encompasses the rational, logical, and discursive mode of thought, whereas the *intellectus* encompasses the contemplative, receptive, and non-discursive mode of thought. Both types are equally vital in seeking knowledge and truth, and the danger in treating education as the transmission of strictly rational, discursive knowledge is excluding the equally necessary intellectual contemplation. Pieper is not the only and last

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<sup>48</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 28.

word on the matter. We have him before us because he provides intelligible access to an otherwise complicated and vexed problem. My thesis is a modest attempt to see what this contemplation business is about. I am not here to rethink the Western philosophical tradition or to offer policy prescriptions to university presidents. I hope you will read this in the spirit in which it is written and by whom.

Back to our cursory and provisional introduction. Pieper warns that the loss of the *intellectus* may cause us to misunderstand virtue. Pieper counters Immanuel Kant's definition of virtue—"mastering our natural bent"—with St. Thomas Aquinas's definition of virtue—it "makes us perfect by enabling us to *follow* our natural bent in the right way."<sup>50</sup> In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant defines virtue as "the moral strength of a human being's will in fulfilling his duty."<sup>51</sup> Using only the *ratio*, one would surely approach virtue with a perspective similar to Kant. But a balance of the *ratio* and the *intellectus* leads to an approach similar to Aquinas. Rather than finding virtue oppressive and constraining, as Kant's definition seems, Aquinas's approach reveals virtue to be consistent with freedom of mind, joyful attachment to our duties and independence of inquiry. It is the same with other pursuits of knowledge. Like with virtue (an education of the self), other education that excludes the *intellectus* leads to knowledge and truth but only on its terms and not comprehensively. An education that is only critical and rational will start to feel like a somewhat unnatural place sanctioned with the belief that it is the only place where Kant's "mastering our natural bent" is possible. The university then starts to look like every other place. Study is just a form of work, a model like all other

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<sup>50</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 34.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, Robert, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2012 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/kant-moral/>.

models. In reducing all work, education, and thought to algorithms, tests, and statistics, the *intellectus* often appears as forms of entertainment. Students play sports, do theater, but none of that is genuinely “life of the mind.” The UNI-versity then turns out to be at odds with itself, valuing only “scientific” inquiry and turning everything else into second rate “rumination.”

### The Traditional Classroom: No Place For Leisure

Is there room for *intellectus* in the classroom? I would say yes, and there is evidence to support my conclusions. But I would agree Contemplative Studies has a long way to go. Do no more than take these affirmations of mine as a road map. We shall disagree and continue to do so. The university prides itself on openness. We shall see if openness applies to inquiries such as these.

Let us do a contemplative mind experiment. Coaches would call this “visualization.” On a crisp, autumn day, as colored leaves meander in the breeze, a first-grade class studies fractions. A kind but astute teacher notices that a tiny, pig-tailed girl in the fourth row is locked in a blank stare out the window, seemingly frozen in consciousness, for the second time today and the ninth time this week. She stops class and calls the child’s name, but it takes several seconds for the girl to respond. This is seriously alarming. The child usually exhibits an interest and eagerness to learn and performs well on quizzes and tests, making these spontaneous spells seem unconscious and involuntary. The girl’s frequent episodes of absentminded staring remind the teacher of something she learned about at an education conference last year: “Absence seizures are brief (usually less than 20 seconds), generalized epileptic seizures of sudden onset



and termination.”<sup>52</sup> Fearing the first-grader is suffering from a condition that could worsen if not treated, the teacher calls the child’s mother that night and suggests she take her daughter to see a specialist.

Thankfully, the first grader was not suffering from absence seizures. She had no mild form of epilepsy or any neurological disorder, for that matter. What she did have, however, was an inclination to daydream, imagine, and think. And at age six, she had not yet mastered the manners of shutting down the receptive and wandering side of the mind in order to respectively focus on the proceedings of the classroom for eight straight hours. Fortunately, this mother knew her daughter well enough to recognize that the teacher’s description of the child’s epileptic “seizures” was simply an example of her daughter’s habit of imagining and contemplating.

What if the mother had been persuaded to bring her daughter to a specialist, as many cautious parents understandably would have? She may have spent hundreds or thousands of dollars on consultations and tests. She may have faced a misdiagnosis, which would have led to a whole other set of problems and difficulties. Maybe the child was sick. Maybe the child did need medication. I am not a doctor. All I suggest you imagine is an alternative. Maybe that alternative is not available to us because we think “normal” behavior is only rational and calculative. So what caused the first-grade teacher to confuse a child’s propensity to contemplate with a serious neurological disorder, a confusion that could have potentially started a life-altering chain of unnecessary worry and fear?

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<sup>52</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, "Absence seizures." Last modified 2012. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absence\\_seizure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absence_seizure).



## The Science of Contemplation

*The material which psychoanalysis has brought to light is not new and unprecedented. Rather, its insights have by and large merely confirmed the things that great knowers of the human heart, and the traditional wisdom of the race, have always known and said.*<sup>53</sup>

An absence of *intellectus* leads to a misunderstanding of virtue, knowledge, and truth, as Pieper notes.<sup>v</sup> It also leads to a misunderstanding of behavior, particularly that of children, as Sanford Newmark, the head of the pediatric integrative neurodevelopmental program at the University of California in San Francisco, points out.<sup>54</sup> He argues that too many children are misdiagnosed with neurological disorders like absence seizures, ADD, and ADHD. According to Newmark, significant overdiagnosis stems from quick diagnoses for which doctors do not take the time to thoroughly talk to parents and teachers, look over school records, or consider other potential causes such as anxiety, giftedness, sleep apnea, learning disabilities, or child abuse. But more interestingly, Newmark argues that our culture's increasing busyness does not leave time for children to develop self-control and concentration, and constant stimulation makes it even more difficult for kids to develop these skills. The subsequent rise in behavior *typical of* children with ADHD contributes to the misdiagnosis and overdiagnosis of ADHD and similar disorders. Pieper addresses Newmark's concerns over both our culture's nonstop work and busyness and the effects of overstimulation. The questions here are political—how are the citizens of a society that educates as we do. The questions here are philosophical—how do we develop agency, self-control, self-regard, and introspection,

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<sup>53</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine, 1962), 60.

<sup>54</sup> Newmark, Sanford. "Are ADHD Medications Overprescribed?" *Wall Street Journal*, sec. Health Care, February 14, 2012.  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444301704577631591596516110.html>.

all leading to knowledge of self and of society. By bringing common examples before you I am not disregarding the science of politics.

Surely, many are skeptical of the brain-body connection. We should be. There is no clear answer from neuroscience. Many good scientists agree we can't speak of free will. What that does not mean is that we cannot speak of choice and agency. We just don't have the new vocabulary yet. My suggestion is bold, and I make it trusting your good will. But I do not rely on a reader's open-mindedness and fairness. My suggestion that physical maladies—behavior typical of ADD and ADHD—often arise from spiritual maladies—overstimulation and lack of contemplation—is not mere speculation; science unites mind-body-brain in ways that compel us who cultivate “intellectual virtue” to pay attention to the embodiment of moral virtue. Aristotle says these are habits.<sup>55</sup>

In a study<sup>56</sup> at Massachusetts General Hospital, researchers scanned the brains of 16 healthy people who had no experience with meditation before and after they underwent 8 weeks of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) training, which focused on meditation. The brain scans showed increases in gray matter in the hippocampus, an important area for learning and memory, and other areas of the brain

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<sup>55</sup> “Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growing to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (ethike) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word ethos (habit)” (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Edited by W. D. Ross. MIT Internet Classics Archive, 350 B.C.E. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.2.ii.html>).

<sup>56</sup> Holzel, Britta K., James Carmody, Mark Vangel, Christina Congleton, Sita M. Yerramsetti, Tim Gard, and Sara W. Lazar. "Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density." *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*. 191. no. 1 (2011): 36-43. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3004979/>.

important for self-awareness, introspection, and compassion.<sup>57</sup> A study at Harvard Osher Research Center found that mindfulness meditation training increases modulation of ~7-14 Hz alpha rhythms, an occurrence in the brain that happens during selective attention.<sup>58</sup> Mindfulness meditation, an intellectual and spiritual endeavor, physically altered the subjects' brains in both studies. Professors of the Information School at the University of Washington conducted another study to discover whether these benefits were exclusively effects of mindfulness or if one could achieve the same results with purely physical exercises, such as body relaxation, and found that removing the mental and spiritual component (meditation) also removed the physical (brain) benefits—further support of a mind-body connection.<sup>59</sup> Alice Walton, a *Forbes* contributor, points to research that demonstrates this brain-body connection in yoga, as well:

Because our lives today include business emails at 10 o'clock at night and loud cell conversations at the next table, our stress response often lingers in the "on" position at times it shouldn't. Yoga helps dampen the body's stress response by reducing levels of the hormone cortisol, which not only fuels our split-second

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<sup>57</sup> Walton, Alice G. "Mind: Meditation Changes the Cells of the Brain." *The Doctor Will See You Now*, February 11, 2011.

<http://www.thedoctorwillseeyounow.com/content/mind/art3214.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Kerr, Catherine E., and Stephanie R. Jones. "Effects of mindfulness meditation training on anticipatory alpha modulation in primary somatosensory cortex." *Brain Research Bulletin*. 85. no. 3-4 (2011): 96-103.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0361923011001341>.

<sup>59</sup> "Three groups each of 12-15 human resources personnel were tested: (1) those who underwent an 8-week training course on mindfulness-based meditation, (2) those who endured a wait period, were tested, and then underwent the same 8-week training, and (3) those who had 8-weeks of training in body relaxation." The study found that "only those trained in meditation stayed on tasks longer and made fewer task switches, as well as reporting less negative emotion after task performance, as compared with the other two groups" (Levy, David M., Jacob O. Wobbrock, Alfred W. Kaszniak, and Marilyn Ostergren. "The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation Training on Multitasking in a High-Stress Information Environment." *Proceedings of Graphics Interface*. (2012): 45-52. <http://faculty.washington.edu/wobbrock/pubs/gi-12.02.pdf>).

stress reactions, but can wreak havoc on the body when one is chronically stressed.<sup>60</sup>

Yoga, a highly contemplative and mindful practice, influences processes in the body like hormone levels and stress reactions. Dr. Elena Antonova, a neuroscientist at King's College's Institute of Psychiatry in London, conducted a study in which she took MRI scans of subjects before and after they underwent 8-week training sessions in mindfulness meditation.<sup>61</sup> One subject with lupus, Fiona Asserhon, found that meditation reduced her pain from the illness, and her MRI scans proved her right, physically showing that the pain response areas of the brain were less active when Fiona was meditating than when she let her mind wander. Newmark's assessment that overstimulation—which causes the mind to wander and prevents contemplation and leisure—may induce behavior typical of a physical malady of the brain (ADD or ADHD) is spot on.<sup>62</sup>

### An Overvaluing of Work Means an Undervaluing of Contemplation

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<sup>60</sup> Walton, Alice G. "Penetrating Postures: The Science of Yoga." *Forbes*, June 16, 2011. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2011/06/16/penetrating-postures-the-science-of-yoga/>.

<sup>61</sup> Sillito, David. "Scans 'show mindfulness meditation brain boost'." BBC. January 04, 2012. Web, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16406814>.

<sup>62</sup> Even cravings and addictions confirm the brain-body connection. Cravings that were once thought of as entirely physical, such as those of smokers, have “more to do with the psychosocial element of smoking than with the physiological effects of nicotine as an addictive chemical” (American Friends of Tel Aviv University, "Smoking Mind Over Smoking Matter." Last modified 2010. <http://www.aftau.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=12531>). University of Chicago Booth School of Business Professor Wilhelm Hofmann explains that this is true of almost all cravings (save some drug addictions). Cravings “originate from reward-processing activity in the brain... Then they become conscious, that is, integrated with a feeling of “longing” and elaborated on with conscious thoughts” (Klosowski, Thorin. Life Hacker, "Hack Your Brain To Use Cravings To Your Advantage." Last modified 2012. <http://lifehacker.com/5887614/hack-your-brain-to-use-cravings-to-your-advantage>).

*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.*<sup>63</sup>

Newmark explores the role of our culture's increased busyness in the overdiagnosis of ADHD:

Finally, I believe ADHD is overdiagnosed because of the constantly increasing demands on children and families that didn't exist a generation ago. Imagine a family with two working parents picking up their exhausted child from after-school care around 5:30, rushing home to get some food on the table and then starting homework. Is it any wonder kids in that situation can't concentrate or that consistent discipline and support are lacking?

Indeed, our society has become busier across the board. Look no further than Tim Krieder's June 2012 op-ed, "The 'Busy' Trap" in the *New York Times*.<sup>64</sup> He addresses the "busy" phenomenon common in our culture, whereby "lamented busyness is purely self-imposed." We volunteer to host a work meet-and-greet, or sign up for the "Home and School Board," and then we love to complain about it. Moreover, Krieder defines this phenomenon as a trap: "It's not as if any of us wants to live like this, any more than any one person wants to be part of a traffic jam or stadium trampling or the hierarchy of cruelty in high school—it's something we collectively force one another to do." This certainly echoes Pieper's criticism of our overvaluing of work.

Aristotle's concept of work, that "we work in order to have leisure," has largely gone out the window. We have replaced it with Max Weber's maxim, "one does not work to live; one lives to work."<sup>65</sup> We have expanded the definition of "work" to include nearly all aspects of living, and we consider it one of the highest virtues. We prioritize

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<sup>63</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 46.

<sup>64</sup> Krieder, Tim. "The 'Busy' Trap." *New York Times*, sec. Opinionator, June 30, 2012. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/30/the-busy-trap/>.

<sup>65</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 20.

work because it is a means to an end; it is productive. And as our Western society has transformed to prioritize work above all else, we have demoted leisure and contemplation, which are not means to other ends but intrinsically valuable themselves. Pieper poses that this redefinition of “work” has redefined our society: “A new and changing conception of the nature of man, a new and changing conception of the very meaning of human existence—that is what comes to light in the claims expressed in the modern notion of ‘work’ and ‘worker.’”<sup>66</sup> A life can be summarized by a resume. A human is defined by the job he or she has.

This overvaluing of work certainly extends to the classroom, which is precisely why the first grade teacher from the story perceived the six-year-old’s tendency to contemplate leisurely as a problem and abnormality that must be remedied. Our overvaluing of work has caused us to limit education to the transmission of rational knowledge, excluding the *intellectus* form from the classroom. Just as the ancient Western philosophers once declared the *ratio* and the *intellectus* equally essential, the Western tradition did not always exclude the contemplative, non-discursive, leisurely mode of thought from the classroom. Pieper distinguishes the original Western notion of school from the current concept by pointing to the meaning of the English word “school”:

And even the history of the word attests the fact: for leisure in Greek is *skole*, and in Latin *scola*, the English “school”. The word used to designate the place where we educate and teach is derived from a word which means “leisure”. “School” does not, properly speaking, mean school, but leisure.<sup>67</sup>

Instead, most American students associate the word “school” with the word “work.”

When they think of leisure, I would venture that for most American students, the words

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<sup>66</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 22-23.

<sup>67</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 19-20.



“holiday,” “vacation,” or “break” come to mind before the word “school” does. Teachers are no different. Considering our understanding of school as work rather than leisure, it is not surprising that the first-grade teacher found her student’s spells of gazing at the leaves out the window abnormal and inappropriate for the classroom. Nor is it surprising that a parent or teacher would view a child’s inability to work without losing focus for over eight hours straight as a disability. But if we look to the foundations of Western culture, as Pieper does, a child’s inclination to leisurely gaze out the window and ruminate in class is quite natural. If we are to return to our roots, to a culture in which children enjoy school and think of it as leisure, Pieper tells us that we must stop overvaluing the sphere of work:

The tremendous difference of point of view implied and our relative ignorance of the notion of leisure emerge more clearly if we examine the notion of work in its modern form, spreading, as it does, to cover and include the whole of human activity and even of human life; for then we shall realize to what an extent we tacitly acknowledge the claims that are made in the name of the “worker”.<sup>68</sup>

Once we set aside this conflation of work and human life, perhaps we can make time and space in our classrooms to allow for contemplation and leisure and avoid over-diagnosing and medicating children who bend to the natural tendency to seek *skole* in *school*. We can see more clearly why contemplation is taking hold in higher education. The life of some of our most earnest students is over-anxious, belabored, painful, and exhausting.

### Over-stimulation

*This, incidentally, may suggest that the greatest menace to our capacity for contemplation is the incessant fabrication of tawdry empty stimuli which kill the receptivity of the soul.*<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 22.

<sup>69</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 102.

In addition to identifying the overvaluing of busyness and work as a factor contributing to the increasing misdiagnosis of ADHD and similar disorders, Newmark posits that constant television-watching, Internet-surfing, and video game-playing amplifies the number of children who exhibit symptoms of ADHD and thus are vulnerable to misdiagnosis: "Add that to the proliferation of videogames and other electronic distractions that have been linked to behavior typical of children with ADHD, and it is easy to see how a diagnosis of ADHD and a simple pill to fix it can become an easy choice." Moreover, many new studies are showing that because overstimulation hinders a child's ability to sit still and concentrate, it serves as a barrier to contemplation.

In Bryan Walsh's "The Upside of Being An Introvert," he cites psychologist Jerome Kagan to scientifically explain the difference between introverts and extroverts.<sup>70</sup> Kagan's 1989 study of introverts and extroverts observed 500 four-month-old infants' reactions to various stimuli, such as popping balloons, colorful mobiles, and the odor of alcohol on cotton balls. When he checked up on the infants in their teenaged years, he found that the 20% of infants who had reacted intensely to the stimuli were introverts, while the 40% who remained quiet throughout the stimuli grew to be extroverted teenagers. Psychologist Elaine Aron elaborates that introverts (those babies who were overwhelmed by the stimuli) tend to take cocktail parties and crowded rooms in moderation, if at all. Contrarily, extroverts "are a little bit like addicts who are always in search of a high, seeking out stimuli...that would make an introvert's head ring."<sup>71</sup> This

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<sup>70</sup> Walsh, Bryan. "The Upside Of Being An Introvert (And Why Extroverts Are Overrated)." *Time Magazine*, sec. Cover, February 06, 2012.  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2105432-3,00.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Walsh, "The Upside of Being An Introvert."



distinction between extroverts and introverts becomes really interesting when we consider the high value we as a society place on extroversion and extroverted individuals. Introverted children are often labeled negatively as “shy” and encouraged by parents and teachers to come out of their shells more and become more out-going, while extroversion is assumed to be an ideal quality for leadership. Our society pushes introverts, who are naturally inclined to shy away from stimuli, to become more like extroverts, who naturally seek out stimuli, and the result is a vacuum of contemplation.

Psychologist Sherry Turkle’s new research on our culture’s increasing attachment to technology confirms the problem constant stimulation poses to contemplation.<sup>72</sup> Stimuli-seeking extroverts are no longer alone in facing obstacles to contemplation. Turkle, founder of MIT’s Initiative on Technology and Self, explores our culture’s growing relationship to stimuli a bit further in her new book *Alone Together*. Because the majority of children are now growing up attached to computers, phones, tablets, mp3 players, and TVs, introverts and extroverts alike are neither learning the art of conversation nor developing the capacity for solitude. Thus, while Walsh’s research concludes that introverts may be more inclined to solitude, reflection, and contemplation than extroverts, Turkle’s research suggests that our society’s obsession with technology is making us neither introverted nor extroverted. These words don’t capture the changes to our psychological traits. But that’s for another study. Our reliance on our phones to be in constant communication with others renders us incapable of contemplating in solitude, yet the replacement of face-to-face or in-person conversation with texting, emailing, and

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<sup>72</sup> Turkle, Sherry. "In Constant Digital Contact, We Feel 'Alone Together'." *Alone Together*, by Terry Gross. October 18, 2012. <http://www.npr.org/2012/10/18/163098594/in-constant-digital-contact-we-feel-alone-together>.

the occasional phone call diminishes our ability to really communicate with others. And so we are stuck in this strange no man's land, unable to converse with others, yet unable to be alone—always lonely, yet never alone.

Universities have adapted both to our culture's overvaluing of work and to new generations' incapacity for conversation, as Stanley Fish points out in his *New York Times* review of Frank Donahue's *The Last Professor*:

The for-profit university is the logical end of a shift from a model of education centered in an individual professor who delivers insight and inspiration to a model that begins and ends with the imperative to deliver the information and skills necessary to gain employment. In this latter model, the mode of delivery—a disc, a computer screen, a video hook-up—doesn't matter so long as delivery occurs. Insofar as there are real-life faculty in the picture, their credentials and publications (if they have any) are beside the point, for they are just “delivery people.”<sup>73</sup>

Current research warning of the danger overstimulation poses to contemplation may sound new, but it echoes Pieper. Way before the Internet or the iPhone, Pieper connected one's relationship with stimuli to one's inclination towards contemplation, arguing that the more stimuli one seeks and engages with, the less time, space, and ability one has for contemplation: “This, incidentally, may suggest that the greatest menace to our capacity for contemplation is the incessant fabrication of tawdry empty stimuli which kill the receptivity of the soul.”<sup>74</sup>

Every soul hungers for contemplation, the vehicle through which we access the *intellectus* mode of knowledge, according to Pieper.<sup>75</sup> Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson,

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<sup>73</sup> Fish, Stanley. “The Last Professor.” *New York Times*, sec. Opinionator, January 18, 2009. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/the-last-professor/>.

<sup>74</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 102.

<sup>75</sup> “Man, physical, historical, “earthly” man, has a basic craving to see; strictly speaking, he craves nothing else; his make-up is such that he lives most purely as a see-er: in contemplation” (Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 59).

and Eleanor Rosch support Pieper's declaration with some hard facts and some compelling science. *The Embodied Mind*, by the way, opened the field of Contemplative Studies. These authors were twenty years ahead of their time. We now see their genius. They assert the need for the integration of cognitive science and human experience in order to truly understand the brain and cognition, and they pose mindfulness meditation as a vehicle for that integration, because mindfulness requires one to step back and become aware of the mind. Just as Pieper argues that contemplation is the only way to happiness, for which we naturally long, Varela, Thompson, and Rosch show that mindfulness allows the mind to assume its *natural* activity: "By letting go of the mind in this way, the natural activity of the mind to be alert and observant becomes apparent."<sup>76</sup> The constant stimuli our extroverted world seeks are the largest obstacles to the natural activity of the mind. Furthermore, these cultural factors may seem largely out of our control, leading to the hopeless conclusion that, if we are to be an active, involved member of our society, we must succumb to the cultural pressures of busyness and overstimulation. The chaos of student social life is not going to be solved by giving students more and more "work." Perhaps the chaos is a consequence of our narrow understanding of work.

### Contemplation as Simplicity

*For example there is simplicitas, that simplicity peculiar to the gaze of contemplation. The whole energy of the seeing person gathers into a single look.*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), 31.

<sup>77</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 100.

It certainly would be easier to lead a contemplative life if schools, workplaces, and peers valued *ratio* and *intellectus*, work and leisure, equally, or if external circumstances forced us to embrace time and space, silence and solitude. Consider my great-grandfather, howsoever simplistic these stories may sound.<sup>78</sup> He lived through what was one of the most difficult times for our entire nation: the Great Depression. My childhood is full of fond memories sitting around Paw Paw J's rocking chair or picking pecans behind his house as he told my cousins and me about how he received his high school diploma in a cow pasture because his school had to shut down in the middle of his senior year due to a poverty of funds.<sup>79</sup> Or how he and his best friend, Shoe, jumped a cargo train and rode stowaway from Louisiana to Michigan to find work to feed his large family back home, and when the train tunneled through a Kentucky mountain, he had to hold his breath to avoid inhaling the smoke for so long that he thought he was going to die. While he spoke of these as tragic times, the stories that Paw Paw J shared the most and with obvious joy and excitement were memories from the solid four years he spent hunting the 19,000 acres of swamp that currently backs up to my neighborhood. Jobs were scarce and money was tight, so he would spend all day, every day fishing and hunting for food for his family. He loved to tell of the winter dawn when he discovered ducks' dominant sense of sight. Hidden from view by a cluster of palmettos, he watched over a dozen mallards float one by one down the bayou. He shot about 20 of them, but it was not until he slightly repositioned himself that the sharp-sighted flock realized where

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<sup>78</sup> "Story—whether delivered through films, books, or video games—teaches us facts about the world; influences our moral logic; and marks us with fears, hopes, and anxieties that alter our behavior, perhaps even our personalities" (Gottschall, Jonathan, *The Storytelling Animal*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2012) 148.

<sup>79</sup> J.A. Braud (1915-2004).

the danger was coming from and flew away. Time and time again, he laughed about the October morning when he could not figure out why a steady stream of male squirrels kept running towards him, even when his line of pellets knocked them down one after another. But when he glanced over his shoulder and spotted a female squirrel right behind him, it clicked.

These and others may seem like insignificant stories, not academic enough. Be that as it may, tales in the woods made up a good four years of Paw Paw J's young adulthood, and they were the times he especially pondered when he lay on his deathbed. We learn from such stories and should continue to do so all our lives. My dad suspects that Paw Paw J talked about his years of unemployment so much because they were, paradoxically, a great gift. "Whether he realized it or not, the years he often lamented over were a great blessing," my dad remarked. "He had silence, peace, and time—to contemplate nature, God, and his place in the world—in one of the most beautiful areas in the state without societal pressure or expectations to do more, work more, and achieve more. I'd take that in a heartbeat."<sup>80</sup>

Coming from my father, this is significant. Ask anyone who knows him—my dad is one of the most driven, hard-working, busiest men you will ever meet. He would never in a million years choose to quit working and spend his days hunting and contemplating in the swamp—even if he had the means to do so. That is why he saw Paw Paw J's forced years of unemployment as so liberating. If my dad had no choice, he could really do what he loves: canoe down the bayou, expand his garden, deer hunt, and dig down to the heart of life. What I am considering here is that contemplation may be a way for us to integrate

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<sup>80</sup> Lathan Alexander.

our hard work with leisure by understanding our labors as leisurely. No one is proposing that we do away with effort and sacrifice. Any such reading distorts my words and intentions. An example may help us stay on course.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh confirms the suspicion that forced time, space, and solitude can be paradoxically liberating in her book *Gift from the Sea*. She writes of the freedom and peace that simplicity and contemplation brings (even when it is forced), referring to an old friend who spent three years in a German prison camp. He was horrifically mistreated, of course, “And yet, prison life taught him how little one can get along with, and what extraordinary spiritual freedom and peace such simplification can bring.”<sup>81</sup> She contrasts her friend’s experience to that of Americans’: “I remember again, ironically, that today more of us in America than anywhere else in the world have the luxury of choice between simplicity and complication of life. And for the most part, we, who could choose simplicity, choose complication.”<sup>82</sup> The realization that more choices do not necessarily translate into liberation may come as quite a shock for some. It seems absurd. We are accustomed to the equation: more choices (especially the seductive choice to choose all of the above) equal more freedom.

Pieper helps to explain why this enticing equation is false:

Only in such activity [whose effects work inward] does the acting person actualize himself. Action which reaches outward perfects the work rather than the person who acts. Under those circumstances what happens is that the perfection of the work “does not...include the creator; he is condemned to return to his lesser ego.”<sup>83,84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Lindbergh, Anne Morrow. *Gift from the Sea*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 26.

<sup>82</sup> Lindbergh 26-27.

<sup>83</sup> Pieper cites this quote: Konrad Weiss in a letter to Katharina Kippenberg (August 14, 1939).

<sup>84</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 57.

This may explain why men and women in fortunate economic climates and conditions do not find any more peace and harmony taking advantage of the countless career and advancement opportunities than do citizens living under far less fortunate economic and financial circumstances.<sup>85</sup> We custodians of liberal education should stop to consider whether we pay for “accomplished” students with their happiness and well-being. The constant working, doing, achieving, producing, texting, stressing, and “succeeding” only perfect the external things we produce and work on. Our wealth of opportunities to work and succeed directs our focus outward rather than inward. Thus our higher salaries or more impressive resumes do not bring us any nearer to peace and harmony, because, as Pieper says, only activity that works inward yields awareness of reality. I do not blame my great-grandfather for wishing he could have gone to college. It is nonetheless worthwhile to consider: if Paw Paw J had been able to go to college and become a doctor, banker, lawyer, or engineer; if he had never had those four years of contemplation in the swamp—would he have been able to experience “the natural activity of the mind to be alert and observant?”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> For example, a study conducted by the University of Southern California’s Department of Economics in 2012 aimed to measure the subjective well-being of China as its socioeconomic status rose from 1990-2010, primarily by using self-reported feelings of satisfaction with life among the Chinese population. The study found: “Despite its unprecedented growth in output per capita in the last two decades, China has essentially followed the life satisfaction trajectory of the central and eastern European transition countries—a U-shaped swing and a nil or declining trend. There is no evidence of an increase in life satisfaction of the magnitude that might have been expected to result from the fourfold improvement in the level of per capita consumption that has occurred” (Easterlin, Richard, Robson Morgan, Malgorzata Switek, and Fei Wang. "China's life satisfaction, 1990-2010." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. (2012). <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/05/09/1205672109.full.pdf>).

<sup>86</sup> Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 31.



Choices do not necessarily mean more freedom. The simple life—even if it is forced—can bring peace, liberation, and happiness. A favorite aphorism of my grandmother comes to mind: “We are human *beings*, not human *doings*.”<sup>87</sup> No matter how paradoxically liberating forced under-working or under-stimulation may be, no one would be so absurd as to argue that our society should somehow strive for recession, oppression, or imprisonment. So the question remains: how can we overcome a culture that over-stimulates and overvalues work and the *ratio*? If we are to return to our Western roots, we must begin with the classroom. This thesis is true to my own experience at one of the nation’s top liberal arts colleges. It is a message of hope and suggestions for action. Political philosophy has consequences.

#### Contemplation: A New Perspective on Time

*Contemplation, then, is intuition; that is to say, it is a type of knowing which does not merely move towards its object, but already rests in it.*<sup>88</sup>

Psychologist Phillip Zimbardo, who conducted the famous Stanford prison experiment in 1971, illuminates a new direction towards which the American education system can head in order to reclaim the Western roots of valuing the *ratio* and *intellectus* equally and viewing school as a place for *skole*, or leisure. He proposes that time perspective characterizes cultures, nations, and cities and influences individuals. A change in our perspective of time can help with our most pressing questions and concerns.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Donna Braud King Diez.

<sup>88</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 74.

<sup>89</sup> Callaghan, Phil. "The Psychology of Time." *Resourceful Change NLP Blog* (blog), February 22, 2012. <http://www.philcallaghan.co.uk/2011/02/the-psychology-of-time/>.

Zimbardo identifies 6 main time zones: (1) past positive-oriented individuals reminisce about the good old times; (2) past negative-oriented individuals focus on regret and failure; (3) present-hedonistic-oriented individuals, which include all babies, live for pleasure and avoid pain; (4) other present-oriented individuals believe that life is fated by the conditions into which one is born and under which one lives; (5) the first future-oriented group has learned to resist temptation to delay gratification; (6) and the second future-oriented group trusts and believes that life begins after the death of the mortal body.

Addressing the education disaster in America—that a child drops out of school every 9 seconds—Zimbardo argues that the root of this problem is a general misunderstanding or ignorance of the changing time orientation in America. Most driven young people and educated working adults are future-oriented. They have learned to resist temptation and delay gratification in order to succeed. Consequently, these same future-oriented people promote propaganda that aim to inform children and adolescents of the future consequences of drinking, doing drugs, having sex, and dropping out of school. These efforts may work on future-oriented kids, but future-oriented students are not the ones dropping out. Zimbardo argues that the children and adolescents who need help are still at the initial present-hedonistic stage, because it takes fully present and active families and schools to teach kids the importance of resisting temptation and delaying gratification.

In an age when television, video games, and the Internet occupy so much of a child's life—especially children from low-income or single-parent households, where there may be less supervision available—technology is rewiring children's brains and

time orientation. Consequently, education traditionalists' solutions to push more structured reading, writing, and arithmetic in the classroom are not working, because present-hedonistic kids find the analogue classroom (the *ratio*) boring and subsequently do not respond the way future-oriented kids do.

Let us return to the academic setting. Pieper's concept of time may help to discern how to better engage young present-oriented students in the classroom:

One who is happy steps away from the parceling up of time and into a reposeful Now, a *nunc stans* in which everything is simultaneous. But this very quality once again links the happy man with the contemplative man. It is not only that the simple insightful gaze of the *intellectus* is related to the "discursive" movements of the *ratio* as the eternal to the temporal. Rather, in contemplation man is capable of remaining longer without fatigue or distraction than in any other activity; time flies by. In happiness as in contemplation, man takes a step out of time.<sup>90</sup>

Pieper both agrees and disagrees with Zimbardo. Like Zimbardo, Pieper highlights the significance and power of time orientation. Pieper adds a seventh time zone. Pieper's "reposeful Now" is certainly present-oriented, but it neither fits in Zimbardo's present-hedonistic orientation nor his fated present orientation. Instead of seeking sensation or surrendering to Armageddon, Pieper's contemplative man lets go of Zimbardo's partitions of time, steps out of time, and peacefully contemplates.

Here may be the silver lining for the new generations of American kids whom overstimulation has perpetually stuck in the present-hedonistic orientation: because they are already present oriented, they are arguably one step closer to the "reposeful Now" than the future oriented kids. Instead of reinforcing the traditional analogue classroom, maybe educators should take advantage of Zimbardo's "revolution in time" and channel children's present time orientation towards contemplation. (Some educators are already

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<sup>90</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 101.

doing this—and meeting success—such as SEL educators, MindUp, and Yoga 4 Classrooms®, which I discussed earlier in this paper.) Starting with new and younger generations of Americans by introducing time and space for contemplation in the classroom is a good starting point for returning to our Western roots and reintegrating leisure, the *intellectus*, and contemplation into our society, but what about older generations? With some scholarship in mind, we may ask: What about higher education?

### Is College Dead?

*In his commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Aquinas gives this definition: "Only those arts are called liberal or free which are connected with knowledge; those which are concerned with utilitarian ends that are attained through activity, however, are called servile."<sup>91</sup>*

In 1987, Allan Bloom dedicated 382 pages proclaiming the crisis of the times, i.e. the crisis of the university. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, he warns of the university's looming *crisis*, admittedly a much-misused word but we shall see if it is appropriate in our context. Bloom writes:

Today there is precious little thought about universities, and what there is does not unequivocally support the university's traditional role. In order to find out why we have fallen on such hard times, we must recognize that the foundations of the university have become extremely doubtful to the highest intelligences. Our petty tribulations have great causes. What happened to the universities in Germany in the thirties is what has happened and is happening everywhere. The essence of it all is not social, political, psychological or economic, but philosophic.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 37.

<sup>92</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 312.

Mr. Bloom has since passed, but I doubt he rests in peace, for a look at today's headlines suggests that the death of the university is here: "College Is Dead. Long Live College!"<sup>93</sup> (*Times*), "11 Students Of A Different Education"<sup>94</sup> (*Forbes*), and "Colleges Lose Pricing Power"<sup>95</sup> (*WSJ*), to name a few. The arrival of start-ups like Udacity, Coursera, and edX, which bring online courses to students of all ages across the globe, has made college seem like a waste of money to many, especially when top-rank universities like Stanford and MIT are offering massive open online courses (MOOCs) practically for free. But universal and affordable college education sounds like victorious progress, not a tragic loss. Why pay \$200,000+ for an education you could get from your computer at home? Sure, college campuses are beautiful, but in today's online world, what purpose do they really serve? We are in need of a new engagement in the liberal arts, one that is personal, and I wonder if Contemplative Studies offer this. My question is not rhetorical and we just don't know. I have a few suggestive remarks to offer in the light of the great preponderance of evidence.

### The Mission of the University

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<sup>93</sup> Ripley, Amanda. "College Is Dead. Long Live College!" *Time Magazine*, October 18, 2012. <http://nation.time.com/2012/10/18/college-is-dead-long-live-college/?iid=us-article-mostpop1>.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, Samantha. "11 Students Of A Different Education." *Forbes*, September 27, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/samanthasmith/2012/09/27/11-students-of-a-different-education/>.

<sup>95</sup> Corkery, Michael. "Colleges Lose Pricing Power." *Wall Street Journal*, sec. U.S. News, January 09, 2013. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324442304578231922159602676.html?mod=WSJ\\_WSJ\\_Careers\\_CJEducation\\_5](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324442304578231922159602676.html?mod=WSJ_WSJ_Careers_CJEducation_5).

*The word used to designate the place where we educate and teach is derived from a word which means "leisure". "School" does not, properly speaking, mean school, but leisure.*<sup>96</sup>

Bloom defines higher education as experience, which, it is important to note, is fundamentally divergent from watching a lecture on a computer screen. He elaborates,

Such experience is a condition of investigating the question, "What is man?," in relation to his highest aspirations as opposed to his low and common needs. A liberal education means precisely helping students to pose this question to themselves, to become aware that the answer is neither obvious nor simply unavailable, and that there is no serious life in which this question is not a continuous concern.<sup>97</sup>

Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset frames the mission of the university similarly:

It is of the first importance to these societies, therefore, that these professional people, aside from their several professions, possess the power to make their lives a vital influence, in harmony with the height of their times. Hence it is imperative to set up once more, in the university, the teaching of the culture, the system of vital ideas, which the age has attained. This is the basic function of the university. This is what the university must be, above all else.<sup>98</sup>

Why can't MOOCs provoke students to ask the question, "What is man?"? Can't MOOCs take on the mission of the university, teaching culture and vital ideas via lectures recorded by Tegrity? This online transfer necessarily assumes an already-given world that our brains re-present to us. Fransisco Varela, a Chilean biologist, philosopher, and neuroscientist, along with Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch, calls into question the assumption that "cognition consists of the representation of a world that is independent of our perceptual and cognitive capacities by a cognitive system that exists independent of the world."<sup>99</sup> This assumption is not something new we must adopt if we are to ditch the

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<sup>96</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 19-20.

<sup>97</sup> Bloom 21.

<sup>98</sup> Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Mission of the University*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 30.

<sup>99</sup> Varela, Thompson, and Rosch xx.

university; it is inherent in our current higher education system. As political philosopher Thomas Pangle put it, “Our education, in contrast, places us at an enormous artificial distance from this starting point of the Socratic path to the ‘examined life.’”<sup>100</sup> The traditional classroom presumes that the student’s brain can receive the information offered by essentially copying the external image or idea shown and re-presenting it in his or her brain. We should consider how all of this gets “operationalized.” But that, remember, is not what I am here to do. To repeat, in drawing this thesis to a conclusion I wish to leave you with some suggestions in light of evidence that makes it quite clear that we need a new education for a new age.

### The Embodied Mind

*But what actually happens when the soul, as it were, takes precedence over the eye? No one has yet succeeded in providing an adequate descriptive account of that process.*<sup>101</sup>

While the Kantian notion of thinking and by extension of how the brain operates is normally taken for granted, Varela, Thompson, and Rosch call attention to a shift in cognitive science away from this view of the world:

This shift requires that we move away from the idea of the world as independent and extrinsic to the idea of a world as inseparable from the structure of these processes of self-modification... Instead of representing an independent world, they [internal mechanisms of self-organization] enact a world as a domain of distinctions that is inseparable from the structure embodied by the cognitive system... In cognitive science, this means that we must call into question the idea that information exists ready-made in the world and that it is extracted by a cognitive system, as the cognitivist notion of an informavore vividly implies.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Thomas Pangle, *Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>101</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation* 87.

<sup>102</sup> Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 140.



Varela, Thompson, and Rosch point to color perception to depict how science and human experience naturally intersect. While one would expect color perception to depend on locally reflected light (short-wave light produces blue, middle-wave light, green, and long-wave light, red), vision scientists identify two phenomena that exhibit the relative independence of color perception from locally reflected light. In *approximate color constancy*, the perceived color of something stays constant no matter how much the locally reflected light varies. In *simultaneous color contrast*, two regions that reflect light of the same spectrum effect different perceived colors depending on their different surroundings. Phenomena such as these lead to the conclusion that color perception cannot solely be determined by external properties; color is not necessarily a pre-given thing that one sees.

Instead, we need to consider the complex and only partially understood processes of cooperative comparison among multiple neuronal ensembles in the brain, which assign colors to objects according to the emergent, global states they reach given a retinal image... Furthermore, visual perception is an active exchange with other sensory modalities. For example, the associations of color and sound, as well as color and horizontal/vertical perception (involving the sense of orientation and equilibrium), are well known to artists, though less studied by neurobiologists... Thus, to reiterate one of our central points, the neuronal network does not function as a one-way street from perception to action. Perception and action, sensorium and motorium, are linked together as successively emergent and mutually selecting patterns.<sup>103</sup>

This is referred to more broadly as the “Brain Web.” We can no longer think about thinking in a reductionist manner alone. What we are and that includes what we think, see, feel, and say, emanates from a web of interconnectedness.

Applying this view of the embodied mind in cognitive science to higher education, it suggests that when we present students with an idea, image, or view of the

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<sup>103</sup> Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 160-163.

world, the likelihood that a student will take away the same view as the textbook, professor or another student is low. We know that teaching as the giving and taking of information does not work very well. Students have to embody what they learn. Staying within the parameters of the study just mentioned, we can say that perception substantially depends on prior experiences and relationships. Just as our perception of an object's color depends on the object's surroundings and the workings of our other senses, so does our perception of an idea. David Brooks articulates it well: "Somehow, over the course of their lives, they [students] have had certain experiences... Out of these myriad influences, a certain pattern of perception has emerged, a certain way of seeing."<sup>104</sup>

What does this mean for the university? It means that when an MIT professor teaches 60,000 students from all over the world the theory of relativity via a MOOC, there are as many as 60,000 different representations of the theory of relativity being perceived. Yet this unavoidable subjective aspect of education is often completely ignored. Experience is a necessary component of education, for if we are to strive for any kind of common understanding or sympathy among students, it must begin with shared experience. But how does one share an experience? Even if 20 students sit in the same classroom, they could all be worlds apart in their minds, each visiting past memories or picturing future expectations. The only thing we truly share is the present moment. How do we experience the present moment, together? To repeat, I am not re-writing higher education. I am suggesting that contemplative pedagogy asks any honest person seeking the truth about themselves and their fellow students, colleagues, and friends, to at least reconsider what they do in the light of this new science. Whether persons think

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<sup>104</sup> Brooks 128.

mindfulness is just a passing fad, I trust the evidence I've provided shows that we ought not be so nonchalant. Not until we've tested the hypotheses.

### Contemplative Pedagogy

*Of course we do not intend in the least to deny the necessity and the importance of rationally demonstrative argumentation...But it is equally evident that we might say: Whoever undertakes to defend belief against the arguments of rationalism should prepare himself by considering the question: "How do we apprehend a person?"<sup>105</sup>*

Mindfulness, or what many educators are calling "contemplative pedagogy" is a start. James Rhem, executive editor of The National Teaching & Learning Forum, defines it as "an approach to learning that embraces subjective experience as a reality, a vital part of the whole in learning, and brings to bear some of the fruit of thousands of years of systematic exploration of that interior reality in teaching."<sup>106</sup> The question arises—if contemplative learning embraces subjective experience, does it demote objective reasoning? Does it necessarily favor passion over reason?<sup>107</sup>

If critics of the American education system lament its focus on and restriction to rationality and reason alone, one might wonder if those critics, particularly those of the contemplative movement, wish to liberate passion from reason's reign, to allow space for

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<sup>105</sup> Josef Pieper, *Josef Pieper: An Anthology*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>106</sup> Rhem, James. "Contemplative Pedagogy Part 1." *The National Teaching & Learning Forum*. 21. no. 3 (2012): 1-6. <http://www.ntlf.com/issues/v21n3/v21n3.pdf>.

<sup>107</sup> Soren Kierkegaard is one example of a philosopher who saw a parallel between subjective vs. objective and passion vs. reason: "Similarly, for a subjective thinker, imagination, feeling, and dialectics in impassioned existence-inwardness are required. But first and last, passion, because for an existing person it is impossible to think about existence without become passionate, inasmuch as existing is a prodigious contradiction from which the subjective thinker is not to abstract, for then it was easy, but in which he is to remain" (Kierkegaard, Soren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*. University bookshop Reitzel, 1846. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_S%C3%B8ren\\_Kierkegaard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard)).

the passions in higher education. Or worse, does mindfulness mean mindlessness? Some might be quick to think that broader understandings of mind threaten reason and promote unreason. That is a legitimate concern. It is however founded on a profound misunderstanding of contemplation.

Many great philosophers have made just that argument before. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for one, criticized man's suppression of the passions by reason and called for a return to the "noble savage," an idyllic state of nature in which the passions are free. Or so it seems at first. But we are not here to flesh out every philosopher. To be sure, contemplation is not rational if by rational we mean ratiocination, a fact that Pieper emphasizes: "Such nonrational, intuitive certainties of the divine base of all that is can be vouchsafed to our gaze even when it is turned toward the most insignificant looking things, if only it is a gaze inspired by love. That, in the precise sense, is contemplation."<sup>108</sup> However, that contemplation is not rational does not mean that it is the opposite of reason—namely, passion. Rather, contemplation may be better associated with the spirit, the third component of Plato's tripartite theory of the soul (the other two being appetitive and rational).<sup>109</sup> Pieper, again, illuminates: "As this philosophical

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<sup>108</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 85.

<sup>109</sup> "The *Republic* also puts forward a new theory of soul, which involves the claim that the embodied human soul has (at least) three parts or aspects, namely reason, spirit and appetite[...]. This happens, for instance, when a person is thirsty and on that basis wants to drink, but at the same time wishes not to drink, on the basis of some calculation or deliberation, and in fact succeeds in refraining from drinking, thirsty though they are. It follows from the premises stated that the human soul includes at least two distinct subjects, so that one opposite (the desire to drink) can be assigned to one of them and the other (the aversion to drinking) can be assigned to the other. Taking himself to have identified reason and appetite as distinct parts of the soul, Socrates draws attention to other kinds of conflict between desires, which are meant to bring to light spirit, the third part of the soul" (Lorenz, Hendrik, "Ancient Theories of Soul", *The Stanford*

tradition holds, man's *spiritual* knowledge is the fruit of *ratio* and *intellectus*.”<sup>110</sup>

Contemplation does not necessitate the suppression of reason in favor of passion. Instead, contemplation elevates the spirit. Undoubtedly this proves difficult for neuroscientists.

What is this talk of spirit? They have other words, such as “emanation.” I wonder if this tricky thing we call spirit is as important as it is because it is now the concern of science.

Imagine, hard-core materialist and reductionist science is the science most interested in the meditating brains of nuns and monks! If there ever was a paradigm shift, this is it.

Consider some evidence, which admittedly is cursory and provisional. In April 2011, a group of MIT and Harvard neuroscientists published a study they conducted on subjects with no previous meditation experience. Scanning the subjects' brains before and after training them in mindfulness-based stress reduction, the researchers found that at the end of the 8-week training period, the subjects showed greater changes in the size of their alpha waves, which help the brain resist distraction, than did the control subjects.<sup>111</sup> Dr. Willoughby Britton, a professor of psychiatry at Brown University Medical School, further helped to explain neuroscientists' attraction to contemplation and mindfulness in a July 2011 Ted Talk.<sup>112</sup> A weak and underactive prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain that focuses attention and modulates the limbic system (emotional system)—both characterizes patients with clinical syndromes such as schizophrenia, substance abuse, depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and ADD and predisposes one to those disorders.

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*Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/ancient-soul/>.

<sup>110</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 29.

<sup>111</sup> Trafton, Anne. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "The benefits of meditation." Last modified 2011. <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2011/meditation-0505.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Britton, Willoughby. "Why A Neuroscientist Would Study Meditation." *TEDxBrownUniversity*. TEDxTalks. July 26, 2011. Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR8TjCncvIw>.

Therefore contemplative and mindfulness practices that exercise one's ability to focus attention can help to prevent and possibly remedy such clinical syndromes and strengthen character by increasing mindfulness of and control over emotion.

In the 2012 BBC segment on Dr. Elena Antonova mentioned earlier, BBC's David Sillito joined Dr. Antonova as a participant in the study, undergoing two MRI scans, one before his introduction to the art of mindfulness meditation and one afterwards.<sup>113</sup> The second MRI scan showed a significant decrease in activity in the area of the brain most associated with self-centeredness, once again suggesting that contemplation and mindfulness can educate and benefit the spirit.

Introducing the words "spirit" or "spiritual" may seem uncomfortable or awkward in an academic setting. French philosopher Pierre Hadot bluntly acknowledges this fact in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*:

"Spiritual exercises." The expression is a bit disconcerting for the contemporary reader. In the first place, it is no longer quite fashionable these days to use the word "spiritual." It is nevertheless necessary to use this term, I believe, because none of the other adjectives we could use – "psychic," "moral," "ethical," "intellectual," "of thought," "of the soul" – covers all the aspects of the reality we want to describe.<sup>114</sup>

Contemplative exercises educate the spirit by suppressing neither reason nor passion but by allowing the best of both to emerge. By engaging in mindfulness or contemplation, one steps back from the self and observes, watching what emotions and thoughts arise when one sits, goes to class, exercises, or socializes. Then, aware of the thoughts, circumstances, and processes that lead to either beneficial or harmful passions, one may

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<sup>113</sup> Sillito, David. "Scans 'show mindfulness meditation brain boost'." BBC. January 04, 2012. Web, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16406814>.

<sup>114</sup> Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1995), 82.

learn to recognize those same thoughts, circumstances, and processes when they repeat themselves later on. As one becomes more contemplative, mindful, and *spiritually knowledgeable*, to borrow from Pieper, the resulting increased awareness can eventually enable one to eliminate those harmful emotions and passions.

Lest we mistake this suggestion to integrate spiritual and contemplative practices into America's rational education system as new, it may be useful to listen to David Levy, author of *No Time To Think*, who addressed the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) conference in 2009.<sup>115</sup> Levy reiterates that we misunderstand Greek philosophy if we think they were primarily schools of intellectual argument and rational discourse.

These Greek schools were spiritual schools, where contemplative practices were not incidental or accidental but were central to the training, because the training in these schools was in how to live, in how to be human...the philosopher's aim was not to inform but to form...Central to this path were a set of spiritual and contemplative exercises that were concerned with the transformation of the self. These included breathing exercises, meditations on death, examination of conscience, and the contemplation of nature. A central feature of all these exercises he [Pierre Hadot] argues was attention to the present moment.

In advocating contemplation in higher education, the contemplative movement is not rebelling against Western tradition. Quite the opposite, we wish to re-embrace the spiritual exercises once common in schools of ancient Greece and Rome. Perhaps we may need another word for spirit. I suppose we do. But the phenomenon itself and its place among the best traditions of liberal learning is not contravened by history, nature, or science.

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<sup>115</sup> Levy, David. "Head, Heart, and Hand: Cultivating the Contemplative in Higher Education." "The Contemplative Heart of Higher Education." Recorded April 2009. Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education. Web, <http://vimeo.com/5187656>.



Contemplation and mindfulness are practices, meaning they must be practiced. By allowing time and space in education for those practices, via meditation, mindful physical activity, or contemplative artistic practices (calligraphy and bookbinding are favorites of Levy), students may build the spiritual strength to practice mindfulness in other aspects of life, finding a virtuous balance between reason and passion. If the word spirit is troubling, we can state the observation in other ways. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom shows that character formation is the fundamental purpose of not only the university, but of the political organism:

Civilization or, to say the same thing, education is the taming or domestication of the soul's raw passions—not suppressing or excising them, which would deprive the soul of its energy—but forming and informing them as art. The goal of harmonizing the enthusiastic part of the soul with what develops later, the rational part, is perhaps impossible to attain. But without it, man can never be whole. Music, or poetry, which is what music becomes as reason emerges, always involves a delicate balance between passion and reason, and, even in its highest and most developed forms—religious, warlike and erotic—that balance is always tipped, if ever so slightly, toward the passionate.<sup>116</sup>

## Models

*One corollary is that insightful knowledge, spiritual vision, “intellectual intuition,” is possible for man here on earth; that man’s method of grasping reality is not exclusively in thinking, “mental labor,” what Hegel called “discursive” effort.<sup>117</sup>*

Many universities are already finding ways to reintroduce the *intellectus*, the experiential component of knowledge, into the classroom via contemplation and mindfulness and to embrace the original purpose of the university to educate the spirit. Aside from ACMHE and Naropa, which were conceived as contemplative organizations,

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<sup>116</sup> Bloom 71-72.

<sup>117</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 79.

(I discussed them earlier in this paper) several universities have begun to integrate contemplative pedagogy into their curricula. Brown University's Contemplative Studies Initiative includes a broad, interdisciplinary curriculum of courses in the sciences, humanities, and creative arts, balancing traditional third-person academic approaches with critical first-person approaches.<sup>118</sup> Its rationale states:

It is through studying and experiencing the contemplative aspects found in these various disciplines, through critically examining their relevance and significance, and through applying them to their lives that students will discover important dimensions of their natures as human beings. It is through this dual approach that students will learn how to cultivate awareness of the present moment that is the heart of contemplative experience and the basis of compassionate action and will be able to understand its scientific basis and philosophical significance.<sup>119</sup>

One such course, Professor H. D. Roth's "Introduction to Contemplative Studies," integrates critical first-person approaches by practicing Daoist meditation at Brown's Meditation Lab three times a week.<sup>120</sup> Though it is a significant undertaking, the success of the Initiative continues to grow, so much so that a Contemplative Studies Steering Committee is working to establish a formal concentration in Contemplative Studies at Brown. Similar initiatives include the Emory Collaborative for Contemplative Studies, whose mission is "to explore contemplative practices and traditions through interdisciplinary dialogue across the sciences and humanities for the advancement of research, clinical practice and education."<sup>121</sup> Georgetown embodies Bloom's definition of

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<sup>118</sup> Brown University, "Contemplative Studies Initiative." Last modified 2013. <http://www.brown.edu/academics/contemplative-studies/home>.

<sup>119</sup> Brown University, "The Rationale Behind Contemplative Studies." Last modified 2013. <http://www.brown.edu/academics/contemplative-studies/about/rationale>.

<sup>120</sup> Roth, H.D. Brown University, "University Course 0540: Introduction to Contemplative Studies." Last modified 2010. [http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/contemplativestudies/05Roth\\_Syllabus1.pdf](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/contemplativestudies/05Roth_Syllabus1.pdf).

<sup>121</sup> Emory University, "Emory Collaborative for Contemplative Studies." Last modified 2013. [http://www.emory.edu/ECCS/about\\_us/mission.html](http://www.emory.edu/ECCS/about_us/mission.html).

liberal education as an education that prompts students to ask existential questions like “What is man?” through its law center’s Lawyers In Balance<sup>122</sup> and its medical school’s Mind Body Medicine Program.<sup>123</sup> Georgetown offers a law non-credit course that meets weekly in which students “learn a range of stress reducing “mind-body” techniques, including meditation, journaling, reflective discussion, guided imagery, and the like.” The University of Michigan’s Program in Creativity & Consciousness Studies includes “silent meditation, contemplative approaches to reading, writing, movement, nature awareness practices, and creativity in and beyond the arts” to “bridge interior and exterior engagement.”<sup>124</sup> Degree programs such as its new Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz & Contemplative Studies balance conventional coursework with experiential learning.

Similarly, Bryn Mawr’s 360° Course Cluster topic for Fall 2013, “Contemplative Traditions,” encompasses three courses that explore both Eastern and Western contemplation and the psychology of mindfulness, integrating history, science, religion, and contemplative experience.<sup>125</sup> Daniel Holland created a similar course at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Fachhochschule-Joanneum, a small college in Austria, and its popularity surged so much that Holland launched the Mindfulness-Based Campus-Community Health Program at Arkansas in 2005.<sup>126</sup> Not all contemplative

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<sup>122</sup> Georgetown Law, “Lawyers In Balance.” <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/lawyers-in-balance/index.cfm>.

<sup>123</sup> Georgetown University School of Medicine, “Mind Body Medicine Program.” <http://som.georgetown.edu/medicaleducation/mindbody/>.

<sup>124</sup> University of Michigan, “Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies.” <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/pccs/home>.

<sup>125</sup> Bryn Mawr, “Upcoming 360° Clusters.” Last modified 2013. <http://www.brynmawr.edu/360/upcoming/>.

<sup>126</sup> Holland, Daniel. “Contemplative Education in Unexpected Places: Teaching Mindfulness in Arkansas and Austria.” *Teachers College Record*. 108. no. 9 (2006): 1842-61.

courses come from Religion and Philosophy departments; they spread across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Professor David Levy's information technology course at the University of Washington Information School explores contemplative practices like sitting (breath) meditation, free writing, and contemplative reading as techniques to alleviate the problems of information overload and divided attention.<sup>127</sup> Professor Judith Shapiro's political science course at American University includes yoga, meditation, and mindfulness in each class to aid in the exploration of whether socio-political change begins with the self or society.<sup>128</sup> And Professor Andre' L. Delbecq's business seminar at Santa Clara University incorporates contemplation and meditation (using a variety of wisdom traditions and religions as guides) into class sessions to explore the relationship between spirituality and business leadership and the role of contemplative practices in stress relief.<sup>129</sup> (For more examples of contemplative courses and syllabi, see bibliography.)

The list is impressive both for its size and the caliber of programs and courses: first among them one of the pioneers of the contemplative movement in higher education, the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society,<sup>130</sup> and then right on its heels Columbia University Teachers

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[http://mindfulconnections.net/Research\\_files/Contemplative%20Education%20in%20Unexpected%20Places-%20Teaching%20Mindfulness%20in%20Arkansas%20%20and%20Austria%20%20.pdf](http://mindfulconnections.net/Research_files/Contemplative%20Education%20in%20Unexpected%20Places-%20Teaching%20Mindfulness%20in%20Arkansas%20%20and%20Austria%20%20.pdf).

<sup>127</sup> Levy, David. University of Washington Information School, "LIS 598A: Information and Contemplation." <http://www.acmhe.org/assets/syllabi/levy.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> Shapiro, Judith. American University, "SIS 315 Contemplation and Political Change." <http://www.acmhe.org/assets/syllabi/shapiro.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup> Delbecq, Andre' L. Santa Clara University, "Seminar in Spirituality and Business Leadership." <http://www.acmhe.org/assets/syllabi/delbecq.pdf>.

<sup>130</sup> University of Massachusetts Medical School, "About the Center for Mindfulness." <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/about/index.aspx>.

College's Mindfulness and Education Working Group,<sup>131</sup> which works to promote the role of contemplative and mindfulness activities in all levels of education, UC Davis's Center for Mind and Brain,<sup>132</sup> UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center,<sup>133</sup> Claremont Lincoln University's Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC),<sup>134</sup> the University of Miami School of Law Mindfulness in Law Program,<sup>135</sup> and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Investigating Healthy Minds.<sup>136</sup> Most recently, the University of Virginia opened the doors to its Contemplative Sciences Center,<sup>137</sup> which aims to "foster dynamic partnerships of unusual depth and breadth towards exploring the transformative impact of contemplation in a variety of social sectors." Not to mention the universities which have begun to introduce contemplative practices into various classes but have not yet developed official mindfulness initiatives or programs.

## W&L

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<sup>131</sup> Columbia University Teachers College, "Mindfulness and Education Working Group."

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/mindfulness/index.asp?Id=About+Us&Info=Mission>

<sup>132</sup> UC Davis, "Center for Mind and Brain." Last modified 2012.

<http://mindbrain.ucdavis.edu/>.

<sup>133</sup> UCLA, "UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center." Last modified 2013.

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=16>.

<sup>134</sup> Claremont Lincoln University's CEC "offers retreats, immersion experiences, contemplative prayer gatherings, research in neuroscience and contemplative practices, art festivals, storytelling events, scholarly conferences, reconciliation workshops, opportunities for community activism, and accredited courses, certificates, and degrees" (Claremont Lincoln University, "Center for Engaged Compassion." Last modified 2013. <http://cec.claremontlincoln.org/>).

<sup>135</sup> University of Miami School of Law, "Mindfulness in Law Program." Last modified 2012. [http://miamimindfulness.org/Mindfulness\\_in\\_Law\\_Program.html](http://miamimindfulness.org/Mindfulness_in_Law_Program.html).

<sup>136</sup> University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Center for Investigating Healthy Minds." <http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/>.

<sup>137</sup> University of Virginia, "Contemplative Sciences Center," <http://www.uvacontemplation.org/>.

*Once the means for living have been obtained, in what will this now-secure life consist? Furthermore, is it not patently absurd to say that the meaning of life consists in securing the means of livelihood?*<sup>138</sup>

The contemplative revolution has not left Washington and Lee untouched. A 2012-2013 interdisciplinary seminar series organized by Professors Jeff Kosky, Jon Eastwood, Karla Murdock, Tim Diette, and Art Goldsmith, titled, “Questioning the Good Life,” invites students across all disciplines to contemplate what it means to be a human being. One of the seminar’s speakers, Professor Richard J. Davidson, is one of the founders of the field of contemplative neuroscience, and proposes meditation “as a potential mechanism for physically changing one’s brain and generating greater health and well-being.”<sup>139</sup>

In Politics 396: Getting Jobs, we<sup>140</sup> explored similar questions and cultivated awareness through mindfulness meditation, yoga, contemplative spin, and visits to Bodhi Path, a center for meditation in Natural Bridge. This and Bhante Gunaratana’s *Mindfulness in Plain English* prepared us for contemplative readings of Walter Isaacson’s biography of Steve Jobs, Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Jonathan Gottschall’s *The Storytelling Animal*, leading us to discover that, ironically, the proliferation of technology that constantly over-stimulates and impedes contemplation may also offer an opening for the reintroduction of the *intellectus* into higher education. Many lament the rise of blogs, tweets, and pins, fearing that these spurts of information

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<sup>138</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 91.

<sup>139</sup> Washington and Lee University, “Questioning the Good Life,” <http://www.wlu.edu/x57392.xml>.

<sup>140</sup> Christopher Alexander ‘13, Zack Cylinder ‘13, Todd Smith-Schoenwalder ‘14, and Emily Crawford ‘14. We gave a presentation on this class at SSA and will present again at Virginia Tech’s upcoming conference, “Contemplative Practices for a Technological Society,” on April 12 (<http://www.cpe.vt.edu/cpts/schedule.html>).



do not transmit knowledge nearly as effectively as do books, newspapers, and scholarly journals. But the gaps between the fragmented tweets, statuses, and comments may provide the space for the *intellectus* that cohesive novels and lectures lack.<sup>141</sup>

The blog is a prime example. A blog is “a Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.”<sup>142</sup> It requires no structure. In fact, what makes a blog unique is that its posts are often inspired by external events or random thoughts. After a period of time, the result is not a cohesive book or lab report, as the academic might aim for, but a collection of thoughts, ideas, and reflections with gaps in between. Blogs are often picked up to become books,<sup>143</sup> but they themselves are organic, neither edited nor nicely packaged as finished books are. By leaving gaps in between rational, discursive posts, blogging may leave space for contemplation—the *intellectus* mode of knowledge. Like Aquinas’s virtue, it enables the blogger to follow his or her intuition or natural bent, rather than confining him or her to a uniform path enforced by traditional classroom procedures.

No honest inquirer should recoil from doubts. Could this be true of “blogs?” I wondered too at the start of Politics 396. Then I investigated. James Geary, a *Forbes*

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<sup>141</sup> “Disciplines ranging from literary analysis to cognitive psychology identify the important function of gaps in the learning and inventive process (e.g., Spolsky, 1993). It is the cognitive gaps that allow for the possibility of conceptual flexibility and multiplicity. These studies point to the importance of a different type of intellectual process, distinct from linear, analytical, and product oriented processes so often emphasized in contemporary” (Hart, Tobin. "Opening the Contemplative Mind in the Classroom." *Journal of Transformative Education*. 2. no. 1 (2004): 28-46. [http://www.mindfuleducation.org/Hart\\_Opening\\_Contemplative\\_Mind.pdf](http://www.mindfuleducation.org/Hart_Opening_Contemplative_Mind.pdf)).

<sup>142</sup> Merriam-Webster, "blog." Last modified 2012. Accessed October 28, 2012. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blog>.

<sup>143</sup> W&L’s very own Jessie Knadler (well, we can’t claim ownership, but she does teach Pilates here) is a case in point. Her blog, “Rurally Screwed,” was picked up to become a book (it’ll be out in paperback in 2013). (Knadler, Jessie. "Hello there!." *Rurally Screwed* (blog), <http://www.rurallyscrewed.com/green-acres-revisited/>).



commentator, celebrates the proper use of aphorisms through new forms of technology, because “Aphorisms don’t present “the truth” but incite us to discover it for ourselves.”<sup>144</sup> Blogs and aphorisms embrace *both* essential forms of knowledge—the *ratio* and the *intellectus*—leading the student, writer, and reader to discover knowledge and truth for themselves. The result is a deeper, longer-lasting, and more influential education.

According to Pieper, intellectual and experiential learning distinguishes the liberal arts from what he calls the “servile arts.” He again quotes Aquinas, who said: “Only those arts are called liberal or free which are concerned with knowledge; those which are concerned with utilitarian ends that are attained through activity, however, are called servile.”<sup>145</sup> Blogs are a start, if written properly, properly supervised, as ours were, attentive to the time-tested methods that have endured because they are good. It does not follow that everything is good because it is time-tested. Slavery was a time-tested institution and for many the status quo. Blogs can help us represent our thoughts while breaking up the *ratio*—constant work and stimulation—and leaving us and the reader with space for the *intellectus*—leisure and contemplation—to seek and discover knowledge and truth for his or herself. Liberal arts colleges and universities like W&L are a good place to start. Contemplation is true to the history, traditions, and practices of liberal learning.

### In Summary

*The whole of political life seems to be ordered with a view to attaining the happiness of contemplation. For peace, which is established and preserved by*

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<sup>144</sup> Geary, James. "Sudden Wisdom." *Forbes*, August 13, 2009.

<http://www.forbes.com/2009/08/12/james-geary-aphorisms-opinions-geary.html>.

<sup>145</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 37.

*virtue of political activity, places man in a position to devote himself to contemplation of the truth (Aquinas).*<sup>146</sup>

The quiet revolution towards contemplation is gaining momentum everywhere—gyms, hospitals, neuroscience labs, you name it. In 2007, 40% of Americans reported meditating—one type of contemplation—at least once a week, and in 2006 the number of Americans who did yoga at least twice a week increased to 3 million, a 133% increase from 2001.<sup>147</sup> This reveals not just an embrace of Eastern practices of mindfulness, but a return, however little known, to the contemplative practices of Western history and tradition. An exploration of this Western contemplative tradition—primarily via Pieper but supported by other prominent voices—illuminates the importance of contemplation or the *intellectus* in seeking knowledge and truth. This tradition, coupled with current neuroscience research, shows that a reintegration of mindfulness and contemplation into higher education allows for students to connect and relate to one another on the basis of shared experience and helps the university to reassert its original purpose: to educate the spirit and human experience of the student. My modest proposal to W&L is that we join the dozen or so (and counting) other reputable universities integrating contemplation into their curricula and fulfill our obligation to treat and educate the student as a whole person, not merely as a business major, journalism student, or pre-med applicant.

It is fitting that I conclude with a quotation from George Steiner, a maverick in his own time, whose learning and erudition are not in question. Speaking to issues of mindfulness and contemplation and to the busy inhumanity of our culture, he wrote:

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<sup>146</sup> Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 94.

<sup>147</sup> Duerr, Maia. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, "Assessing the State of Contemplative Practices in the U.S.." Last modified 2011. <http://www.contemplativemind.org/admin/wp-content/uploads/ContemplationNation-2-Duerr.pdf>.

I'll give you two answers. They may sound like jokes, but they're not. The first is: couldn't we again teach our children to sit quietly in a room, maybe ten minutes in the beginning, twenty. I mean this very seriously. I'm thinking of Pascal's great statement that human history would change if people could sit quietly in a room. Just think how American history would change if one evening CBS or NBC would announce, "We have nothing to show you tonight on television worth showing, so we're not showing you anything." I keep dreaming of this; I'm echoing a very great early Ezra Pound poem about the United States, "I dream of you America, if you were reading the classics." I dream of this land, if one of the great national networks didn't show something one evening, with a very quiet statement that it was waiting for better programs, perhaps the next day, or the day after. And precisely because you and I know this to be impossible, that impossibility might just be the gauge of our difficulties.<sup>148</sup>

### Acknowledgements

The reader will have grossly misunderstood me if he or she thinks I am in any way under-appreciative of my education at W&L. I cannot begin to count the ways in which W&L has helped me to grow, learn, and pursue amazing opportunities. I would choose another four years at my alma mater in a heartbeat. But my earnest respect and love for W&L requires that I not flatter it. And so my thesis does not criticize W&L. W&L has given so much to me; the least I can do is to simply shed light on a space I see for growth. With immense gratitude I would like to thank Professor Eduardo Velásquez and Professor Marc Conner for leading me to consider a space for contemplation in higher education, and Professor Velásquez and Professor Bill Connelly for advising and guiding me throughout this process. It goes without saying that my views do not represent theirs.

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<sup>148</sup> Hirsch, Kathleen, and George Steiner. "A Conversation with George Steiner." *Mississippi Review*. 10. no. 1/2 (1981): 75-84.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20133822>.

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<sup>i</sup> Some will question contemplation as a topic for a politics thesis. To clarify the connection between the two, let us begin with Thomas Aquinas: “The whole of political life seems to be ordered with a view to attaining the happiness of contemplation. For peace, which is established and preserved by virtue of political activity, places man in a position to devote himself to contemplation of the truth” (Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 94). Political activity serves to ease unrest and provide quiet and tranquility: “We, the People, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility.” (Emphasis added.) Why? It would be odd to infer that the first lines of the Preamble insure domestic tranquility, which means quietude, stillness, silence, and harmony, so that Americans can simply sleep. Domestic tranquility makes the union more perfect because it allows its people to pursue the contemplative life. As George Will says in *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, “A purpose of politics is to facilitate, as much as is prudent, the existence of worthy passions and the achievement of worthy aims” (27). This is the first connection between contemplation and politics.

Contemplation has a second role in political life. Will again states, *Actually, there is only one “first question” of government, and it is “How should we live?” or (this is the same question) “What kind of people do we want our citizens to be?” ...What I have seen in a dozen years in Washington, a proudly “practical” city, has strengthened my conviction that ideas have consequences, and that the contemplation of ideas is an intensely practical undertaking* (17).

To be sure, the “practical contemplation” of ideas Will speaks of differs from contemplation as an end in itself, which is the focus of this thesis. But Will’s suggestion for Washington certainly points in the direction of realizing the inherent good in contemplation. It points forward to better statecraft, but it also points backward to a time when contemplation was a future statesman’s introduction to political life:

*Plato wanted to train not only skillful statesmen, but also human beings. In order to realize his political goal, Plato thus had to make an immense detour: he had to create an intellectual and spiritual community whose job it would be to train new human beings, however long this might take...and if they could not govern a city, he wanted them at least to be able to govern their own selves in accordance with the norms of the ideal city* (Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* 60).

Once again, contemplation and politics are clearly and intricately connected.

Contemplation is a crucial component to the political process in many ways. Good political action and policy making requires contemplation, and good political action and policy making creates a state conducive to the contemplative life. In the words of James V. Schall, “There are things beyond politics and without which politics cannot be politics” (Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 11).

Even scholars who assert that the contemplative life necessarily precludes political life agree that, for that very reason, contemplation is political. In a 1960 article for *The American Political Science Review*, Pulitzer Prize winner Sebastian de Grazia argues that detachment and objectivity make the contemplative life superior (“Politics and the Contemplative Life” <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1978305>). The truly contemplative man must detach himself from all worldly ties, including and especially politics. Sebastian de Grazia’s thesis errs in characterizing contemplation as detached

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from friends, family, and community, however, because, in contemplation and mindfulness, we let go of ourselves and “come to understand that everything that exists—including us—is interdependent with everything else” (Bhante Gunaratana, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in Plain English*, 9). Detachment does not allow for interdependence—only independence—and so it cannot be what makes contemplative life superior and what prevents the contemplative from participating in politics. But despite his fundamentally different view of contemplation, Sebastian de Grazia concedes that contemplation is political: “For us a theory that holds that politics is not necessary is a political theory. It deserves the fullest consideration. If a life without politics is possible, we should be the first to know about it. If that life is the contemplative life, we may also be the first to rejoice” (456).

ii The argument for the necessity of experiential learning in education is not new. John Dewey, one of the first proponents, wrote on experience in education in *Democracy and Education* in 1916. He distinguished between the active element of experience, which consists of trying, as one does in experiments, and the passive element of experience, which consists of undergoing. But he qualifies that experience by itself is not learning. Nor is cognition by itself learning. It is the union of the two that results in education:

*Experience as trying involves change, but change is meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it. When an activity is continued into the undergoing of consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. We learn something. It is not experience when a child merely sticks his finger into a flame; it is experience when the movement is connected with the pain which he undergoes in consequence. Henceforth the sticking of the finger into flame means a burn. Being burned is a mere physical change, like the burning of a stick of wood, if it is not perceived as a consequence of some other action (Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education*. ILT Digital Classics, 1994. <http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/dewey.html>).*

Dewey explains why advocating contemplation as a private exercise among students is not enough to benefit education. In order to rediscover the experiential component of knowledge, what the philosophers of antiquity called *intellectus*, experience must be coupled with cognition, or what the philosophers of antiquity called *ratio*. Dewey’s writings gathered quite a following in the early 1900s (his ideas influenced the foundings of Problem-Based Learning, the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, The New School for Social Research, and Bennington College, according to Wikipedia) but arguably carry more weight for education today, as the information explosion challenges the purpose of schooling.

In a 2010 TED Talk, Diana Laufenberg, an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade American history teacher, explained the need for experiential learning in education today. She contrasts her grandmother’s and father’s educations—they “went to school to get the information because that’s where the information lived”—to current times—“Why do you have kids come to school if they no longer have to come here to get the information?” To remain relevant, schools (and universities) must teach students what to do with the information



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overload, and the only way to do that is to have students take ownership over their education, even if it means risking failure:

*The main point is that, if we continue to look at education as if it's about coming to school to get the information and not about experiential learning, empowering student voice and embracing failure, we're missing the mark. And everything that everybody is talking about today isn't possible if we keep having an educational system that does not value these qualities, because we don't get there with a standardized test, and we won't get there with a culture of one right answer* (Laufenberg, Diana. "How to learn? From mistakes." *TEDxMidAtlantic*. Recorded November 2010. TEDx. December 2010. Web, [http://www.ted.com/talks/diana\\_laufenberg\\_3\\_ways\\_to\\_teach.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/diana_laufenberg_3_ways_to_teach.html)).

Critics of experiential knowledge in education argue that experience cannot be quantified or graded; therefore, how can one be certain that experience augments education? First of all, this criticism addresses one of the central issues of this paper—that the liberal arts are not a means to an end: “the distinction between the *artes liberales* and the *artes serviles* is a meaningful one, that is, it must be recognized that there is a real distinction between useful activity on the one hand, the sense and purpose of which is not in itself, and on the other hand the liberal arts which cannot be put at the disposal of useful ends” (Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 60). To place the value of a liberal arts education on its quantification or grades would be to reduce it to a means to an end. Secondly, if the *intellectus*, which includes the passive undergoing part of experiential knowledge, as Dewey notes, truly makes up half of the faculty of mind, then its benefit to the student's education will be apparent in measurable writing assignments and tests.

<sup>iii</sup> Let us consider the origins and definitions of *contemplation* and *mindfulness* before going further. German philosopher Josef Pieper traces the etymology of the word contemplation, which comes from the Latin word *contemplatio*. This word translates the Greek word *theoria*, which “has to do with the purely receptive approach to reality, one altogether independent of all practical aims in life...

*Theoria and contemplatio devote their full energy to revealing, clarifying, and making manifest the reality which has been sighted; they aim at truth and nothing else. This is the first element of the concept of contemplation: silent perception of reality. A second is the following: Contemplation is a form of knowing arrived at not by thinking but by seeing, intuition* (Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 73).

The word contemplation originates in the West, but its coordinate, mindfulness, has roots in the East. The word *mindfulness* translates the Pali word *sati*, which means, “bare attention.” Bhante Gunaratana expands:

*Mindfulness is nonconceptual awareness...It is not thinking. It does not get involved with thought or concepts. It does not get hung up on ideas or opinions or memories. It just looks...It takes place in the here and now. It is the observance of what is happening right now, in the present. It stays forever in the present, perpetually on the crest of the ongoing wave of passing time* (Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, 134).

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Mindfulness and mindfulness based exercises, then, share contemplation's first element, silent perception of reality. So although this thesis primarily focuses on contemplation, mindfulness has a place and shares this space.

<sup>iv</sup> D. T. Suzuki writes about the *satori* experience, which he likens to the light and heat of Zen, with Zen being the sun. He explains *satori*, which is a Japanese Buddhist term for 'awakening,' as an intuitive, irrational (Valera says pre-logical or non-logical may be better terms), incommunicable, and impersonal experience. The *satori* experience transcends subject-object dualism, arriving at an understanding of *sunyata*, which means emptiness. This central understanding in Zen Buddhism does not express nihilism. Rather, it expresses unity—there are no “things”; all share a common essence and thus are empty of content: “through *satori* every division is over-come and...the union of the subject and object is realized” (Valera, J. Eduardo Perez. "Toward a Transcultural Philosophy." *Monumenta Nipponica*. 27. no. 2 (1972): 175-189. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2383718>,185). Christianity differs from Buddhism, one way being that Christianity speaks of a self while Buddhism believes there is no such thing. But Christianity and Buddhism are alike in that the Buddhist notion of *sunyata* and a universal essence is not very different from the Christian notion of the universal love of Christ within all things. One can see why Merton and Suzuki would find much to converse about: “Christ is King but He controls by love. This love is the very root of our own being... Who am I? My deepest realization of who I am is that I am one loved by Christ” (Thomas Merton, *On Christian Contemplation*, 33-34).

University of Notre Dame Professor Fred Dallmayr reveals a more explicit connection between Zen Buddhism and Western philosophy through Keiji Nishitani, a leading representative of the Kyoto School, and German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Nishitani explains *sunyata*, emphasizing its distinction from nihilism: “True emptiness is not to be posited as something outside of and other than ‘being’; rather, it is to be realized as something united to and self-identical with being” (42). Heidegger's notion of nothingness also conveys unity and being rather than nihilism's vacuum of meaning: “Nothingness not merely designates the conceptual opposite of beings but is an integral part of their essence. It is in the being of beings that the nihilation of nothingness occurs” (45) (Dallmayr, Fred. "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani." *Philosophy East and West*. 42. no. 1 (1992): 37-48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1399690>).

<sup>v</sup> Some critics, such as J. Hartland-Swann of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, accuse Pieper of proposing Christian theology as the sole answer to the overvaluing of work and absence of leisure in modern Western culture. As Hartland-Swann writes in a review of *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, “Pieper is trying to reintroduce the religious bigotry of the Middle Ages” (178). To make such a criticism is to ignore the object of *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, which Pieper states explicitly:

*The considerations put forward in this essay were not designed to give advice and draw up a line of action; they were meant to make men think. Their aim has been to throw a little light on a problem which seems to me very important and very urgent, and is all too easily lost to sight among the immediate tasks in hand. The*



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object of this essay, then, is not to provide an immediate, practical guide to action (71).

It is in this light that I have read Pieper, as thought-provoking writing that sheds light on a problem, namely, the absence of and need for contemplation, intellectus, and leisure. (Hartland-Swann, J. Review of *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* by Josef Pieper. *Philosophy*. 28. no. 105 (1953): 177-180. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3747348>).

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