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DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONING THE RHETORICAL ECLIPSE OF PHILOSOPHICAL LEISURE:

AD COLLOQUIUM CONFERENDUM

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION & RHETORICAL
STUDIES

MCANULTY AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

ANNETTE M. HOLBA

PITTSBURGH, PA

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Questioning the Rhetorical Eclipse of Philosophical Leisure

February 7, 2005

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Annette M. Holba

Questioning the Rhetorical Eclipse of Philosophical Leisure

Preface

The advent of technology into society has saturated how human beings conduct daily communication (Postman 16; Winter 14). Technology has pushed leisure even further from our grasp, which reduces the human connection in our relationships as we have become driven by work and technology, instead of by human interest. The advent and subsequent saturation of technology ushered in a moral crisis in human communication.

The moral crisis in human communication is an obscuration of the human element, meaning human beings often find it difficult to have a deep, thoughtful, and interested conversation with others. This obscuration has manifest into a culture of narcissism (Lasch, Narcissism 27; Kristeva 7) and a sense of existential homelessness (Arnett 229; Nietzsche 127). As a result of this moral crisis, human communication has degenerated into phatic conversation, small-talk, or meaningless chatter (Rorty, *Mirror* 372).

This study calls for a rediscovery of philosophical leisure as one approach to human engagement. Philosophical leisure enables human beings to contribute valuable ingredients to idea-laden conversation. Contributing to conversation, or engaging the art of conversation, occurs when human interest envelops the conversational experience.

Acknowledgments

This research has been interesting, exciting, and time consuming. Understanding philosophical leisure is an important contribution to the study of human communication because philosophical leisure is communicative praxis. Philosophical leisure is a theoretical interest that has been considered by most significant thinkers responsible for

contributing to the development of Western thought. But philosophical leisure is not only grounded theoretically, it is something human beings ‘do.’ Therefore, communication scholarship can find bountiful paths to explore in theory and practice of philosophical leisure. This study can re-open the conversation about philosophical leisure from a communication perspective and invite cross disciplinary studies to enrich the conversation for a consummated examination.

I must express my appreciation to my dissertation director, Pat Arneson, and my dissertation committee, Ronald C. Arnett and Richard Thames. Their direction and insight have been valuable and vital to the development of the ideas that follow. During the course of my doctorate study I studied Latin with Dr. Lawrence Gaichas, in the Classics Department, McAnulty College, Duquesne University. In the writing of this study I needed to revisit my Latin grammatical understandings with Dr. Gaichas. I am extremely grateful for his time and his consideration of my work and my questions. I thank my husband, Dennis, for putting up with my research and writing schedule that so often did not synchronize with his schedule. I thank my parents, Bill and June, for reading chapters for clarity and readability. I am extremely grateful to my daughters, Michele and Christina, who were the gatekeepers of every revised chapter document throughout the whole writing process. Finally, to Emily, who patiently and diligently watched as I typed away instead of rubbing her belly, thank you.

One final note of gratitude. English words cannot fully express my appreciation to my dissertation director, Pat Arneson. Therefore, *inter nos, labores nostrae, otium mihi dulce. Ab īmō pectore – gratiae. Amīcus certus in rē incertā cernitur.* ☺

Questioning the Rhetorical Eclipse of Philosophical Leisure

Abstract

Human communication in our postmodern era has degenerated into phatic communication. Phatic communication, appropriate in some circumstances, used unreflectively limits the ability for the development of healthy, idea-laden conversation. The phatic nature of communication represents a loss of human interest in human communication. Philosophical leisure can help to recapture the element of human interest in conversation, which recuperates an over-abundance of phaticity in human communication. Recuperation of communication occurs when ideas drive conversation. Philosophical leisure can help human beings to find substance for those ideas. This study considers how philosophical leisure can enrich human communication.

Questioning the Rhetorical Eclipse of Philosophical Leisure

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Chapter I

Communicatio Humanus Quaestio

(The Problem in Human Communication)

People commonly seek luxuries to make life efficient and easy – yet we often hear the comments “I’m busy,” “I’m tired,” or “I need more time!” People try to catch up with their work load and seemingly find themselves more behind than when they started. People say they need a vacation immediately after taking a vacation. People work to provide greater security for their future. The Western world is aggressive, competitive, and materialistic. All this work and material gathering is temporal and responsive to the societal environment in which one lives.

The industrial revolution induced people to use mechanical and subsequently technological means for increasing efficiencies and ease of life. Human communication often reflects this contemporary shortcut to the *good life*. The progression toward this lifestyle foregrounds a material gathering of ‘things’ responsive to their immediate environment, which directs one’s attention in the world away from a meaning-laden life.

Contemporary conversation is often self-oriented or about other people, which characterizes conversation as either monologic or gossip. Good conversation, that is, conversation with a human element, can nourish the mind because the focus of attention is on ideas rather than on the self or gossip about others. Ideas are open to spontaneity and therefore generate depth and novelty in conversation. Talking about the self or about others is often flat and narrowly focused, which disables depth and novelty. Nourishment from ideas invites contribution to conversation. The degeneration of conversation focused on the self or gossip about others interferes with the emergences and

development of ideas. Therefore, this study looks for an alternative approach to refocusing attention toward a healthier aesthetic conversational ground.

Leisure allows individuals to re-focus their attention in the world. Leisure, colloquially, has been misconstrued by many people for idleness, relaxation, entertainment, and other similar non-activities. One must also consider that historically leisure has meant different things to different microcultures. Leisure was a source of vice for the Puritans, a sign of privilege for egalitarians, and surplus to those Marxists elites (Pieper, Leisure xi). In 2004 human beings frequently mistake leisure for relaxation and entertainment. These historically shifting definitions of leisure have shifted our focus of attention in the world and in relation to other human beings. This alternate understanding is *otium obscurum*¹ (an eclipse of leisure), which in turn can cause the quality of human communication to diminish or depreciate. This study examines the rhetorical eclipse of leisure to better understand the relationship between philosophical leisure and human communication.

This chapter first considers the problem of a communication eclipse as a moral crisis. This moral crisis is defined as an obscuring of the ability to engage in idea-laden conversation because of the lack of ground from which people make good decisions. A discussion follows considering how a therapeutic culture of psychologism and the saturation of technology in the Western world have invited a culture of narcissism and a sense of existential homelessness that now impede the ability to participate in an idea-centered conversation. Second, the research approach to this study is discussed. Third,

¹ In this study, all translation of Latin terms are made by the author of this work.

consequences of the problems pervasive in human communication; narcissism (Lasch, *Narcissism* 31) and “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential*, 229) are identified. Both of these manifestations invite a communication eclipse among human beings. Fourth, supportive terms significant to understanding the eclipse of human communication such as; common center, loss of faith, and soul are also defined. The work begins by addressing a therapeutic culture of psychologism and the technological revolution.

The Problem in Human Communication

In the 1950s, social scientists predicted that by the end of the century we’d all be living the lives of leisure. Technology would free us from dull time-consuming tasks and allow us to work four-hour days, twenty-hour weeks, maybe less. Why do you think that so many of our colleges and universities during this period began setting up departments of recreation administration and leisure studies? It wasn’t because they needed special classes for their football teams. It was to help us figure out what to do with all the predicted spare time we would be experiencing.

Of course, that prophesized age of leisure has not materialized.

I recently caught myself hovering over my fax machine in a state of high anxiety, gesturing wildly at the paper coming out of the slot, and saying out loud in a voice of frustration, ‘Faster! Faster! (Morris, 14-15).

Psychologism is a term that refers to a therapeutic culture in which the practice of revealing motives and intent is a primary focus for understanding (Palmer 88-89). One of

the early modern thinkers to consider the significance of psychologism in human communication was Thomas Hobbes who believed that the human being was an integral part understanding the natural order – not only a human being’s body but also the mind (Randall 312). Hobbes would argue against a critique of psychologism as posited by this study.

To psychologize something we seek out an individual’s reason for committing an action. Along with motive and intent, psychologizing also suggests the justification or rationalization of a particular act (Palmer 95). This therapeutic focus on the individual is deceptive and misleading (Dostal 272; Schrag, Praxis 127).

To find meaning in text or conversation is not found by delving into “a spate of psychological conditions” (Schrag, Praxis 127). Rather, meaning in conversation happens through the experience of the communicative event, communicative praxis. When examining communication, the avoidance of psychologism is necessary because communication driven by psychologism can shut down the possibilities for contributing to or enriching a conversation. Through psychologizing, meaning is found solely within one author rather than from “examination of the contribution of meaning from other quarters” (127). Conversation is diminished when it focuses solely on the self or other (gossip). Continuing the conversation becomes difficult because the focus is on an individual instead of the idea. This focus impedes the ability to contribute to an ongoing conversation. Technology, like psychologism, has also had a similar effect on human communication.

The advent of technology into society changed how human beings conduct their daily communication (Postman 16; Winter 14). We may have thought technology would

free us from work but, instead, technology has saturated society and pushed leisure even further from our grasp. This serves to repose our relationships with one another because we have become driven by work and technology instead of by interest in the other. This saturated interiority has transformed how human beings communicate (Habermas, Structural 156). Technological saturation altered society as we are now aware of multiple narratives, which is one of the characteristics of a postmodern world (Lyotard 66; Rorty, Contingency 44).

The advent and subsequent saturation of technology into society ushered in a postmodern condition of human communication that I describe as a moral crisis. A moral crisis in communication is exhibited by two symptoms: narcissism, which is characterized by a devaluation of the self (Lasch, Narcissism 27; Kristeva 7), and existential homelessness², characterized by living at a time when uncertainty and mistrust are pervasive in human relationships and Western culture (Arnett, *Existential* 229; Nietzsche, Genealogy 127). These consequences happen when human beings are unable to identify appropriate ground from which to engage human communication – a moral crisis – the inability to communicate from one’s ground.

Narcissism and existential homelessness are characterized by “false communication” – when conversation degenerates into small talk or meaningless chatter (Rorty, Mirror 372). This study asks the question: how can the rediscovery of leisure nourish the ground of conversation? Understanding more about the problem of losing the art of conversation can help to situate the significance of this research question. Working

² For the purpose of this study the term ‘home’ refers to the private realm. It is “a feeling of being psychologically ‘at home’” (Arnett 231). “Existential homelessness” happens with the loss of a “common center” (Buber, I-Thou 163; Paths 135).

from the assumption that the therapeutic culture of psychologism and the saturation of technology in Western culture have caused problems in human relationships and human communication (Postman 16; Winter 14), the symptoms of this problem can now be considered through a constructive hermeneutic.

Research Approach

This study observes problems inherent to human communication in postmodernity. Dominant social trends that inform how people get along-in- the-world tend to eclipse idea-laden communication. This author offers an alternative perspective to communicative praxis consistent with Aristotle's philosophical leisure that redirect the dominant morés. Grounding the rhetoric of leisure in Aristotle is not without problems. Aristotle presupposes that there is a natural order hierarchy, indicating that some human beings were born free and others were born slaves. For this work, the existing presuppositions include the grounding of a rediscovery of leisure in an Aristotelian framework and the presupposition that leisure has not been obliterated but is eclipsed behind the postmodern condition of narcissism and existential homelessness. This study presupposes equal access to a leisure framework and that class, gender, or age, and so forth, do not impose or deter one from the engagement of leisure. Additionally, this project considers presuppositions of the human condition, leisure, and the rhetorical eclipse of leisure through each historical period. Revealing the eclipse of leisure and redefining leisure through contemplation, reflection, and play, this work proposes a constructive way to enhance conversation.

The primary focus of this inquiry considers human communication in the postmodern world and investigates possibilities for the reconstruction of fertile ground

for conversation. An interpretive approach traces ideas to their origins and development, and assesses popular contemporary attitudes towards these ideas (Mailloux 147). This project takes a constructive hermeneutic approach to the rhetoric of leisure which allows leisure to be excavated from antiquity. Leisure is traced through historical time periods and historical themes up to the present contemporary rhetoric of leisure. This process begins by deconstructing ideas by definition, analogy, and assessment. This deconstruction is done by examining coherence, comprehensiveness, thoroughness, contextuality, appropriateness, agreement, and potentiality of text (Madison 29). The interpretive process penetrates deeper into a written and social text by examining meaning and intent, rather than viewing a flat, one-dimensional approach. Hermeneutic interpretation allows the absence of the aesthetic to be revealed through the lack of the art of conversation. A constructive hermeneutic provides a way to rebuild after the initial deconstruction of text and ideas.

This work examines historical texts that define leisure. The textual lens will be limited to writings within the Western tradition. Examination by analogy will be conducted through the work of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, where both writers consider a transformation of public and private realms. Leisure is considered analogous to Arendt's "social" (Arendt 38) and Habermas' "saturated private sphere" (Habermas, Structural 158). The assessment of contemporary literature is considered and how this literature presents the practice of leisure in contemporary society. Assessment also occurs through the evaluation of the catalysts of the contemporary eclipse of leisure, including psychologism and technological saturation.

Using definition, analogy, and assessment to examine texts requires considering the coherence of text and arguments, the comprehensiveness and thoroughness of historical arguments, and understanding the context in which text, social morés, and communicative action occur. Also, this phase of deconstruction includes consideration of the appropriateness, agreement, and potentiality of text studied in relation to how it informs the study of leisure and future applications to human communication (Madison 29).

Following a thorough deconstruction of the rhetoric of leisure from a Western perspective is considered, this study provides an alternative approach to human communication through a discovery of philosophical leisure. This alternative approach provides one remedy to the communication eclipse inherent in contemporary human communication.

This work points toward recuperating communication to once again add to the everyday art of conversation. Richard Rorty considers the art of conversation in his discussion of the difference between epistemology and hermeneutics. He argues that an epistemological approach to communicative understanding is no longer effective in a postmodern age because epistemology begins with a set of terms and boundaries that guide the inquiry (Mirror 318). Rorty asserts this not acceptable in a postmodern age because set terms impede one's understanding; they set the parameter or assume a starting place. Juxtaposed to epistemology, Rorty argues hermeneutics offers an open beginning and serendipitous stroll to understanding that meets and is responsive to a historical moment (322-323). Therefore, while Rorty does not say that an epistemological approach is always incorrect, he argues that it is no longer a viable

means of study (325). In a postmodern age we ought to begin without a set of terms and proceed responsively.

A constructive hermeneutic approach to the rhetoric of leisure suggests the importance of the act of interpretation in its most relevant critical forum to the most contemporary ongoing arguments. These discussions must be situated within our rhetorical tradition and the interpretive act placed in relevant social practices of human communication (Mailloux 134). This study is situated within the contemporary Western world which is open to new and helpful ways of re-situating philosophical leisure into our culture and addressing the challenges in human communication in the postmodern world. Announcing existing presuppositions and the perspectives that came before them by an examination of text, social morés, and historical action (147), will provide a textured discussion that will enhance our current understanding of leisure. The next section discusses the problem of a moral crisis in human communication that announces the communication eclipse described by Rorty as a “degeneration of conversation” into small talk (Mirror 372).

Moral Crisis as Communication Eclipse

A moral crisis occurs when human communication is unreflective, obscured, or hidden behind “false communication” (Rorty, Mirror 372). False communication is communication focused on the self or disguised communication, fostering communication imposters. False communication happens when conversation degenerates into small talk and/or meaningless chatter (372). False communication is disingenuous communication because the communicative event provides an illusion of human interest that is actually empty communication. The moral crisis of this communication eclipse

does not pertain to one or two human beings but instead, it represents the state of human communication in general.

Many philosophers pointed to the moral crisis of this eclipse and discussed it in a variety of ways. Emmanuel Kant pointed to this moral crisis in his responses to early Enlightenment thinkers and their focus on empiricism and the scientific world. Kant suggested that David Hume's defense of empirical principles, judgments, and negation of *a priori* propositions calls "metaphysics a mere delusion, whereby we fancy ourselves to have rational insight into what, in actual fact, is borrowed solely from experience, and under the influence of custom has taken the illusory semblance of necessity" (Kant, Reason VI. b20 55). Kant was pointing toward a disenchantment with conclusions that rely on the senses. Kant advocated enlarged thought which negotiated the metaphysical realm that is open to multiple possibilities and a priori judgments, while dissuading the reliance upon synthetic judgments (II. B4. 44-45). There is a risk of becoming a communicative imposter or engaging communication through posturing if human beings rely upon synthetic judgments for communicative guidance. This false communication is a symptom of the fractured spirit that has permeated human communication in the postmodern era.

Immanuel Kant argued that ultimate destiny of humanity is to achieve the greatest moral perfection, which could only be reached through human freedom (Ethics, 252). This place of moral perfection is the only place where human beings can find true happiness (252). Happiness cannot be found outside of one's self. Kant argued that true morality only occurs when one makes one's self happy, it begins within one's self (252). Kant suggested this self-happiness is not achieved due to independence or from a lust for

power. However, happiness can be achieved through education, either at home or at school (253). A rhetorical eclipse of communication occurs when one cannot reach moral perfection because one cannot truly experience happiness. Kant suggested moral perfection is hopeful but distant. Turning from this inward reflection and happiness, this study considers the human relationship with the other.

A social relationship that invites responsibility for the other is grounded in human interest. Human interest nourishes conversation, thus, enabling conversation to continue and develop. As the conversation continues, ideas play, and human communication is connected organically. Without the human element, conversation can become technical and disconnected from a humanness that eventually can become less meaningful.

Ground for conversation can eliminate the insecurity that human beings feel, or it can provide security at a time when we sense more loss than contentment in our lives. Fertile ground gives human beings idea-rich conversation that penetrates beyond the superficialities of phatic communication. Contentment is often obscured from human beings because our approach to living is filled with phatic conversation. Conversation is thus dependent upon *res* (things), rather than people. Additionally, moral crisis is evident given the increase in violence around the world, and one way to fight back or to feel more secure is by not allowing the possibilities of such a threat to interfere with daily living. If there is a disruption in one's life, one can move forward and bring one's life back to contentment.

Central to a moral crisis is the rhetorical eclipse of communication that raises disillusionment and cripples discourse. Both public and private spheres suffer in a moral

crisis because human beings lack the ability to define boundaries and communicate responsibly within boundaries. Arendt argued:

The social realm, where the life process has established its own public domain, has let loose an unnatural growth, so to speak, of the natural; and it is against this growth, not merely against society but against a constantly growing social realm, that the private and the intimate, on the one hand, and the political [...] on the other, have proved incapable of defending themselves. (Human Condition 47)

Arendt explains that the realm of the social has killed off the realms of the private and the public, which are essential to human communication. As human beings negotiate their experience in the world, they use a variety of frameworks for participating in conversation. The public and private realms each have a different framework for communication. If that framework is not clear or consistent, human communication may suffer and degenerate into less genuine or less meaningful content. Therefore, communication in the realm of the social must be approached cautiously, as meaning is often misrepresented or misunderstood. Arendt's communicative moral crisis is situated in the realm of the social because the social emphasizes the achievements of progress not human beings. The social has changed the content of the public realm "beyond recognition" (49). The realm of the social destroys the public and private spheres. Arendt argued that human beings no longer recognize the boundary or difference between a public and private sphere. She proclaimed the death of the distinguishable public and private realms by the emergence of the social realm (68).

Like Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas has similar concerns. He addresses the problems of a saturated private realm with public concerns. Habermas called this a “disappearance of the private” (Structural 153). The disappearance of the private realm occurred with the disillusionment that the interior realm intensified in scope but it actually “shrunk to comprise the conjugal family only insofar as it constituted a community of consumers” (156). Without demarcating the boundaries of the public and private spheres, guidance for appropriate human communication is obscured. With this move toward an ambiguous private realm, the private sphere weakened in authority over the public realm and created the illusion of a perfect private sphere where leisure activities could be the “externalization of [...] the innerlife” (159). The idea of a saturated interiority disabled the distinction between public and private life. This is especially evident in the middle class, as leisure activities became an affordable replacement to interior cultivation. An inability to distinguish between what is appropriate for public and private spheres contributed to the communicative crisis discussed in this study.

Communication situates differentiation between the rhetorical spheres of science, aesthetics, jurisprudence, religion, and morals. This differentiation offers no common place from which to formulate an “overarching vision of the human good” (Benhabib 75). For example, Heidegger argued that not all people should contribute to the public sphere (224). However, a Habermasian public sphere invites voices of all human beings (Habermas, Theory vol. II 161; Structural, 55; Myerson 31). Habermas suggests any moral act “must have in some way a universal character” (Theory vol. II 92). Therefore, a moral act is not a private affair but a public or universal affair. “A thing that is good

from a moral standpoint must be a good for everyone under the same conditions” (93). So, Habermas’s sense of moral crisis is a public, communal occurrence.

Seyla Benhabib asserts that Jürgen Habermas’s public sphere is too ideal and inclusive, Heidegger’s public sphere is too limiting and exclusive, and Arendt’s incomplete doctrine of judgment and free will is too confusing (124), therefore, human beings remain in a static state of moral crisis. These disjunctions demonstrate that philosophers of communication have not reached an understanding for addressing this moral crisis of a communication eclipse. This disjunction enables a dissonance in a moral crisis precipitated by a technological saturation and a culture driven by psychologism. The dissonance fuels this moral crisis situated within a culture of narcissism (Lasch, *Narcissism* 27) and sense of “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential* 230). Lasch pointed to a communication eclipse in his study of the culture of narcissism (*Narcissism* 239-240) and Arnett’s existential homelessness points to an even broader communication eclipse (230).

Christopher Lasch notes the postmodern Western world continues to struggle with discomfiting realities of “a deeper failure of morale,” a collapse of “traditional values,” and the “emergence of self-gratification” (*Minimal* 23). The end of the twentieth century was significant to the Western world because “American know-how, it appears, no longer dominates the world” (23). Crippling productivity in the marketplace, an undermined American enterprise, and weakened competition in the global marketplace led to a weakened morale for human beings (24). There is a general sense of insecurity as human beings in the Western World live their lives and encounter the other. This insecurity has obscured the art of conversation, leaving it limp and purposeless. What seems to be

missing in communication is the human element that nourishes the conversation and keeps it going. This is the social relationship that Levinas considered in his discussion of the face of the Other (Levinas, *Philosophy* 110).

Uncertainty and mistrust are prevalent in the human population. One's distrust of his/her everyday experience is fueled by rapid changes in the marketplace and/or private realm (Arnett, *Existential* 230). Human beings that experience this disruption, mistrust, or loss of narrative, can experience a psychological feeling of "homelessness" – a feeling of no longer being able to be at home (240) or of "losing one's common center" (Buber, *Paths* 135). This "common center" (Buber, *Paths* 135) is essential for one to feel connected and part of a whole, while providing an "active philosophical and practical set of assumptions and actions that guide a people" (Arnett, *Existential* 231).

The person questioning life's meaning as well as having a concern for a future feels the loss of a "common center" (Buber, *Paths* 135), the veil of mistrust, the "disembedded self" (Benhabib 152), and the lack of a place to call home³. This shift in focus makes it difficult to have hope for one's place in the world. The concern for a "common center" (Buber, *Paths* 135), narcissistic human communicative engagement (Lasch, *Narcissism* 27), and the condition of "existential homeless" (Arnett, *Existential* 229), all point to a problem in the world today. This problem is a test of dialogue between human beings (Arnett, *Existential* 238; Arnett and Arneson 16). Even at times of fundamental conflict between human beings, if trust is present, people can

³ "Home" is consistent with Michael Hyde's definition of home as, "an abode or dwelling place whose inhabitants ought to know, no matter how bad things become, there still exists a haven of shelter and forgiveness" (177). Additionally, it is a place where one should not worry about "being oneself" (177). I argue that this dwelling place can be a structure as well as a metaphysical place of comfort and certainty.

communicate (Arnett, *Existential* 238). Narcissism and existential homelessness are two ways in which this moral crisis can be considered.

Existential homelessness signifies the lack of trust and uncertainty in human communication. An individual looking toward the self for direction finds that the self “no longer [is] adequate to meet the changes challenging stable taken-for-granted values” (Arnett, *Existential* 239). Human communication can be impeded when we are over reliant on the self, living in a world that is no longer reliable and responsive to the self. Arnett asks, “without havens of trust to move us toward the arena of dialogue with others, the question is what or will or can sustain the impulse or desire to be in dialogue [conversation] with others?” (240). Engaging philosophical leisure as a guide for human communication can redirect or point the individual to a reflective mode of communication that moves away from the condition of existential homelessness and narcissism.

Narcissism

The human condition of a fractured spirit⁴ is one of the contributing factors leading to a culture of narcissism. The ability for one human being to communicate with other human beings is influenced as he/she finds one’s life imbued with uncertainty. For many people this means an inability to engage the other as a unique moral human being with a genuine connection to the greater sphere of others. Thus, the communicator is superficial and responsive only to self-survival, lacking the nourishment needed to

⁴ A “fractured spirit” “harbors many ironies, contradictions, and perplexities” (Benhabib 1) where the democratic metanarratives become themselves suspect, producing “an intellectual climate profoundly skeptical toward moral and political ideals of modernity, the Enlightenment, and liberal democracy” (Benhabib 2).

engage idea-rich communication. This is narcissism; the result of modernity's fractured spirit.

A simple definition of narcissism is one who loves one's self (Merriam 772). Scholars develop a denser understanding of this concept. According to Christopher Lasch, a narcissist is a person steeped within great anxiety and fear of the future while being too crippled to move forward in a positive way (Narcissism xv). The culture of narcissism is a response to competitive individualism and the myth of progress. The narcissist is haunted by anxiety and an unending search for meaning in life (xvi). The narcissist is competitive for approval but distrusts competition because competition itself is destructive. For the narcissist, there is no interest in the past or future, rather all concern is directed into the present. A society that creates this narcissistic culture is a society of abandonment, where there is internal poverty and nothing to look forward to (xvii). A narcissist constantly looks for ways to hide or return to a broken past because he/she understands that meta-narratives no longer make sense. The narcissist's search is futile and he/she may not be aware of one's own futility.

Narcissism implies a devaluation of the personal realm (Lasch, Narcissism 27). The lack of esteem for one's self is the hallmark of the narcissist. This inhibits one from ethically engaging others because narcissism is also the antithesis of loving one's neighbor. Human beings engage narcissism as a way of survival. But this way of survival is just as fractured as the spirit of modernity for which it is a symptom. To continue in narcissism would be ensure one's communicative death. One must find alternative ways of living with the self so that one can live better with others.

Martin Buber's existential philosophy argued this very ideal, that in order for a human being to live better with others, he/she must first be right with the self (Way 30). In other words, Buber suggested that human communication cannot begin externally with others. Rather, human communication must begin with the reflection of the self. Buber privileged the personal/private realm as the starting place for all communicative events because this is where reflective engagement begins. Beginning at any other point would weaken one's initiative and distract him/her from the communion at hand (Buber, Way 28). A narcissistic culture is the antithesis of Buber's Way because the personal or private realm is devalued and ignored. A narcissistic culture does not find value with the inward reflection that Buber suggests because the individual does not find any value in him/herself. The narcissist lives in the present focused on the self, and is unable to see/grasp the past or the future.

The narcissist – in a perpetual state of seeking meaning – predominately finds him/herself in the realm of the social. The social is a place where the boundaries of the private and the public realm are blurred (Arendt 38). The social is manifest in the narcissist's endless effort to “either to be at home in society or to live outside altogether” (Arendt 39). The rise of the social may be a symptom of the culture of narcissism and part of the cause of the rise of narcissism. Much like Sisyphus, no matter how hard the narcissist tries, the ties to the past and the hope for the future seem futile. This over-emphasis on the self is one of the contributing factors that leads to the feeling of existential homelessness, a place previously revealed in one's nightmares, but now an often inescapable reality for many.

Existential Homelessness

“Existential homelessness” is a metaphor used by Ronald C. Arnett in a case for the importance of dialogue as a form of human communication (Arnett, *Existential* 229). Arnett argues that we live in an era of significant uncertainty and mistrust, which is problematic to human dialogue (229). A foundation of trust is essential for dialogue to happen *inter homines* (between people). Human dialogue has a distinctive life in the sign, the sound, or the gesture, but in the most genuine moments human dialogue reaches beyond the boundaries of the sign (Buber, Between 20). Genuine dialogue has trust embedded within it. The life of dialogue is the mutuality of the “inner action” (25) [or interaction]. The idea that trust is needed as a foundation for human communication is consistent with the work of Christopher Lasch who argues that havens of trust have been lost in human relationships (Lasch, Haven 178). Arnett also argues that trust is “in short supply” (Arnett, *Existential* 230). Turning toward another human being in “becoming aware” of the other (Buber, Between 27) is central to the rebuilding of trust. This becoming awareness is the beginning of trust and the possibility of being able to contribute to the conversation.

Christopher Lasch refers to “havens of trust” as commonplaces that are imbued with certainty and basic interpersonal trust (Haven, 3; Arnett, *Existential* 230). Both Lasch and Arnett concur that this trust is no longer present or it is an imposter, which can cripple human communication, inhibit the art of conversation, and generate a world of imposters – increasing the paranoia, futility, and insecurities around all human beings. Even Rousseau’s Discourse on Inequality warned of these “impostors” (109). These

imposters, emerging out of progress, caused misery on the human race and impeded the ability for human beings to engage communication (109).

Some of the contributing factors to this sense of “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential* 229) are the rapid changes we experience in society. For example, when one approaches life in a fast-paced manner, it is often devoid of extended reflection. This includes quickly moving from one activity to the next, obsessing over and purchasing the most recent technology as it is introduced into society, and dissatisfaction with gadgets we consistently purchase and replace. This lack of appreciation is unreflective and the results can only be temporal. Usually, human beings become bored with *res* (things) before the things depreciate themselves. Living in an era that can not provide *res* that one can count on propels the experience of existential homelessness. The uncertainty of *res* and the experience of existential homelessness are consistent with Friedrich Nietzsche’s examination of human beings and their experience in the world. Nietzsche’s conclusion that the world is uncertain and untrustworthy is a prophetic description of a postmodern world.

In Friedrich Nietzsche’s critique on morality, he re-evaluates the human self, the law, and justices which human beings encounter. He begins his critique by noting, “We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers, we ourselves, to ourselves, and there is a good reason for this. We have never looked for ourselves – so how are we supposed to find ourselves?” (*Genealogy* 3). The human being is described as strange and confused in the ability to find his/her place in the world (3). Nietzsche critiques the church and Christian values and describes the priestly aristocracy as “unhealthy” (17). Existential homelessness implies one can no longer trust in or count on the strength of tradition.

Nietzsche's sense of homelessness was revealed with his pronouncement "God is dead" (Zarathustra 6, 83; Genealogy xi). In this case, the church represents tradition and Nietzsche expressed skepticism toward the foundation of Christianity. He explained his nihilistic position:

Today we see nothing that wants to expand, we suspect that things will just continue to decline, getting thinner, better-natured, cleverer, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian – no doubt about it, man [woman] is getting better all the time [...] in losing our fear of man [woman] we have also lost our love for him [her], our respect for him [her], our hope in him [her] and even our will to be man [woman]. The sight of man [woman] now makes us tired – what is nihilism today if it is not that? We are tired of *man* [*woman*].

(Genealogy 27)

Friedrich Nietzsche's perspective that human beings have caused their own suffering shows a human being's will to suffer. He argued that this suffering is meaningless. The suffering itself is not bad but there is no longer meaning to anything anymore, which is worse than the actual suffering (Genealogy 127). This suffering describes the state of "existential homelessness" that Arnett posits (*Existential* 229).

Medieval scholar, Josef Pieper, argued for contemplation, happiness, and leisure to be the basis for culture. This provides a solution to the moral disrepair in the fabric of human existence (Pieper, Leisure 35-36). The ability to have *otium* (leisure) is a gift of the human soul. Leisure can "uplift one's spirits in festivity [...] and win contact with those super human, life-giving forces that can send us, renewed and alive again, into the

busy world of work” (35-36). Pieper’s discussion of philosophical leisure revealed a communication eclipse that suggested an inability for human beings to engage conversation and move toward a more meaningful communicative experience.

“Existential homelessness” (Arnett 229) is pervasive in our human condition. Human communication has suffered because of the lack of certainty and trust in human relationships and society. Understanding our human condition as homelessness and acknowledging the loss of a “common center” (Buber, Paths 135) enables us to seek alternative approaches to everyday living. This communication eclipse can be better understood through an analogy to Arendt’s realm of the social (49).

Communication Eclipse and an Analogy to the Social

The moral crisis that this study illuminates is a communication eclipse between human beings. Communication eclipse means that communication is obscured – that communication either cannot occur or that the communication that does occur is false or inauthentic. The missing component in this communication eclipse is the element of human interest between human beings.

A communication eclipse is the result of this loss of a “common center” (Buber, Paths, 135). This loss is not a tangible artifact that can be precisely calculated and compartmentalized. A communication eclipse is something that cuts to the core of what it means to be a human being. This crisis is a threat to one’s mode of existence because it is not a technical function but a communicative function of society. We can better understand the danger of this moral crisis though an analogy to Arendt’s realm of the social.

The social is a place of ambiguity and bleeding boundaries which seem to make human communication uncertain and confused. Thus the interlocutors become more like ‘imposters’ who spend so much time ‘posturing’ that communicative meaning can be obstructed or impaired. The understanding of leisure in the postmodern age is like human relationships existing in the realm of the social. Leisure is often approached as if it were entertainment or relaxation – a brief hiccup in one’s daily existence – with no long-term effects to the quality of one’s life.

Like the social, a misunderstood idea of leisure can result in a false sense of satisfaction and nourishment. Reaching back to Buber’s idea that one must be morally reflective within one’s self (inside) before engaging others (outside), we see a similar theme. A misunderstood idea of leisure is just as dangerous to human communicative engagement, as living in the realm of the social has to human relationships.

A misunderstood leisure activity is short-term and unable to nourish a person as a philosophical leisure activity would nourish one’s inner self. This lack of nourishment may disable one’s ability to be able to effectively communicate with others because of an unreflective approach to the engagement of life. Living in the social realm also disables one’s ability to understand one’s place in the world because the boundaries between public and private are not visible or clear.

Hannah Arendt provides an example of the social realm in which she considers a telephone conversation with a psychiatrist on a cellular phone in a public restaurant, the issues of doctor/patient confidentiality may become blurred if bystanders hear the conversation. In a court of law, the information heard by the bystander might no longer be held private because what is discussed between a patient and doctor is typically held in

the private realm. Once the conversation is held in a public realm the question of confidentiality becomes ambiguous. Likewise, leisure, approached in a non-contemplative, unreflective, and erratic manner can not be considered philosophical leisure because the soulful nourishment can not be obtained. Therefore, leisure approached aphilosophically is akin to Arendt's idea of the social; it most often leads to confusion, ambiguity, or uncertainty.

The term 'rhetorical eclipse' seems to aptly describe most human communication in this postmodern era. There is an overwhelming sense of 'imposters' engaging in 'posturing.' Posturing refers to an imitative communicative understanding and presentation. Posturing can be a defensive or a deceptive mode of human communication, or both. The idea of a rhetorical eclipse implies there exists an obstruction to the reality of communication. This implies issues consistent with Sir Francis Bacon's Idols, which are empty words or overall communicative ideas that simply happen for the sake of happening but contain no real ideas or information. As human beings, we are fooled by these Idols – our communication is eclipsed – we are eclipsed.

This hermeneutic inquiry next examines by definition some key terms that will enrich and texture understanding of the communication eclipse. These terms – common center, loss of faith, and soul – provide coherence, comprehensiveness, and thoroughness for better understanding the communication eclipse.

Supportive Terms

To better understand the depth of this problem, the terms "common center" (Buber, I-Thou 115), loss of faith, and soul are considered in relation to the

communication eclipse. Martin Buber's "common center" (115) offers the perspective of what is missing in human communication. Considering the 'loss of faith' through Jean Paul Sartre provides texture in our understanding of the contemporary state of human communication. Finally, providing insight into how this study considers the 'soul' will inform one's understanding of the idea that philosophical leisure can be nourishment for one's soul and communicative abilities.

Common Center

Another way to understand the symptoms of the rhetorical eclipse is to recognize the loss of a "common center" (Buber, I-Thou 115). Buber argued:

[T]he authentic assurance of constancy in space consists in the fact that men's [women's] relations with their true *Thou*, the radical lines that proceed from all points of the *I* to the Center, form a circle. It is not the periphery, the community, that comes first, but the radii, the common quality of relation with the Center. This alone guarantees the authentic existence of the community. (I-Thou 115)

Buber's common center is sought during times of uncertainty (Paths 129). A common center is "never a mere attitude of mind" rather it is a feeling of an "inner disposition" (134). Martin Buber argued that the real essence of a community is found in its common center (135). A common center does not need to be a place or location but is a "living togetherness, constantly renewing itself" (135).

A common center in the art of conversation is the life lived between persons (Arnett and Arneson 129). To communicate from a common center means there is a place of trust that can bring interlocutors together (Buber, I-Thou 115). A common

center is embedded in a trust that allows for organic communication to happen and endure, although finding a common center is often blurred by the temporality of the unreflective approach to life that is often the case in a modern framework.

Common centers are often linked by moral stories that guide one's life. Moral stories are a necessary part of the social fabric of life because they provide human beings with a *sententia* (reason – thought) for life. These common centers or moral stories provide hope and direction for human beings who are lost in a sea of confusion and mistrust (Arnett 232). The idea of having a *finis* (aim) is a basic human need (Arnett, *Existential* 233; Aristotle, *Ethics* III.2). In our postmodern era, difference is celebrated and the multiplicity of voices compete for an audience. The ability to find a common center or to hear and apply the direction of moral stories to our lives becomes more difficult and demanding. Thus, at times this leaves human beings hopelessly confused. Arnett described this directional confusion as being similar to feudal Europe or the Soviet Union. When the common center was removed, people were left to scramble for a connection with something common to themselves. Ethnic groups became strictly divided subcultures, however, without a common center that would link all groups together, a broad sense of “existential homelessness” for all peoples emerged (Arnett, *Existential* 233). Existential homelessness is grounded in a loss of common center or moral story. A communication crisis occurs when people can no longer trust what they hear.

The realization that one can no longer trust what one hears reveals a “fractured spirit of modernity” (Benhabib 1) and loss of faith in the postmodern world.

Loss of Faith

The phrase ‘loss of faith’ represents a general state of humankind that is embedded in postmodernity’s uncertain and sometimes unfamiliar landscape. To have a loss of faith is to feel no trust in one’s condition or place-in-the-world. A ‘loss of faith’ can be understood by considering the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean Paul Sartre.

Along with the “fractured spirit of modernity” (Benhabib 1), postmodernity reveals a loss of faith and a crisis of western culture exhibited in misunderstanding and political bankruptcy (Lasch, Culture xiii). Science, once thought to be sufficient to dispel superstitions and provide answers to basic human questions, is no longer satisfactory to instill faith and trust in the world.

The realization of the ‘myth of progress’ (Lasch, Haven) may have led to what Nietzsche called “bad conscience” (Genealogy 38). “Bad conscience” is a culture of forgetfulness, the suppressing of experience. People live through experience not to digest it, but to aimlessly ingest it (38). This culture of bad conscience is a culture of empty communication or human imposters that are imbued with a loss of guilt and shame in daily human interactions (45). This failure impairs and impedes human communication as it promotes a culture of narcissism, which is an appropriate response to the growing despair and distrust that is now pervasive in the Western world.

Another falsehood we might experience in this loss of faith is the idea of “bad faith” (Sartre 83). “Bad faith” happens when an individual deceives oneself by holding a false notion of one’s self (350). An individual allows him/herself to hide from him/herself by appropriating or accepting a false set of patterns (posturing) in daily aspects of life (96). This aspect of engaging “bad faith” describes an individual who does

not reflect or contemplate inward and continues to do so knowingly (92). Jean Paul Sartre would describe the individual engaging in bad faith, as disintegrating in the heart of their being (116).

Bad faith can be considered a consequence of this communication eclipse. Jean Paul Sartre identifies three stages of bad faith. The first stage happens when one realizes he/she is in a relationship with the “lived world” (Sartre 735). This world impinges upon our options for living, which is imposing upon human beings (461). The second stage is one’s retreat into conscious reflection. This reflection ultimately reveals to the individual that there is no guide to help make decisions (68). The third stage in this futility is where the individual realizes that situated within one’s self is non-being, having no guide or options to encounter the other (321).

The reflection that Jean Paul Sartre posits is “not a subject-object dyad [...] its being does not depend on any transcendent consciousness; rather its mode of being is precisely to be in question for itself” (323). This reflection is not the deep contemplative play posited by philosophical leisure,⁵ instead it is a reflection of being that “nihilates itself in its being and which seeks in vain to dissolve into itself as a self” (323). Compared to Aristotle’s contemplation, Sartre’s reflection is an escape from being and not a mode of play with ideas. With mistrust and uncertainty in the world, this escape through bad faith is one option or alternative to being-in-the-world. Deep contemplation cultivates the soul. Bad faith recognizes a nihilation of the soul.

⁵ Contemplation of philosophical leisure is defined thoroughly in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this chapter, contemplation is a seeing into the soul rather than a recognition of the nihilation of the soul.

Loss of faith or having bad faith touches the soul, although, the soul of human beings cannot be concretely considered. Yet, while we often take for granted that we do not understand the soul in relation to human communication, the human soul permeates the human world. The following section will consider the human soul and its relatedness to human communication.

Soul

This author does not claim to know exactly what the soul is or where it resides. The intention is not to provide an interpretive study of what makes up the soul. However, this study asserts that philosophical leisure nourishes one's *soul* and suggests that the nourishment of one's soul can help to generate the art of conversation. This study does not assume that all readers will have the same understanding of how the term 'soul' is used and what its value is to this study. Therefore, a lens that this study uses to frame the *anima* (soul) will come from Aristotle, Seneca, and Julia Kristeva.

Aristotle considered the question, 'what is the soul of man [human beings]' in his essay, entitled *De Anima* (On the Soul). He argued that the *anima* (soul) is one of the most difficult things for the world to know (I. 1. 402a. 10). He suggested that the *anima* is the principle of animal life (I.1. 402a. 5). He provides a sort of literature review of writings on the *anima*, which considered whether the soul is divisible, whether it makes movement or whether it is moveable (I. 1. 404a. 5, I. 1. 404a. 25). Aristotle also considered whether the *anima* is harmony or spatial (I. 2. 407a. 5; I. 2. 408a. 30). Aristotle disagreed with most of the claims about the soul that preceded his inquiry. After refuting several lines of argument about the nature of the *anima*, Aristotle

concluded that the soul is potentiality of life (II. 1. 412a. 20). *Anima* is the “essence” of *res* (things) (II. 1. 412b. 10).

In his discussion on the *anima* (soul), Aristotle argued the *anima* is inseparable from its body, although he indicated that some body parts do not need *anima*, other body parts do (II. 1. 413a. 5). The *anima*, according to Aristotle, is the giver of life. His discussion of naming or describing the *anima* concluded abruptly with the words, “This must suffice as our sketch or outline determination of the nature of the soul” (II. 1. 413a. 10). Aristotle continued the conversation *de animi* (of the soul) specifically pertaining to the nourishment of the soul (II. 2. 416a. 10).

Aristotle argued that food is essential for the *anima* because that is the only way to “maintain being” (II. 4. 416b. 10). Aristotle maps the processual nourishment of the soul, which includes not only what and how an *anima* is fed but also the idea that the feeding helps to generate other beings (II. 4. 416b. 20-25). This generative ability is what contributes to the art of conversation. If philosophical leisure is nourishment for the soul, then it has the ability to generate the art of conversation and keep the conversation going.

A prolific Latin author, Seneca, contributed much to what remains of our Latin literature. In a collection of moral essays, Seneca offers *de Otio* (On Leisure) and *de Tranquillitate Animi* (On Tranquility of Mind), among other similar type essays. His use of *animi* for mind suggests that mind and soul may be considered the same thing. Although, many Latin words have several distinct meanings, the content of *de Tranquillitate Animi* focuses on the nourishment of one’s inner mind (II. 3). Seneca considers leisure to be secreted away from dailyness of everyday living and be devoted to “studies” (III. 3-6). This suggests that nourishment *de animi* (of mind or soul) is worthy

and helps to build society (III. 2. 6). This building of society is not a physical building, but an aesthetic building, which is the ‘art of conversation.’

Contemporary scholar, Julia Kristeva, considers the same questions that Aristotle pondered: what is a soul and do human beings have a soul (3). Kristeva considers different models *de animi* (of mind or soul), identifying Greek, Christian, and a psychological/Freudian model (5). Kristeva was concerned with the psychological model of the soul, the psychic life. She argued the psychic life involves language, which allows one to access one’s own self and others. She asserted that because of the soul, one is capable of taking action (6). Therefore, if the soul leads to action, then the soul will need nourishment to enable the action (7). In Kristeva’s description of the modern human being, she argued that people are stress-ridden and eager to spend money, have fun, and die. The problem she identified is that people are neglecting their soul. They have neglected to provide nourishment for their souls. If the soul is nourished, the psychic life is nourished and people would then be enabled to engage in life actions and find meaning rather than engage in “imminent abandonment” which has replaced the interpretation of meaning (7). Kristeva suggested that people are not taking the time to consider their psychic life, which in her case, is how one might nourish the *anima*. The life that does not take time to consider the psychic life is “artificial” and “empty” (9).

The *anima* (soul), whether considered to be the essence of one’s life, one’s mind, or one’s psychic life, requires nourishment. Without nourishment human communication can be rendered meaningless. This nourishment can be seen as the edifying philosophy of leisure, which can help to generate human communication and save it from degenerating into small talk. Nourishment *de animi* (of the soul) can contribute to conversation

because if conversation is generated by ideas, then the possibilities of ideas will increase and reshape into other or new ideas. Nourishment can save the art of conversation from degenerating into false communication. Nourishment of the soul allows for the life of conversation to evolve.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the question, “Can the rediscovery of leisure nourish the ground of conversation?” Through a constructive hermeneutic approach, as described earlier in this chapter, a discussion of the art of conversation and the current state of human communication is explored. One presupposition this study engages is that philosophical leisure can be an edifying philosophy (Rorty, *Mirror* 377). An edifying philosophy differs from a systematic philosophy “to keep the conversation going rather than to find an objective truth” (377). Leisure as an open and edifying way to engage other human beings sees “human beings as generators of new descriptions” rather than being confined to a set of terms in an objective fashion (378). Rorty would argue that we can contribute to the conversation but we can not do this based on a predetermined method. Rather, as generators of conversation we must be open to possibilities and to a transcendent seeing that the search for an objective truth is absurd (377).

Narcissism and existential homelessness characterize a communication eclipse within the human community. This eclipse began with industrialism and dependency on production of the market rather than production of the home, led to the addiction to over-consumption as a way of life (Lasch, *Minimal* 27). Human beings now depend on the external market for their sense of home, instead of their own abilities to forge a way of life. The “American Dream” (Decker 79-80; Tebbel 3) can no longer support what it

claims, as “downward mobility, social upheaval, and chronic economic, political, and military” crises continue to deeply weaken the Western world (Lasch, Minimal 23). These claims of crises reveal the nature of human communication in our historical moment.

The loss of a “common center” (Buber, I-Thou 115), the veil of mistrust, the “disembedded self” (Benhabib 152), and the lack of a place to call home, may leave an individual questioning life’s meaning as well as having a concern for a future. This shift in focus makes it difficult to have hope for one’s place in the world. The concern for a “common center” (Buber, I-Thou 115), narcissistic human communicative engagement (Lasch, Narcissism 37), and the condition of “existential homeless” (Arnett, *Existential* 229), all point to a problem in the world today. This problem tests the potential for dialogue between human beings (Arnett, *Existential* 238; Arnett and Arneson 16). Even in times of fundamental conflict between human beings, if trust is present, the conversation can continue (Arnett, *Existential* 238). The principle of leisure has shifted across the centuries. This shift is *otium obscurum* (an eclipse of leisure). The contention of this work is that communicative trust can be rebuilt not in the existential self, rather in the phenomenological soul. Trust can be rediscovered through a philosophical engagement of leisure, which an individual nourishes his/her communicative spirit and acknowledges the face of the other.

While Richard Rorty warns of epistemological approaches that set terms and confine inquiries, this study had to set the stage by defining the problem. These parameters are not intended to limit the discussion. This chapter situates the main definitions so that the conversation does not become misdirected. As misinformation and

misunderstanding are peeled away, a clearer understanding can be found and the aesthetic can be revealed (Gadamer, Truth 472-473). The intention is to understand philosophical leisure and to consider how leisure as an edifying philosophy can regenerate fertile ground for conversation. This study reveals the ‘imposter leisure’ and replaces it with an aesthetic ‘philosophical leisure’ connected to the classical understanding of what it means *otio esse* (to be at leisure). The next chapter advances perspectives of aesthetics that begin with judgments of beauty and move toward aesthetics as a social relationship – an aesthetic co-experience. These perspectives reveal a connection between the aesthetic activity of philosophical leisure and communicative praxis. Understanding the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure as communicative praxis offers one approach to recuperate human communication.

Chapter 2

Sententiae de Aesthetics

(Perspectives on Aesthetics)

Philosophical leisure is one hermeneutic entrance into understanding the aesthetic experience. Examining philosophical leisure as part of aesthetic theory is important to the engagement of communicative praxis. This chapter offers a historical overview of aesthetics by examining the aesthetic in historical settings.

Historical Overview of Aesthetics

Aesthetic is a dynamic and multidimensional branch of philosophy. The history of aesthetic thought can provide an amplitude of considerations from which to better understand philosophical leisure. This overview is constructed diachronically, beginning with the ancient world.

The Ancient World

Aesthetics have played a significant role in philosophical inquiry throughout history. The original Greek word, *aisthetikos*, means “sensitive.” A reflection on the ‘beautiful’ was considered a reflection of the aesthetic in the classical world. Initially, the aesthetic was used to designate the philosophy of the beautiful (Bosanquet 1). Aesthetics as a reflection of the beautiful were engaged before the time of Socrates, but in a very limited capacity. First examples of the aesthetic were depicted in the oral tradition. For example, Homer described the shield of Achilles as being made of gold and that it was “a marvelous piece of work!” (Homer 467). Scholars are unable to agree whether or not this is an aesthetic judgment, but it is one of the first statements whereby an evaluation is made regarding the appearance of an object (Beardsley 23).

The history of aesthetic theory “is a narrative which traces the aesthetic consciousness in its intellectual form of aesthetic theory, but never forgets the central matter to be elucidated is the value of beauty for human life” (Bosanquet 2). To the ancients, aesthetics meant beauty connected with notions of rhythm, symmetry, harmony and unity (4). The beginning noted that aesthetic inquiry was not limited to an aesthetic system but was contained within an aesthetic consciousness, which means it was, is, and will be.

The first written documentation of aesthetics occur in Plato’s work (Beardsley 24). Plato spoke in “heightened language, in words that moved and dazzled, with an inexplicable magic power” (25). This also marks the implicit transfer of aesthetics and the beauty of an object to the *beauty* of language and communication. The first and most explicit indication where Plato looked into the aesthetic is in his use of *techné* which means “art” (32). In the Symposium, Socrates argued that “of anything whatever that passes from not being into being the whole cause is composing or poetry” (204b). The value of the aesthetic is most clear when Plato presents this dialogue:

Whoever shall be guided so far towards the mysteries of love, by contemplating beautiful things rightly in due order, is approaching the last grade [...] beginning from these beautiful things, to mount for that beauty’s sake ever upwards, as by a flight of steps, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies, and from practices to beautiful learnings, so that from learnings he may come at last to that perfect learning which is the learning solely of that beauty itself, and may know at last that which is the perfection of beauty. There in life, and there alone [...] is life

worth living. (Symposium 211b)

Plato established that *techne* has a value unto itself, unlike the Egyptians who used their objects of beauty for a utilitarian purpose. Plato extended this beauty to language in his dialogue Gorgias. He stated that pseudo crafts or the arts of flattery are not genuine (Gorgias 463-465). Flattery or cookery, Plato's accusation against the sophists, makes things look good but is deceptive and full of pretense. Language is aesthetic and words can distinguish between cookery as ugly, and justice as beautiful (463-65).

Whether in matter (object creation) or in language (verbal creation), Plato's dialogues indicated that "absolute Beauty [...is] not seen with the eyes but is grasped conceptually by the mind alone (Phaedo 77e-79c). Plato also inquired into the nature of aesthetic enjoyment by considering the relationship between the nature of pleasure and the nature of the good. As a result, Plato placed the notion of morality within the realm of the aesthetic as related to the common good (Philebus 51 bc). This is exemplified clearly when he instructs the *custodis* (guardians) to avoid stories containing "any suggestion of the permissibility of immoral conduct [as they] must take into account the all-important ends and values of the whole society" (Beardsley 49). For the Greeks, art and the aesthetic realm engaged social influence and had social responsibilities. All citizens had the potential to be exposed to aesthetics, making the study of aesthetics essential to the common good (Beardsley 51).

Aristotle addressed aesthetics in his Poetics and in his Metaphysics. He distinguished three types of thought, which were "knowing (*theoria*), doing (*praxis*), and making (*poiesis*) (Metaphysics VI. e.I; Topics Vi.vi). Aristotle suggested that making something is imitation or representation. He identified two types of art, which are

imitating visual appearances by coloring or drawing and imitating human actions through song, verse, and dance (Poetics 223-224). Aristotle placed the aesthetic in the creation (invention) of the imitation or representation.

Aristotle linked aesthetics to emotions. Aesthetic imitations can arouse fear and pity in audiences (Poetics 240). In Beardsley's consideration of Plato and Aristotle's aesthetics he suggested that Aristotle believed the emotions evoked from a work of art are both painful and painless but neither impact the ability to give pleasure to the audience or aesthetic seer (59). Aristotle placed his aesthetics in the space between the type of thought and the reception of a listener or seer. This space concerned Plato because he (Plato) wanted to censure things that might be morally questionable to the observer. Aristotle disagreed with Plato. Aristotle meant even as art is morally questionable, so is man. The art is simply representing man's state of being. Aristotle believed man ought to see himself and be offered the opportunity for reflection. Plato felt that all morally questionable art ought to be removed from the sight of man (Beardsley 67).

This distinction between Plato and Aristotle suggests Aristotle found the aesthetic to be helpful toward the attainment of morality and justice through aesthetic excellence. Aesthetic considerations were initially shaped by the ancient polis. The paradigm shift from secular to sacred in the medieval world pointed aesthetics in another direction. As the metanarrative of Christianity became strengthened, its influence in the development of aesthetic consciousness also strengthened.

The Medieval World

Medieval philosophers spent much time reflecting upon interesting things. They did not much concern themselves with working out a theory of art, because the

understanding was not as important to them as the artful categories they created (Beardsley 105). For them art meant either the mechanical (servile), the liberal (trivium and quadrivium), or the theological arts. A dominant belief in the medieval world was that everything in the visible universe is in some way a counterpart of something invisible. Aesthetics incorporated a symbolic meaning, which suggested that images were representations of both the visible and the invisible (113).

The aesthetic consciousness of the medieval period evolved around the church, formative art, and the sense of beauty (Bosanquet 120). St. Thomas Aquinas (b. 1227), discussed the nature of beauty in his magnum opus, Summa of the Summa. Aquinas argued that senses are the bearers of the aesthetic. “*Sicut in sibi similibus*” (Bosanquet 147) translated as “the senses are charmed with things duly proportioned as analogous to themselves” (Aquinas 93). He clearly stated that beauty is derivative of God and has an affinity to intellect (Bosanquet 147). The most explicit example of Aquinas’s aesthetics is in the Summa when he describes the holy trinity:

Species or beauty has a likeness to the property of the Son. For beauty includes three conditions: integrity or perfection since those things which are impaired are by that very fact ugly; due proportion or harmony; and lastly, brightness or clarity, whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color. (93)

How Aquinas uses language in this passage is suggestive and rich. Beauty, for Aquinas, was not a single common beauty for everything but it is a whole family of qualities (Beardsley 105).

Aesthetics are a gift from God and sometimes difficult to judge, because one cannot explicitly recognize how aesthetics can provide a conception of a transcendent universal (Bosanquet 150). This transcendent notion of the aesthetic was not recognized by all but eventually moved into the realm of theoretical recognition (150). Aquinas found the aesthetic to be divine and untouchable, yet knowable through the imagination and through abstractions (Summa 81; Bosanquet 149).

Essential and fundamental to Aquinas's metaphysics is *unum, verum, and bonum* (one, true, and good). Aquinas added two other concepts of *res* (things) and *aliquid* (any/some), which means some(any)thing. Aquinas argued that *res* and *aliquid* are convertible and predictable of everything real (Aquinas, Summa 145; Beardsley 100). Aquinas placed the aesthetic into a category of good and beauty. He argued *bonum* is either befitting or useful describes the "movement of appetite" (Aquinas 93). He continued that the aesthetic is sought after for its own sake, "it is the virtuous" (94). Aquinas explicitly states that beauty and contemplation are based upon form and that they are the same thing (qtd. in Beardsley 101). So Aquinas situated the aesthetic within a transcendent realm. His perspective is more clearly related to contemplation, than his philosophical predecessors, evidenced by the church's influence.

Reflecting upon conceptions of aesthetics in both the ancient and the medieval world reveals some commonalities. These reflections allow the aesthetic realm to be partly tangible with objects and matter but also allow for a realm of abstractness. Understanding the aesthetic as being a plurality of existence is one that will follow through the next two historical periods. A transcendent aesthetic allows language to

remain abstract yet tangible. The balance between abstractness and tangibility in aesthetics becomes imbalanced in the modern world.

The Modern World

The Modern Era spans approximately between about 1500AD and the mid twentieth century and includes the Renaissance era and the Age of Enlightenment. For the purpose of this inquiry into aesthetics, the modern era will be limited to the metaphysical speculation of Immanuel Kant. His theory of aesthetics is described in the first part of Critique of Judgment. For Kant, aesthetics include three things: a natural order, a moral order, and compatibility between the natural and the moral (Judgment 7). Kant asserted that theoretical knowledge limits understanding (Pure 177). He suggested that aesthetic judgment can be an alternative to theoretical judgment. Aesthetic judgment softens the boundaries for a broader window of understanding (Bosanquet 261).

According to Immanuel Kant, the power of judgment happens in the connection of *sentential a ratio*, (understanding and reason) (Judgment 38). Additionally, the power of judgment must be reflective in nature and conform to our cognition. As a result, the feeling of pleasure is produced (27). This pleasure moves our aesthetic judgment to bring conformity between the perception of the object and the faculties of the subject (46). Since there are no theoretical limits to understanding, judgment is formed out of the free interplay between the natural and the moral order. The experience of awareness is the result of the operation of the cognitive faculties – in free play, in the imagination, and in the understanding, and the harmonizing of the experience (Crawford 28). Kant considered judgment as the mind in a “free play of the imagination and the understanding” (Judgment 64-65). Kant was able to link judgments of taste and

judgments of pleasure as being “imputed to everyone [...] as a duty” (Crawford 28).

Again for Kant, the aesthetic transcendental is the only place for reflexivity in judgment.

Immanuel Kant’s aesthetics can be divided into two distinct meanings. First, aesthetics refers to the “science of a priori sensibility” (Pure 82). Second, the aesthetic is the “critique of taste,” (Judgment 45). Prior to Kant’s work, the aesthetic was connected to pleasure, often creating a solipsistic framework for understanding the aesthetic. Kant tried to localize his aesthetic into a doctrine of sensibility (Caygill 53). This doctrine dealt primarily with pure forms (54). Kant argued that there are two such pure forms; sensible intuition and space and time, space being the outer form and time being the inner sense (Pure 65-67).

The main argument in Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Judgment is that aesthetics are not conceptual judgments about “things in the world but are reports on the relation between an object met with in experience and a feeling of pleasure in the judging subject” (Crawford 26). Kant claimed that judging something beautiful has been critiqued as a judgment of taste not pleasure (Judgment 58; Crawford 27). Kant argued against the axiom that judgments of pleasure have more to do with subjective experience and can claim no universality. Kant suggested the principle that underlies all of judgment, *sensus communis* (collective experience), is experience (Judgment 64).

Immanuel Kant’s aesthetic theory has four subdivisions or “moments.” The moments are qualitative, quantitative, relational, and modal (Judgment v-vi). Each moment considers judgment from different perspectives. Qualitative and relational moments are considered grounds of aesthetic judgment. Quantitative and modal moments are considered grounds of epistemological status (Crowther 51).

First, discussing the qualitative moment, Kant argued that:

In order to distinguish whether anything is beautiful or not, we refer to the representation, not by understanding to the object for cognition, but by the imagination [...] to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or pain [...] the judgment of taste is therefore not a judgment of cognition, and is consequently not logical but aesthetical, by which we understand that whose determining ground can be no longer other than subjective. (Kant, Judgment 45)

For Kant, aesthetic taste is not concerned with the existence of an object. Rather, taste is determined by what one makes of the representation in himself or herself (47). This is a disinterestedness necessary for the determination of taste. “An entirely *disinterested* satisfaction,” is beautiful (55). Judgment, for Kant, involved a disassociation of the object from its context.

Second, discussing the quantitative moment, Kant argued that judgment of taste according to quantity considers the beautiful being separate or apart from the concept. Kant asserted, “the beautiful is that which pleases universally without [...]requiring] a concept” (Judgment 55). In other words, because of the disinterested satisfaction that comes from the non-attachment to a judgment in private conditions, “it must be regarded as grounded on what he [she] can presuppose in every other person” (56). Because judgment is not private, Kant notes that a disinterested judgment of taste presupposes a universal satisfaction (59). Universal satisfaction is found in a judgment of taste – not in a judgment of pleasure (61). A judgment of pleasure would involve a private interestedness particular to the object and the viewer.

Third, discussing the relational moment, Kant asserted that “beauty is the form of the purposiveness of an object [...] without any representation as a purpose” (Judgment 73). No subjective purpose can ground the judgment of taste because taste requires disinterested satisfaction. This third moment concerns the “relation of the representative powers to one another, so far as they are determined by the representation” (69). This relation is determined by the feeling of pleasure that is declared in the process of the judgment of taste. Therefore, the relational moment is nothing but a subjective purposive consideration of the representation.

Fourth, discussing the modal moment, Kant addressed satisfaction. Aesthetic judgment is “not an objective cognitive judgment [...] and] cannot be derived from definite concepts” (Judgment 91). Aesthetic judgment cannot be apodictic but must be responsive to the modality of human interest. In this last moment, judgment is serendipitous.

Immanuel Kant’s major points suggest “judgments of taste are a special form of reflective judgment where in the subjective conditions of cognition (imagination and understanding) are in a harmonious accord which is conducive to cognition” (Crowther 59). The psychological complexity of these judgments suggest that human faculties can only recognize feeling through the pleasure the object brings about, which occurs in formal qualities such as form or appearance of design. Finally, the pleasure generated is disinterested in relation to the real existence of the object (59).

Kantian aesthetics involves the notion of ‘free play’ of our imagination in response to the object (Judgment 64). This is how we organize data (Rogerson 1). Essential to Kant’s theory is this internal reflection that allows us this ‘free play,’ later to be addressed by Gadamer. In the end, Kant is recognized as a formalist who opposes a

theory that emphasizes content or context of beauty, rather one must consider more important what the object itself conveys (1).

After looking at the Ancient World, Medieval World, and the Modern World, three conclusions can be drawn. First, the metaphysical interpretation of fine art was initially inferior to that of reality because utility was a priority in fine art. Second, moralistic criticism was originally confused with aesthetic or practical interest and eventually evaporated by Kant's time. For Kant, there was only a "trace of moralism [that] remains in as far as the permanent value of the beautiful [...] exclusively to its representation of moral ideas and moral order" (Bosanquet 283). Third, unity and variety in aesthetics transformed into the principles of expressiveness, characterization, and significance. These attributes are not tangible but they reside in the transcendent realm, allowing for rhetorical interplay and growth.

The space of the aesthetic rhetorical interplay invites human growth as philosophical leisure enhances human interest through aesthetic free innerplay and interplay. Innerplay and interplay is a catalyst for nourishing and developing idea-laden conversation.

Postmodern World

The final part of this historical overview discusses Hans-Georg Gadamer and Mikhail Bakhtin's work with aesthetics. Both Gadamer and Bakhtin wrote during the modern and postmodern eras. Nevertheless, their aesthetic insight foregrounds a postmodern aesthetic.

Hans-Georg Gadamer

Philosophical hermeneutics opens Hans-Georg Gadamer's aesthetic theory. Gadamer's aesthetics are concerned with "play," "interplay," and "innerplay" (Truth 109). Gadamer's aesthetics modulate to move between the author and the audience (102). Some may argue with Gadamer and suggest that *mens auctoris* (authorial intent) is important to art, however, Gadamer limited aesthetics to the task of understanding art. In the aesthetic bridge, *mens auctoris* is left behind as an understanding of the art transcends. For Gadamer, in order to not limit understanding of aesthetic, he argued against a dictated aesthetic canon. Gadamer believed that once there is a set, established, agreed upon canon for the study of aesthetics, the discussion of aesthetics would close down.

Hans-Georg Gadamer suggested that the aesthetic can never clearly be encountered. He suggested one always consider the aesthetic with a fuzzy clarity (Hermeneutics 103). For Gadamer, the "being of the aesthetic has emerged for us as play" (Truth 129). The aesthetic transcends of the being of play and is not the object or subject of play. Play in the aesthetic is "independent of consciousness of those who play" (Gadamer 102). When the player is no longer one-dimensional and task-driven one is unaware of one's interestedness in the act-in-itself. This is transcendence into the aesthetic realm of consciousness. Play does not have its being in the player's consciousness or attitude, but on the contrary "draws him [her] into its dominion and fills him [her] with its spirit" (Truth 109). Play, then, is a becoming of something and that process of becoming is aesthetic for Gadamer.

Hans-Georg Gadamer experienced the aesthetic through “aesthetic differentiation” (Truth 135). He suggested:

we can experience every work of plastic art ‘immediately’ as itself –
i.e., without needing further meditation to us [...] But inasmuch as certain
subjective conditions obtain whenever a work of sculpture is accessible,
we must obviously abstract from them if we want to experience the work
itself. (Gadamer, Truth 134-135)

Gadamer used an example of a photograph. He argued a photograph is not “tied to a particular place but offers itself entirely by itself by virtue of the frame that encloses it” (135). A photograph is not the actual object and you do not look at the actual object, the photograph is removed from the object. But the photograph does represent the object, detached from life and the particular condition that of which we would approach to it. A photograph represents the aesthetic consciousness – the aesthetic dimension “develops the concept of art and the artist as a way of understanding traditional structures and so performs aesthetic differentiation” (135). The aesthetic conception of the photograph “shows the ontological inseparability of the picture from what is represented [...] and] it distinguishes the representation as such from what is represented” (139).

Gadamer argued that “plastic art” shut down understanding and interpretation but the “intellectual universality of language [...] remains open to all kinds of imaginative elaborations” (Truth 143). Gadamer revealed his conception of *play* to represent the “proper art” (144). He argued that aesthetic consciousness (the photograph) is situational and we cannot understand a work of art because “meaning and contents are determined by the occasion” (144). Aesthetic consciousness is situated in the occasion, which limits

the understanding of the picture. Aesthetic differentiation is needed to understand the art. Gadamer noted an example that “aesthetic differentiation may judge the performance against the inner structure of sound read in [a] score, but no one believes that reading music the same as listening to music” (148). Aesthetic differentiation separates the art from its occasion to offer a fuller understanding of the experience. Bakhtin’s aesthetic in “answerability” can augment Gadamer’s aesthetic differentiation.

Mikhail Bakhtin

Bakhtin developed his aesthetic theory through a negation of traditional aesthetic theories. Bakhtin argued that expressive aesthetics is “the outward expression of an inner state” (*Hero* 62). Aesthetic value “is actualized at the moment when the contemplator abides within the contemplated object” (63). Bakhtin said that aesthetic value cannot be maintained from beginning to end. Bakhtin’s critique of aesthetics asserted that expressive aesthetics cannot account for the whole of a work of art (64). Additionally, a work of art is unable to “provide a valid foundation of form” (67). This negation of form reduces expressive theory to pure expression.

The core of Mikhail Bakhtin’s aesthetic theory is form. He looked at language as non-spatial (*Hero* 93). He suggested verbal creations do not produce “an *external* spatial form for it does not operate with spatial material” (93). Unlike a painting or a vase, verbal creations do not exist in material form. Bakhtin contends that language has an inner spatial form that is artistically valid (94). Bakhtin argued the aesthetic object itself is imaged through words. He added that words alone do not account for the aesthetic value of language but that there exists an inner spatial form that is actualized through visual representation or its equivalent, an emotional volition - a feeling-tone (94).

Mikhail Bakhtin argued that form should aid a co-experiencing. Form does not consummate content but expresses content (Bakhtin, *Hero* 67). This means that without form there can be no expression. Bakhtin argued that expressive aesthetics places content on the same plane with constituents, creating a form for itself as the expression of itself (69). Thus ‘form’ is reduced to a flat expression that cannot be consummated and leads to the destruction of the whole of the aesthetic object.

Mikhail Bakhtin sought to develop a theory of aesthetics that did not negate the aesthetic object. For Bakhtin, aesthetic form is founded and validated from within the other (*Hero* 91). Aesthetic form “is constructed on the basis of a given work of art but does not coincide with that work, or it may be the form of the work of art itself, i.e. a material form” (93).

Language is a verbal creation lived-in-the-world and consummated by the aesthetic object not concrete and many-sided (Bakhtin, *Hero* 93). For a verbal creation to be non-spatial, Bakhtin suggested that language does not operate like spatial material. Rather, verbal creations have an insideness that is an inner spatial form. Bakhtin clarified that this “visual inner form is experienced emotionally and volitionally as if it were visually full and complete” (94). This emotional-volitional tone is the whole concrete “once-occurrent” unity in its entirety. The emotional-volitional tone expresses the fullness of the state of being at any given and yet to be determined moment (Bakhtin, Toward 36). There is no isolation outside the “once-occurrent” event context of a living consciousness, which is precisely the moment constituted by “myself-activity” in a lived experience (36).

Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetics concern itself with problems of consummation, which is how parts shape together to make a whole (Art x). Bakhtin understood that consummation is in the "eye of the beholder" (x). This wholeness is a creation and a fiction and is created from a particular point of view (x). This wholeness has an aesthetic value, whether of material form or of emotional tone.

Mikhail Bakhtin's architectonics divides aesthetics into two types. First, "general aesthetics," which lay the foundation for all for all aesthetic events, and second, "special aesthetics" that account for the distinctive qualities of the material form (Art xv). His aesthetic has little to do with beauty, rather it deals more with concepts of isolation, outsidersness, and consummation (xv). Bakhtin's aesthetics are more often dealing with perceiving an object, text, or person as something fashioned into a whole.

Consummation is creative and aesthetic and can only be treated as an act of authorship (xv).

Mikhail Bakhtin's rhetorical theory and aesthetic theory both have a place for the other. Bakhtin examined the role of aesthetics through the question, "what shall we make of this gift of otherness?" (Art xix). He described his aesthetic rhetorical theory as a first philosophy or a moral philosophy toward the other. This obligation to the other is manifested in Bakhtin's work on "answerability," which is the "actual acknowledgement of one's own participation in unitary Being-as-event" (40). The aesthetic occurs in this realm of answerability, "where you exist, in the ought, your obligation of answerability [...] the highest architectonic principle of the actual world of the performed act or deed [...] it is the contraposition of I and other" (75).

Being is distributed in Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetic. The distribution, for Bakhtin, occurs between the "author," the "hero," and a "third party." (Bakhtin, *Hero* 14). Bakhtin's author is the creator of an object or utterance. The hero is more complex than the author and has a passive role in the aesthetic experience. An author occupies a space outside the hero. The outsideness of the hero enables the author to concentrate on the hero and to concentrate on the whole hero to complete an action. The author consummates the hero and the aesthetic object, independently of the hero's own life (Bakhtin, *Hero* 14). The author is outside the hero or aesthetic object. Through aesthetic activity in lived experience, the author creates the hero in form through utterances. The superaddressee (discussed at length in chapter 4) is the third party that transcends physicalness, yet is necessary for consummation of the author-hero relationship. The author and the hero are nourished by the presence of this third party, which is God or spirit (Bakhtin, *Problem* 126). This is how one can explain 'feeling' the presence of another when he/she is not with you. This individual is situated in a story or narrative in which one is consummated by the third party (126).

Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetics posits that the "aesthetic is found within the seeing, it is the creation or process of the seer, within" (Art 75). Further, the aesthetic seeing that occurs is nourished and cultivated by the third party. Consummation occurs and sensation is driven by this very act. The whole of an experience is now larger than each individual part.

Conclusion

Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetic theory considers the consummation of the form of the work of art, the author, the viewer, the hero, and the superaddressee. Consummation of

the aesthetic brings together an ethical responsiveness and awareness that invites the development of human interest, considering the other. Aesthetics in a postmodern world is significantly different from aesthetics in the ancient world. Aesthetics are dynamic and responsive to living-in-the-world. The aesthetic historical overview suggests that aesthetics have a vital role in human communication. Yet that role is still undefined and often dubious. Chapter three provides an historical overview of the rhetoric of leisure throughout historical periods. This identifies the *otium obscurum* (eclipse of leisure) and describes how the human understanding of leisure modulated through time. The chapter follows the eclipse of philosophical leisure through a rhetorical journey that encounters luxury, pleasure, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. Implications for a contemporary understanding of leisure suggest a manifestation within Hannah Arendt's social realm. Contemporary understanding of leisure is more akin to an aleisure manifestation rather than a classical understanding of philosophical leisure.

Chapter 3

Sententiae de Otio

(Perspectives on Philosophical Leisure)

This chapter traces historical perspectives on philosophical leisure⁶ beginning with the Ancient World. Continuing through the Medieval Era, the Renaissance Era, the Modern Era, and finally the Postmodern Era, this chapter identifies the *otium obscurum* (eclipse of leisure) and the emergence of the communicative crisis. A discussion of the implications for the eclipse of leisure in postmodernity follows. Consequences of the problem of *otium obscurum* (the eclipse of leisure) to human communication are discussed.

Across time there has been a divergence from philosophical leisure as posited by Aristotle. This divergence is present in the colloquial understanding of leisure as a mere interruption of everyday work. Philosophical leisure is long-term and nourishing to the human soul. *Otium obscurum* (eclipse of leisure) is juxtaposed with relaxation and entertainment/amusement.

Historical Overview of Philosophical Leisure

A contemporary understanding of leisure situates leisure somewhere between entertainment and relaxation. Most of the time there is not much thought associated with the engagement of leisure, which is often viewed as a side bar or post-script in everyday life (Pieper, Leisure 150). This approach to the idea of leisure is symptomatic of Arendt's concept of the "social" sphere of society (Arendt 38). The social sphere blurs

⁶ The term 'philosophical leisure' is used to distinguish from a contemporary and unreflective understanding of leisure.

meaning. The engagement of activity or non-activity demonstrates a disconnect from a philosophical understanding of leisure.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1699) once said leisure is the mother of philosophy (IV. 46). This is perhaps one reason why leisure is an open ended concept. Regardless of the historical moment in which the thinker is situated, leisure is a concept repeatedly encountered. The rhetoric of leisure is certainly embedded in religion, one of the universal narratives of the Western world. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity share similar stories in which leisure is embedded within the framework of creation, Levitical laws, and practice. Many philosophers take time to address leisure and its significance to their inquiry. Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Augustine, Aquinas, Salisbury, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill, Kant, Pieper, Gadamer, Postman, and a multitude of others, have negotiated a rhetoric of leisure. Leisure has been consistently situated as a fundamental philosophical concept through documented time. The following sections texture this author's understanding of leisure through the historical time periods of the Ancient World, the Medieval Era, the Renaissance Era, the Enlightenment Era, the Modern Era, and the Postmodern Era.⁷

Ancient World

This study examines leisure through a Western perspective. Since Greek culture is the cradle of the Western world, this study begins with Greek etymology and philosophers. Leisure, from the Greek word, *skole* and from Latin word, *scola*, evolved into the English word *school*. "The word used to designate the place where we educate

⁷ The philosophers chosen for this study were selected because they either wrote a significant amount about leisure or their text was a seminal document from which others began their inquiry of leisure.

and teach derived from a word which means ‘leisure’” (Pieper, Leisure 20). This reveals that leisure is not a non-activity involving no thoughtful component but is something that involves learning – implying an organization and a sense of focus with social and cultural benefits. Another form of the word leisure used in Roman antiquity is *otium* (noun - used in ablative case, *otio* – at leisure). *Otium* has the “general meaning of being free from action and from preoccupations that are the companions of activity,” it is the equivalent of the quiet life (Petrarch xii). The Oxford Latin Dictionary also defines *otium* as being free from action (1277-8). Additionally, the Oxford Latin Dictionary defines *negotio*, to be at work or to negotiate a task (1168-1169). *Otio*⁸ is to ‘at leisure’ and *neg* negates the term, meaning to be without leisure. Thus, one cannot be at work and at leisure simultaneously. By 65 C.E. *otium* came to mean “a way of life leading to spiritual enrichment,” not to be understood as rest or relaxation (Petrarch xii). Both the Greek and the Latin understanding of leisure situate leisure as action.

Aristotle’s (384-322 B.C.E.)⁹ Politics discuss leisure quite thoroughly. He begins:

Nature herself, as it has often been said, requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well; for as I must repeat once again, the first principle of all action is leisure. (VIII.3.1338)

This leads to the question of what do you do when you engage in leisure? Aristotle suggested that when one is at leisure (*otio*) one is not just amusing one’s self. He continued that the action of merely amusing one’s self is the end of one’s life (Politics

⁸ *Otium* denotes the noun, *otio* denotes the state of being at leisure.

⁹ This study uses B.C.E. stands for ‘Before Common Era’ which traditionally meant ‘before Christ.’ The appropriate reference in a postmodern era does not indicate any particular religion.

VIII.3.1338). Aristotle also argued that leisure must give one pleasure, happiness, and enjoyment, which can only be experienced by people *otio* (VIII.3.1338). Like the people whom are merely amusing themselves to death (Postman), Aristotle says that if one is merely busy, then one cannot be *otio*. Therefore, Aristotle contended that in leisure our study of form and structure is an intellectual activity. Leisure is a purposeful action with value in its own sake, unlike things that are necessary for worldly existence (VIII.3.1338).

Aristotle argued that mere relaxation and amusement are not good in themselves but they are, in short, pleasant (Politics IV.1339). However, he suggested that music “conduces virtue on the ground that it can form our minds and habituate us to true pleasures as [...] it contributes to the enjoyment of leisure and mental cultivation” (IV.1339). So, Aristotle argued that the benefits of being *otio* (at leisure) are transforming, as they enable development of good judgments in other areas of our daily life. However, this is untrue of relaxation and amusement as these may be considered interruptions that temporarily ease situations rather than cultivate constructive responses to them. In his discussion on virtue, Aristotle stated “happiness is thought to depend on leisure, for we are busy that we may have leisure” (Ethics.X.7.1177b4-6). Nothing is gained until one is *otio*. *Otio esse* (being at leisure) occurs in contemplation, an essential element of leisure. For Aristotle, leisure was necessary for the development of virtue and the political life (Politics VII.9.5).

Aristotle’s application of leisure implicitly oriented his philosophical leisure to the class of people like him, as that was his audience. In his time and through his ideologies, a natural hierarchy existed, which divided man from man, or the intellectual

worker from the servile worker. Aristotle supported the natural idea of slavery, which questions whether he intended for slaves to have access to leisure, or if in light of this inherent position in society, they were automatically excluded from engagement of leisure. This question is certainly far more appropriate for another inquiry and will not be addressed here.

Cicero (106 B.C.E. – 46 B.C.E.) mirrored Aristotle’s work in a collection of his experiences entitled, Anecdotes From Roman History, in which he told a story of Publius Scipio, the first one called Africanus, who said, “*numquam se minus otiosum esse quam quum otiosus, nec minus solum quam solus esset*” (II.1.5) (he was never less at leisure than when he was at leisure and he was never less alone than when he was alone). This suggested the truth of contemplation is not inaction but an action of the mind – which means Publius Scipio was never more busy than when he was at leisure and he was never more engaged than when he was alone. Cicero concluded that while being a successful agent for the Roman Empire, Publius Scipio also found the value of contemplation inherent in *otio esse* (being at leisure), as his words resonate “*quae declaret illum et in otio de negotiis cogitare, et in solitudine secum loqui solitum, ut neque cessaret umquam. Et interdum colloquio alteris non egeret [...] otium et solitudo*” (II.1.10) (to be at leisure one is free of business and that even when conversing with others, the thing to be carried with one is the notion of leisure and solitude). One must hold a deliberate and particular focus of attention to be at leisure.

Another Roman author considered leisure valuable to the cultivation of human life. Seneca’s (4 B.C.E. – 65 C.E.) moral essays (volume 2) are devoted to the idea of leisure. In *De Vita Beata* (On the Happy Life), *De Otio* (On Leisure), *De Tranquillitate*

Animi (On the Tranquility of Mind), and *De Brevitate Vitae* (On the Short Life), Seneca posited his view of the good life as imbued with leisure. He suggested that even in the early years, leisure is the ability for human beings to surrender wholly to the contemplation of truth, to search out the art of living, and to practice this in retirement. (On Leisure, II.1-III 1). Seneca urged human beings to not wait until retirement years to begin to engage leisure but to make time for it during their productive working years. A striking analogy for this exhortation involves the metaphor of sailing. Seneca suggested:

some sail the sea and endure the hardships of journeying to distant lands for the sole reward of discovering something hidden and remote. It is this that collects people everywhere to see sights, it is this that forces them to pry into things that are closed, to search out the more hidden things, to unroll the past, and to listen to the tales of the customs of barbarous tribes. (IV. v. 2-5)

Seneca appealed to the common sailor's desire to forge new lands and seek out the unknown. Attending to leisure is no different than engaging in the actions of the ancient sailor. The desire for leisure is to seek the unknown. Seneca explained the advantages of leisure as the seeking may "pass from revealed to hidden things and discover something more ancient than the world itself – whence yon stars came forth, what was the state of the universe before the several elements separated to form its parts" (On Leisure IV. v. 5-6) and other self-reflective ideals that one can only find by a reflective seeking.

Seneca argued that the contemplative life is not devoid of action – it is action (On Leisure IV. v.7 – vI.3). In Seneca's discussion *De Tranquillitate Animi* (On Tranquility of Mind) he considered another analogy descriptive for seeking on land, rather than on

sea. He suggested that wide-ranging travel and wandering over remote shores demonstrated a discontent or an inability to be satisfied (On Leisure II. 12-16).

Wandering unreflectively ultimately leaves human beings unfulfilled. Seneca suggested that this wandering is like passing the day in “seeking the sun and in exercise and care of the body” (II.15 – III.3). However, Seneca warned that this may lead to ambition where “chicanery so frequently turns into wrong [...] and is always sure to meet with more that hinders than helps” (II. 15 – III.3). Seneca advocated that before this unfulfilling action happens, that man¹⁰ can hide away and “wherever he secrets his leisure, he should be willing to benefit the individual man and mankind by his intellect, his voice, and his counsel” (III. 3-6). Seneca’s concern was that without the leisure time to mend one’s mind, time would be wasted and might lead human beings toward the wrong path.

Seneca used the word *anima* for his reference to the mind, which is also the Latin word for soul. This is consistent with Aristotle’s call for leisure as one way to cultivate the human/animal soul.

The Greek and Roman roots of leisure should inform contemporary understanding of leisure, however, a gap has transpired resulting in *otium obscurum* (an eclipse of leisure). From the perspective of writers of the Ancient World, leisure is more a reflective questioning than a time to not do work. The idea of philosophical leisure emerges to distinguish between an early understanding of leisure and the contemporary

¹⁰ Up through the Renaissance period original text quotations have the original gender indicator, ‘man.’ Beginning with the Enlightenment period this author adds the historically appropriate, contemporary gender reference of ‘woman’ to the original quotations as needed.

understanding of leisure. A review of leisure in the medieval era enriches the discussion on the understanding of philosophical leisure.

Medieval Era

The medieval era contributes to a deeper understanding of philosophical leisure. Relying upon Thomas Aquinas and John of Salisbury, the reflective foundation of the action of leisure is consistent with the ancient philosophers understanding of philosophical leisure. The Christian church guided most thought in the Medieval era. Therefore, this section considers leisure through the lens of Christian philosopher, Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 C.E.) suggested “because of the leisure that goes with contemplation [...] the divine wisdom itself [...] is always at play, playing through the whole world” (Commentary I.d.2; Pieper, Leisure 18). Leisure can play in both the private and public spheres. Aquinas showed the contemplative aspect of leisure in the private realm and how it manifests into the public realm as action in the world, playing in the world and *inter homines* (to be among man).

Thomas Aquinas equated leisure with study, wisdom, and transformation. Aquinas argued the contemplative life is the highest form of living *non propre humana sed superhumana* (not properly human, but super human) (Aquinas, Philosophical 192). He argued that human beings experienced leisure in taking time for study which released them from other occupations. Essentially, Aquinas argued that people who studied the arts and sciences did so as leisure. This kept them from work in the marketplace and gave them great knowledge and wisdom. They would not have had this opportunity without the leisure activity of study (10). Aquinas said this activity of leisure was

superior to work and could lead to true wisdom (47). He suggested that leisure is a path to virtue because of its contemplative nature. Busy-ness (business) attacks or acts without contemplation; without contemplation virtue cannot be attained. This study subscribes to the Aristotelian notion of virtue, the noble, the praise worthy, more simply “that which is both desirable for its own sake and also worthy of praise; or that which is both good and also pleasant because good” (Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.9.1366.23). The perspective of John of Salisbury offers texture to this examination of philosophical leisure.

John of Salisbury (1163-1180 C.E.), a twelfth century Bishop, also agreed on the importance of leisure. In his primary philosophical text, Policraticus, he discussed the importance of letter writing to communicate ideas. He advocated that this contemplative action of letter writing should not exist without the notion of leisure. Additionally, Salisbury asserted without leisure in the action of letter writing there would be “death and burial of every living man” (7). This argument is consistent with Salisbury’s concern of the contemplative life and “man’s alienation from his true self by the ways of life found in the higher ranks of society” (Liebeschutz 23). Whether Salisbury referred to private or public foibles of a courtier or to the oppression of the common folk, his main concern was for a “dangerous mode of human self-abandonment” (Salisbury 52). Salisbury argued the only way to save man is through a path to virtue (Salisbury 54). Virtue is Salisbury’s connection to philosophical leisure because the path to virtue can only be tread upon through contemplation and the seeking of wisdom. For Salisbury, this path toward virtue was through letter writing as it removed him from the daily toil of work

with the courtiers and allowed him time for contemplation and solitude, essential for philosophical leisure (Salisbury 7).

John of Salisbury equated idleness as the ignorance of leisure. He argued that his letter writing transcends time as it draws people together and induces people to a reflective virtue. Salisbury said leisure “triumphs over idleness and transmit[s] these things to posterity” (3). His letter writing was a contemplative and a reflective action, which he considered good for his soul, for others, and for the common good.

Thomas Aquinas and John of Salisbury understood what philosophical leisure would provide for humanity. Grounded in Aristotle’s understanding of leisure, Salisbury and Aquinas advocated and sought a life of leisure. This philosophical understanding of leisure would continue through the Renaissance, however, with certain concern over the misunderstanding of how to ‘do’ leisure.

Renaissance Era

A life without leisure is a life of idleness. Idleness is a state of being that indicates a lack of growth. Philosophical leisure cultivates the soul and a purpose emerges out of that cultivation. This emergence does not allow idleness to consume the soul. This section illuminates Renaissance contribution to the understanding of philosophical leisure, beginning with Montaigne.

In the 16th century Montaigne (1533-1592 C.E.) outlined his perspective on leisure where he warned that human beings often do not seek leisure properly. He pointed to an illusion where human beings “think they have left their occupations behind when they have merely changed them” (267). People deceive themselves when they believe they act in the engagement of leisure but in actuality they have simply

unreflectively substituted one action for another. The result of this misperception is the experience of a hiccup instead of a transformative experience.

Montaigne argued for leisure as part of life because evil cultivates minds without leisure. He called for a cultivation of the human mind with solitude, the only defense against evil (270). This cultivation in solitude is a contemplation of one's self, "arresting and fixing" one's soul, which recognizes true, long-lasting benefits without any desire for immortality or luxury (278). The turn away from solitude and contemplation can only lead to a life of "drunkenness," rapture of the body, exclusion of the mind (Montaigne 381). When the soul is without an aim or direction, "you are everywhere [and] you are no where" (31). This lack of direction would be considered idleness. Montaigne's conception of leisure is consistent with the religious ideal of leisure addressed by Petrarch.

During the Renaissance period, Petrarch (1304-1374 C.E.) referred to leisure as "religious leisure" as indicated by the title of his work, *De Otio Religioso* (On Religious Leisure). Petrarch's concerns were consistent with the perspectives of Thomas Aquinas and John of Salisbury. In 1348, inspired by an overnight visit to a Carthusian monastery to visit his brother, Petrarch wrote his treatise *De Otio Religioso* (On Religious Leisure). Before writing *De Otio Religioso* (On Religious Leisure), Petrarch wrote *De Vita Solitaria* (On Solitary Life), in which he pondered his contemplative life and his everyday, work-a-day existence. In solitude, Petrarch studied literature and poetry while considering fundamental questions of humanity. As early as 1200-1300 C.E.¹¹ *otium* (leisure) was beginning to break away from Aristotle's influence. A few monks feared

¹¹ C.E. stands for Common Era.

otium was mindless and wasteful because it did not produce immediate, tangible results (an early illusion of progress) (Petrarch xiii). By the late 14th century the negative implication of *otium* prevailed. Petrarch attempted to bring the *sententia populus* (popular understanding) of *otium* back to the philosophical ideal of leisure. *De Otio Religioso* was Petrarch's attempt at a recuperative effort of leisure (xiii).

Petrarch's ideal of *otio* (being at leisure) is grounded in contemplation and reflection. He argued (consistent with this author) that "nothing" of the world is satisfying (I.17). He posited that if human beings do not engage leisure, their ability would be thwarted to chose the best path in life (I.17). Petrarch warned "we should say more properly that men do not take time now, and therefore they will never have any time at all" (I.17). Petrarch suggested that only by "taking time" can the soul become wise (I.18).

Leisure stretches the intellect and can often seem difficult. Leisure can also be joyous and transformative, unlike *negotio* (non-*otium* or work), that is grounded in "carnal desires which defile and weaken our whole person from the visual lusts which deflect us from the acquisition of knowledge" (Petrarch I.2.14). Petrarch asked the question, "what benefit is it for a man if he should gain the whole world but suffer the loss of his soul?" (I.2.15). For Petrarch, this question was avoided by human beings because the soul is elevated, it is *supra* (above) each individual being. The resistance to this question illuminated the nature of humanity – "swollen with temporal self-importance and forgetful of the human condition" (I.2.16).

Petrarch distinguished leisure from entertainment and relaxation by describing two leisures. The first leisure is "relaxed and indolent [...] which weakens your minds"

(I.7.64). The second leisure “is strong and [...] religious and dutiful” (I.7. 64-65). He exhorted human beings to manage leisure wisely and take time for it, otherwise, one risks the human mind of becoming crowded with illusion and unsatisfied desires (I.7.65).

Petrarch described the first leisure as “evil under the sun” (II.I.82) because it caused sweat and worry. Petrarch’s second leisure is less like direct sunlight and more like a shade tree, a haven for recuperation, rebuilding, and transformation. Petrarch called for human beings to “make the best of your leisure time and you will find knowledge” (II.2.102). His requests – were a human being’s path toward salvation.

Leisure begins with contemplation and the movement away from daily tasks and busy-ness. Petrarch argued that a human being ought to know one’s self and that when one knows one’s self, the light illuminates the darkness, guiding one’s actions. Petrarch was referring to the knowing of one’s ground and the ability to take action in the world based upon that ground. As part of this self-guidance, human communication is encountered. Petrarch would say that one’s inward reflective action is helpful for the art of conversation because it presupposes that one already understands one’s standpoint, which is necessary for communication between persons. This eliminates impostors or the posturing that can cause disillusionment. Ultimately, this can guide and nourish public communication for the common good.

False humanity cripples human communication. Francis Bacon (1561-1626 C.E.) warned of such problems his Novum Organum. Bacon warned of Idols or illusions that were apparent in human understanding during the Renaissance period. He argued that these “Idols” have successfully blocked out a human being’s ability to encounter truth (I.xxxviii).

Francis Bacon described four Idols; Idols of the Tribe, Idols of the Cave, Idols of the Market-place, and Idols of the Theatre (I.xxxix). An understanding of these Idols is helpful to the understanding of a moral crisis as a communication eclipse. The “Idols of the Tribe” refer to the human mind serving as a false mirror that distorts and discolors information by importing its own nature to the information (I.xli). This can be seen in the narcissist, focused on the present and unable to see the past or future, which distorts perception and understanding. “Idols of the Cave” represent the individual as a human being focused only on one’s self instead of the common world – again, like the narcissist, an individual limited by one’s own pursuit. “Idols of the Market-place” have to do with the empty meaning in words themselves. “Idols of the Theatre,” describe a misunderstanding of philosophical grounding based upon errors in dogma (I. xliv). Bacon warned of these idols as deceivers to humanity that will alter the horizon in which one is situated. This is a falseness that appears unfalse yet regenerates the moral crisis. Like the uncertainties of the hat rack that may distort or impair one’s ability to see reality-as-it-really-is, the falseness of these Idols can misguide the actions of human beings whom may never perceive their fate. Reasoning and human discourse is distorted when impacted by Bacon’s Idols. Therefore, a moral crisis encounters these Idols or their manifestation as narcissism and “existential homelessness” (Arnett 229).

Petrarch and Bacon were inspired by Aristotle, Seneca, and Aquinas, as they foresaw a mass exodus from leisure and attempted to call back human beings to what they saw as the right path. The divergence pointed to by Petrarch was only the beginning. The Enlightenment period, while ushering in the Modern Era, saw the mass exodus explode in response to the new age of science, technology, and reason.

Enlightenment Era

The dialectical tension between leisure as a commodity and philosophical leisure increased during the Enlightenment era. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 C.E.) was asked the question, “What is the Enlightenment?” His response came in the form of an essay titled, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” Kant argued that the newly found freedoms of science came with strings of responsibility for human beings. He suggested that the “enlightenment is the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority” (Kant, Works 17). Minority, for Kant, is the “inability to make use of one’s own understanding without direction from another” (17). This minority is self-incurred, meaning that human beings were lazy as a result of their enlightenment or new understanding of science and progress. He argued that the responsibility should accompany this new freedom. Kant argued that human beings did not accept the new responsibility but did accept the new freedom (18).

The rejection of responsibility is a paradox of leisure. Enlightenment thinkers could not have been enlightened without leisure. As a result of the enlightenment, leisure was obscured or eclipsed behind false ideas of rest, relaxation, and entertainment. Human beings became lazy (Kant, Works 17). This is consistent with Rousseau’s (1712-1778 C.E.) ideas on leisure in which he equated luxury with leisure. Rousseau critiqued luxury as the activity of human beings who are greedy for their own comforts (151). Rousseau argued that accumulation of luxury turned human beings into “impostors” (151) as luxury “impoverishes everyone else and sooner or later depopulates the state” (151). The excess of luxury creates imposters that kill the individual and can destroy the populus through idleness of luxury.

Immanuel Kant addressed the idea of idleness in his Lectures on Ethics. He argued that we feel lifeless when we engage in idleness. He said that in idleness we can feel fleetingly happy, but that happiness is short-term (160). He distinguished between idleness and rest. Rest comes after a busy day, an interruption that can restore a mind and body (161). These understandings represent Kant's pietist upbringing. Kant's focus on active work and contribution to society was primary in his approach to life (Strathern, Kant 11). Kant believed idleness to be contrary to work. At one point in his lectures, Kant reduced idleness to that of laziness (Ethics 161). He discussed occupations as being either work or play (neither being linked to idleness). Work has a purpose and play is for its own sake (161). Kant's approach to idleness suggested that idleness is not physically or spiritually productive.

Immanuel Kant engaged an idea of leisure contrary to Aristotle's representation of leisure. Kant equated leisure with luxury. He suggested leisure can only be obtained by those who have first met their necessities and those who have enough left over for things they do not need (174). In a similar fashion as Veblen, although with less sarcasm, Kant argued, "Man [Woman] becomes dependent upon a multitude of pseudo-necessities; a time comes when he [she] can no longer procure these for himself [herself], and he [she] becomes miserable, even to the length of taking his [her] life" (173). Kant suggested that having leisure or luxury is mere idleness, and is sure physical or spiritual death for those who are addicted to leisure. If one does not become addicted to leisure, then leisure can be good or restful. At the least, leisure will not have such a negative impact to one's life. For Kant, an obsession for luxury is an infringement upon one's

morality (175). The danger that Kant focused upon suggested a certain moral, spiritual death of any human being who has too much luxury or leisure.

Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832 C.E.) utilitarian philosophy was a test of the "value of acts, and [...] that acts are to be judged by their consequences – happiness or unhappiness" (LaFleur xi). Bentham placed a value judgment on consequences (the end), rather than the act itself. For Bentham, to be involved in busy-ness would be productive. Bentham would be unable to quantify leisure and therefore would be tempted to equate leisure with idleness.

Idle hands have been associated with the devil's workshop. This is represented in the concern that if we do not keep our children busy, that they may succumb to bad influences (Werner 209). The argument here is that "having a vocation [...] leads to more fulfilling development of one's social, moral, ethical, and spiritual being" (Werner 211). Idleness is more a symptom of an aleisure life. This argument presupposes that leisure is one way of finding a vocation, which is devoid of bad influences. Philosophical leisure is not offered here as an absolute remedy for the communication eclipse, rather it is offered as one way to approach living that is revealed in and through communicative praxis.

Enlightenment philosophers associated leisure with the attainment of happiness, which in the long-run sequesters leisure from a contemplative activity (Mill, Political Economy 758). John Stuart Mill's (1806-1873 C.E.) Autobiography recounted his unhappiness with a pure utilitarian framework that ultimately caused a divide (and a breakdown) from his father's pure utilitarian perspective. Recalling his nervous breakdown early in his life, Mill may have been on the right track about removing oneself

from busy-ness. The rhetoric of leisure continued to shape the growth of the marketplace and capitalism.

In the achievement of wealth, Adam Smith (1723-1790 C.E.) asked the question whether or not “the nation will be better or worse supplied with all the necessaries and conveniences for which it has occasion” (Smith 1:1). Smith posited that man/woman should not only earn what he/she needs but that if he/she wants to raise a family he/she should earn a bit more beyond the necessity (1:76). In Smith’s critique of this over-consumption he admitted that the key for seeking a standard of living above natural subsistence, to most men/women, was not for ‘wealth’ but for the approval of others, as this was a sign of social status (50-52). This is similar to the conspicuous consumption and pecuniary emulation which led to an inclusion and exclusion of classes. If you can afford it, you are included – if you cannot afford it, you are excluded. This appearance of wealth and inclusion did little to contribute to true happiness because people were never satisfied (Stabile 686).

Adam Smith’s disdain for inclusion and exclusion outlined a theory of consumption in which to address humans propensity for excessive spending and luxury. Smith’s theory of consumption suggested that every member of society should earn at least a subsistence wage, which is defined through the specific venues. Smith’s theory also supported the idea that the desire to emulate or ‘keep up with the Jones’ was a healthy attitude which inspired workers to produce. This would maintain the natural circulation of money in the marketplace (Stabile 687). Smith believed in moderation, taxes on luxuries, and improving the work environment for man/woman. His writing reflected a concern for social values (687). While Smith did not approve of

excessiveness in leisure/luxury activities, he did endorse the ability for a man/woman to provide more than needed for his/her family so that one could engage in status-related activities. Smith acknowledged that some people had more luxuries or leisure than others but he did not approve of a lifestyle that endorsed this kind of conspicuous consumption.

The issue of people who did/did not engage leisure emerged during this Enlightenment period. Inclusion and exclusion can be represented by productive consumption and unproductive consumption. Productive consumption is a production that produces capital; unproductive consumption does not produce capital and becomes wasteful (Marx 1045; Rouner 46). Privileging the productive worker also identifies a class orientation of people who do not consume to reproduce but are wasteful and consume to consume. By the end of the Enlightenment period the marketplace began to manipulate the idea of leisure away from a philosophical, contemplative engagement. This digression impacted human communication in a way that would lead to a degeneration of the art of conversation. This degeneration becomes manifest more clearly in the Modern World.

Modern Era

The modern era witnessed a rapid growth of leisure activities embedded through progress and technological advancements. In Thorstein Veblen's (1857-1929 C.E.) Theory of the Leisure Class, he distinguished between "those activities and moods that are productive and useful and those that are ostentatious and honorific" (xiii). He suggested that to a particular class of people, work "became irksome because of indignity imbued to it; it had not become undignified because it was irksome" (xii). Veblen critiqued a class of people he defined as the "leisure class" (21). He said these people

were wasteful and flaunt their needless activity as work but it is really a waste of time and things. One of the primary metaphors Veblen developed was that of “conspicuous consumption” (42). The leisure class engaged in leisure for the sake of engaging in leisure, so that others ut *videant* (see) the engagement of leisure (posturing). He posited that this conspicuous consumption is a form of class superiority and exempts a class of people from menial tasks (42). Veblen also argued that labor actually became dishonorable (42). He critiqued this approach to life as being invidious and potentially leading to dissent in other classes (44).

Thorstein Veblen’s understanding of leisure was associated with an elitism that included a particular class of people who were less connected to the biological function of work or people who needed to work for a living. This inclusion led to the immediate exclusion of people who were not in the elite class. Veblen’s scorn for luxuries suggested excessive consumption was simply wasteful (Stabile 685).

“Pecuniary emulation” was another pitfall Veblen identified in his critique of the leisure class (33). The leisure class developed as a result of the growth of private ownership, which led to an attitude of ‘keeping up with the Jones’s’ and only fueled the disconnect between those included in the leisure class and those excluded from the leisure class (33). Inclusion into the leisure class depended upon pecuniary privilege. To be selected for this class would have been an honor but once initiated into it, one needed to continue the pretense of flaunting money by spending just to spend, and to spend more than anyone else was spending. Being a member of the leisure class required conspicuous consumption and open only to those who had the pecuniary instruments to

play. Consistent with Veblen, theistic scholars had the same critique of engagement of leisure.

Josef Pieper (1904-1997 C.E.), a Medieval scholar, grounded his work in Aristotle and Aquinas. Pieper argued that philosophers contemplate theory divorced from the constraints of daily life. He argued that theory “can only be preserved and realized within the sphere of leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is free because of its relation to worship and to the *cultus* (cultivation of the mind/soul) (Leisure 18). The first step to ‘doing’ leisure occurs when deep contemplative thought is removed from constraints inherent in daily life. Pieper posited that leisure is “a mental and spiritual attitude” (40). Leisure is not simply the result of external factors, such as spare time, a holiday weekend, or a vacation (40).

Simply put, leisure for Josef Pieper is “an attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul” (Leisure 40). This aspect of leisure is developed in the private sphere. He warned that if one remains preoccupied within his/her worldly realm, his/her true inner self which is not bound or limited by worldly needs will cease to exist – extinguishing itself through works, which are tasks married to the material realm.

Josef Pieper, writing in the United States during the post-World War II era, claimed that most people did not want to hear about the notion of leisure. He suggested “our hands are full and there is work for all. And surely, until our task is done and our house is built, the only thing that matters is to strain every nerve” (Leisure 19-20). Pieper was concerned that this preoccupation with work will be the destruction of humanity as it will dismantle all that it builds. Human beings cannot engage in the toil of daily existence without taking care of the soul through the contemplative nature of leisure.

Pieper would say there needs to be *plus studii ponendum est in curis animae quam in curis corporis. Nam anima nostra est aeterna; sed corpus nostrum non* (more study being put into the care of the soul than in the care of the body).

Josef Pieper was greatly influenced by Aristotle. The Aristotelian notion of leisure signifies a distinction between *artes liberales* (the liberal arts) and *artes serviles* (servile work) (Pieper, Leisure 21). These two notions are related in that we see the liberal arts are connected to the notion of knowing for its own sake and the servile arts connect knowledge to have a utility outside of itself (21). *Artes liberales* (liberal arts) add value to one's inner existence. If the inner existence is not cultivated there will be nothing left for the outer existence. This outer existence is where the art of conversation happens between human beings. The cultivation of the inner existence can help to cultivate the art of conversation. Cultivation of inner existence happens through silence and contemplation.

Josef Pieper suggested that leisure is a form of silence "the apprehension of reality [...] a receptive attitude [...] a contemplative attitude [...] steeping oneself in the whole of creation" (41). Pieper did not mean *tacitus* (silence) in the sense of quiet but in *silentium* (silence) in the sense of receptiveness, reflectiveness, or contemplative listening with a power to answer the reality of the world (41). *Silentium* (silence) is a part of leisure, as leisure is contemplative. In today's vernacular, *silentium* (silence) would imply a quietness or inward mentality, but the Latin means a state of preparedness for something and what we do to facilitate that state. This is the opposite of work, as work is not contemplative but active and task oriented. *Silentium* (silence) includes foreground and background in the engagement of differing aspects of a phenomenological

experience. Physical action in leisure occurs only as a by-product. In busy-ness the driving force is of attack without contemplation. In philosophical leisure, contemplation is the driving force or more aptly, the foreground.

Philosophical leisure can be considered an attitude of contemplative celebration. Pieper argued that “celebration” is the very center of what leisure really means (Leisure 42). He said “leisure draws its vitality from affirmation [...] it is not the same as non-activity, nor is it identical with tranquility” (42). Rather, leisure as a celebration “affirm[s] the basic meaningfulness of the universe and a sense of oneness with it” (43). This celebration exhibits one’s intensity of and for life.

Philosophical leisure is not a social function, a break in one’s workday, a coffee break, or a nap. These things are a part of a chain of utilitarian functions and cannot refresh one’s Being. However, philosophical leisure is a much different matter, it is no longer on the same plane or in the same realm. “Leisure [...] is of a higher order than the *vita active*” (Pieper, Leisure 43). The whole point of leisure is not to give human beings a coffee break but to help human beings grasp the realization of “his [her] full potentialities as an entity meant to reach wholeness” (44). Wholeness is what man/woman really strives for and “is one of the fundamental powers of the human soul” (44). In leisure, not exclusively but always, “truly human values are saved and preserved” (44). From the theistic perspective, a human being’s soul is saved not through work but in leisure.

Josef Pieper situated leisure in the public and the private realms. The private realm reflects the contemplative action taken by the intellectual worker and the public realm reflects where the individual demonstrates a value to the common good where one

engages busy-ness. The by-product of the contemplative act demonstrates a value to the common good, not intentionally, but organically. Therefore, leisure begins in the private realm and as a by-product enables an action for the common good.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975 C.E.) agreed the action of leisure occurs in both the private and the public realms. Her writings addressed the realms of the public, the private, and the social. For her, the public is for the *vita active* (active life), or “a life devoted to public – political matters” (Arendt 12). She posited that the public is an “active engagement of things in the world” (14). The private realm, the *vita-contemplativa* (contemplative life), is engaged when “freedom from the necessities of life and compulsion by others” are not encountered (14). Arendt found value with both spheres but considered the significance of the private sphere. She argued:

The primacy of contemplation over activity rests on the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth, the physical *kosmos*, which swings in itself in changeless eternity without any interference or assistance from outside. (Arendt 15)

Arendt clarified that the “very discovery of contemplation as a human faculty” is different from the Socratic school of thought and reasoning (16). She argued that the public and private must “lie in an all together a different aspect of the human condition, whose diversity is not exhausted in the various articulations of the *vita active* [active life] and we may suspect, would not be exhausted” (16).

Hannah Arendt differentiates between Labour, Work, and Action. First, Arendt described Labour as referring to the basic biological condition. For example, to breathe is to do labour. Second, for Arendt, Work refers to worldliness – how we negotiate

things. For example, what we do to earn a living is how we negotiate through the world. Third, Arendt's Action considers how we live with others (Arendt 16). For example, our actions toward others guided by free will demonstrate how we live with others. Arendt's concern was one's connection with the world. These metaphors are connected to Pieper's work – leisure is contemplative (private), while creating a by-product of something for the common good (public).

Hannah Arendt's biological understanding of labour comes with a warning. One can survive without work and action, remaining a biological organism, but one would not really be engaged and would be dead to the world (Arendt 176). In this case, the sole concept of Labour is not good for the human condition. Labour, without Action and Work is chaotic. Arendt sees the social exemplified in leisure, which is *muertae homo faber* (the death of the human condition). Therefore, Arendt would see the reference to leisure today as being merely relaxation and engagement in the social, reduced to a biological organism, without work or action. Relaxation would be Arendt's social, which is dangerous because there is no transformation extended to the individual or the common good. Arendt, writing in the middle of the 20th century, had philosophical insight to the postmodern condition of human communication.

Postmodern Era

The postmodern era is a historical time period that follows the modern era and represents different living in the world. Our postmodern understanding of 'work' covers all of human activity, eradicating the notion for leisure leading man/woman away from his/her contemplative mind (Pieper, Leisure 22). In postmodernity many people 'attack' life but do not really think about what it means to 'do' leisure, which first requires a

mindful action and then contemplation, which is listening to *res* or *rei* (the essence of things) (26). Today, this contemplative approach to *res* (things) is often forgotten. This can be found in some of the popular self-help books for today's readers. Many of these books imply that if you attack any situation you encounter, whether work, leisure, or even sleeping, that you should "whip" (Salmansohn 4) the situation to work for your benefit. This self-help advice also advocates that a recess from work will help the overall work process, yet this recess is merely changing a task, not engaging contemplation (220). Leisure, or not work, for some self-help advocates, equates laughing, calling friend, or reading a funny book (220). A postmodern idea of leisure is not the philosophical leisure that Aristotle suggested. Today's understanding of leisure is mere idleness or relaxation, neither of which cultivates the *anima* (soul).

Some self-help books advocate teaching our children about leisure as "spend[ing] their out-of-school time inventively, enjoyably, and wisely" but then "parents must seize the opportunity to help their children choose something where they can become really good" (Bergstrom 14). In this case, an outcome driven activity is selected for the child, which prohibits contemplative action. As an example, in the author's choice to practice music, she contemplates first, the idea of practice. She does not practice for a desired outcome primarily. She practices for the play of the notes and the interaction between the notes in a piece of music. In philosophical leisure the outcome must be a by-product not the intent.

A. Bartlett Giamatti, Renaissance scholar and former President of Yale University, admits to being driven by leisure when he served as the Commissioner of Major League baseball (Giamatti 113). Before his death in 1989, he argued that leisure is

important and he advocated a return to the Aristotelian form. However, he failed to see the transforming power of leisure. Giamatti believed the transformation from a leisure activity to be temporal, like a coffee break at work, a break from toil, an intermission of sorts. He suggested that leisure, and for him sports were his leisure, “creat[ed] a reservoir of transformation to which we can return when we are free to do so” (15). While Giamatti felt a shift in his mood, leisure did not truly transform him.

The absence of leisure today is cloaked in a concern over the technological saturation in our society. Neil Postman warned of the advent of technology. Like a thief in the night, technology has robbed our minds of the ability to think critically and make good decisions (Postman 27). Postman claimed there is nothing wrong with entertainment or relaxation. However, when human beings believe entertainment or relaxation is more than it is, they are misguided and deceived. This impedes one’s ability to effectively communicate with others. The inability to make good decisions is a result of the lack of good information derived through the media (78). Postman claimed the over-saturation of media and technology, the over production of information, and the questionable quality of information available to the Western world, has rendered human beings at a disadvantage in their ability to make good decisions and to communicate with others (28).

One example Neil Postman provided to support his argument is the pollution of electronic public communication. The surrounding landscape of pleasure oriented communication, public discourse has questionable rationality (Postman 29). He argued that today public discourse has great emotional power, which has limited benefits for the human community. A total reliance upon the television is deceptive because it is

orchestrated to shape one's thoughts and directs a person to take a preferred action. Like leisure, misconstrued as relaxation or entertainment, complete reliance on technology provides an illusion that one can think for one's self. The problem that Postman was most concerned about was the idea that human beings think they 'know' something, when they actually 'know' only what they are told (27). This renders decision-making and most public discourse at risk of degenerating into bad decisions and small talk. Other contemporary media scholars, such as Richard Winter, have similar concerns.

Richard Winter suggested that through over indulgences of entertainment, human beings have acquired a "deadness of soul" (73). His work suggests that because human beings engage entertainment rather than traditional leisure, they have become bored. Winter argues for a closer examination of the religious quality of leisure as a way to cultivate humanness and ultimately enable a better human condition (77). Winter argues that boredom impairs human communication as well. Thus, if one cultivates a religious leisure, the communicative crisis of leisure can be repaired (142).

This section reviewed leisure through a variety of philosophers from the Western perspective, representing a diachronic engagement of the rhetoric of leisure. The next section discusses the emergence of the *otium obscurum* (eclipse of leisure) and implications for human communication and the art of conversation.

The Eclipse of Philosophical Leisure in Postmodernity

The eclipse of leisure in Postmodernity frames the communicative problem facing human beings today. This section situates perspectives of leisure through the ideas of philosophers in writing in Postmodernity.

The modern era is generally agreed to have commenced with Enlightenment thought. The early modern time period refers to the “broad period in history that encompasses the rise of capitalism, science, and technology” (Sim 319). In the eighteenth century, modernity was defined in opposition to a “traditional way of life,” (320) and opposed arbitrary authority of rule and religious dogma. The Enlightenment opened the path to modernization and by the nineteenth century, change, transformation, and upheaval became the social norm (320). The doctrine of progress (which suggested a linear movement toward a better end) industrial capitalism, and communism, came to represent the modern historical time period (320).

John Herman Randall argued that the “idea of progress” came from a “spread of reason and science among individual men [women] that the great apostles of the Enlightenment hoped to bring about the ideal society of [hu]mankind” (381). The metaphor of progress is more than an idea. Rather, according to Randall, the Enlightenment was a “faith” in which human beings held destiny in their own hands and erased what they thought was the “foolish errors” of the past – referring to religion (381).

Critics of progress, such as Christopher Lasch, argue it falsely provides the expectation of the indefinite, or an open-ended improvement that can only happen through human doing (Lasch, True 48). Progress does not promise an ideal society, rather it rests on accumulation, never-ending achievements, self-perpetuating inquiry, and certainties of scientific theory (48). Progress provides a society based on science and unending expansion of intellectual horizons, seemingly reaching toward an unrealistic immortality (48).

The idea of progress is a “superstition” that has lost its grip on society (Lasch, True 41). The recognition of a loss of progress is a collapse of utopia – leaving people to scramble for some form of hope – yet no matter where they reach the illusion penetrates their reality (41). Lasch discussed the idea of progress as a secular religion, referring to progress as “a working faith of our civilization” (Dawson 1929 in Lasch, True 43). Although progress did not originate in Christian eschatology, nevertheless, Lasch posited that the idea of progress implies “the promise of steady improvement with no foreseeable ending at all” (47).

The gateway year to the postmodern era, 1968, saw the assassination of Martin Luther King, Robert F. Kennedy, student revolts, Watergate, and Vietnam, which seemed to fracture the moral ground of America and the Western world. Benhabib describes human communication in the postmodern era as having a “fractured spirit” (1). This revised social reality does not destroy normative bases of human existence but it does mean that human normative experiences are less stable (Benhabib 209). This instability, whether real, exaggerated, or imagined, created a “mood of pessimism” and a loss of faith in world leaders (Lasch, Narcissism xii). Distrust of the powerful elite led to a new independence for human beings, but the capacity for individuals to help themselves was crippled (xv). Human beings desperately seek to find the meaning of life only to find they are unable to trust the future or the past as a guiding framework for action/communication in a postmodern age.

Jean Francois Lyotard defined ‘modern’ as “any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative” (xxiii). Postmodernity is a time after the modern era that is disenchanted with

modernist thought (Benhabib 68). Lyotard pointed to this myth of modernity as he saw temporal aspects of discourse replacing the permanent institutions of professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family, and political affairs. Lyotard suggested that the institutions of the Western world that seemed all too immovable had been replaced with uncertainty and change (66). Rorty concurred with Lyotard in the general sense that the metanarratives of the 19th and 20th centuries had changed in the postmodern age (Rorty, Mirror 44).

Cultural and political ideals of the “metanarratives of liberal democracies” are questioned in the postmodern age (Rorty, Mirror 44). Postmodern thought is embedded with skepticism and the idea that things are not what they seem to be. The historical notion of progress is an illusion and there is no metanarrative of history on which human beings can rely (Benhabib 69). This illusion may cause a fractured moral spirit because it shatters the very ground upon which human beings stand.

The postmodern era is not the first time we see a critique of progress. Rousseau, in the eighteenth century, responded to the rise of empiricism/modernity through his claim that science would be the ruin of mankind, that progress was an illusion, and the development of modern culture did not make human beings more happy or virtuous (25).

Rousseau argued:

[T]he progress of the human species removes man [woman] constantly farther and farther from his [her] primitive state; the more we acquire new knowledge, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all; and in a sense it is through studying man

[woman] that we have rendered ourselves incapable of knowing him [her].

(67)

Rousseau believed human beings are naturally good but have become wicked, melancholy, and rely too much on experiences, which has corrupted the essence of humanity (147). This dependence on sense experience or the quest to understand humans from ‘outside’ one’s personhood is the central point for Rousseau. He is cautious about external *foci* as the mechanism keeping human beings from true contemplation and understanding.

Philosophical leisure can nourish the phenomenological soul and yield hermeneutic depth into communication *inter homines* (between human beings). However, the way leisure is thought about today can impede this nourishment and depth, resulting in an impaired human communicative environment. This impediment is described in many different ways. According to Richard Butsch, leisure activities “have become commercialized” (3). Butsch warns that there are no theoretical frameworks from which to comprehend commercialized leisure, its development, and its implications (6; Marrus 9). Butsch calls communication scholars to look for ways to “encourage dialogue [...and] rethink their theoretical concepts” (6). Unreflective leisure practices have revealed social and communicative complexities. Power imbalances and issues of social and political inclusion and exclusion have dramatically impacted human communication. The study of leisure and its impact to the human condition is lacking and needs to be addressed (7).

One reason why leisure has been often ignored by contemporary scholars is that some people do not see leisure as a legitimate topic of inquiry (Marrus 1). The

apprehension about leisure may be linked to its higher, or more important, purpose in life (3). The emergence of leisure as a result of free thinking and cultural change invites an understanding how leisure can create a harried class of people. A human being's wish to be free from authority moves one's actions into the public eye, distorting motives, behaviors, and expression. Leisure is no longer considered from a theistic point of view – rather, leisure has become a secular leisure activity (50).

The ignorance of philosophical leisure has produced a harried leisure class (Linder 46). Approaching leisure without contemplative reflective engagement and instead attacking it as strenuous activity, can only make the human body fatigued and in need of rest. An interruption produces nothing other than an unsatisfying desire seeking more rest (46).

George Cutten critiques the leisure class and suggested that the whole idea of doing leisure is to show that you are doing leisure (5). Any activity that is engaged for the appearance of itself is destined to be unproductive and distorts the reality of an experience or a life. Today there is a blurring of leisure, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. Recreation, relaxation, and entertainment are mere interruptions in a busy life. Leisure, however, is not an interruption but rather a structured engagement with long-term effects, producing a transformation at some point, not intended to produce, but nevertheless, a transformation organically occurs. The problem with recreation, relaxation, or entertainment is that the activity is driven by an appearance or an end rather than for the activity itself.

The idea that some people are excluded from leisure is a result of over-rapid changes, which grew into an economic pessimism (Keynes 385). Because of this rapid

improvement of the standard of living, there has developed a schism between people who have leisure and people who do not have leisure. Rapid technological changes have also contributed this schism (385). In his prediction for the future salvation of the marketplace, Keynes argues that the West can solve the economic problem but that no country and no people will be able to look forward to the age of leisure without an abundance of dread (368). His inclusion and exclusion into the leisure class is articulated through the language of the ordinary people and the language of the wealthy people. Keynes argues that the accumulation of wealth will one day be no longer a social advantage and that the lifestyle of the ordinary will be of a better status than wealth. Keynes argues that the love of money will be negated and seen as disgusting (369). Keynes assertions that the meek shall inherit the earth never fully reveal how his will happen. Keynes seems threatened by this fast paced economy and disillusioned by the ordinary versus the wealthy. He supports a way to balance a system that leaves some people disconnected from the grand necessities of life.

Concepts of inclusion and exclusion in the leisure class indicate there is something or someplace that separates people. In John Galbraith's The Affluent Society, he notes that production should serve a purpose for everyone, not be conspicuous for only some (1). Galbraith argues that there really is enough to go around and we need to considerably redistribute what we have. He finds more that society is not balanced, that there is opulent supply for some and scarcity for others (251). Galbraith's entire treatise of affluence recognizes the inclusion versus exclusion of the leisure class and calls for an elimination of this separation because the West really does have the means to redistribute. Although his ideas are universal and grandiose, Galbraith spends less time discerning

what social problems might arise if this redistribution actually does happen, than once it does happen, the balance will need to be maintained. The tension between inclusion and exclusion of a leisure class provides ground for the eclipse of communication.

Many of the marketplace representations of exclusion and inclusion of leisure are simply the ability to buy leisure time or activities. This philosophy promotes a hedonistic culture for the people who can afford it but not for everyone. Some people will be left behind. This is not the idea that leisure represented to Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, and other classical thinkers. While we can deconstruct Aristotle's natural hierarchy to suggest that in his society there were still those included and those excluded, the fact remains that for Aristotle the emphasis on leisure was not the fact that one could buy it, flaunt it, and abuse it, but that one could engage in contemplative thought which will lead to a better social action. While slaves may not (and we do not know for sure) have had access to leisure, Aristotle lived life through contemplation. Certainly his slaves might have seen the value in this way of life. Nevertheless, inclusion and exclusion of a leisure class seems to have existed in all periods of thought, throughout the marketplace of transactions. This inclusion and exclusion of a leisure class invites the rhetorical eclipse of leisure and has shaped how leisure is defined today.

After examining leisure diachronically, this study suggests leisure has had many faces and applications throughout the Western world. Certain themes erupt to suggest that leisure is not toil yet it is a kind of work that is intellectual and physical. Leisure is connected to philosophical thought (Walker 63). Leisure is connected to idleness but also contrasted with busy-ness. Finally, there are implicit and explicit class implications connected to leisure which divides people by social and economic lines.

An implication of philosophical leisure to the communication eclipse is that leisure can help to nourish the ground of conversation by nourishing the soul of humanity (Ibrahim 9). People contribute to conversation and have the responsibility to ensure it remains alive and growing. If people do not meet this responsibility, Rorty warns that a degeneration of the art of conversation will occur. This would render the state of human communication in disrepair. On the other hand, if human beings nourish their soul by rediscovering philosophical leisure, they have already helped to shape the art of conversation. This generation of conversation is a by-product of the philosophical engagement of leisure. Like Richard Rorty's edifying philosophy, engaging leisure for a specific purpose of achievement is like engaging an epistemological inquiry, a search for an objective truth. A philosophical engagement of leisure is more like engaging life hermeneutically, deconstructing and reconstructing until growth happens. Philosophical leisure warns against the rhetorical eclipse of leisure and allows for nourishment of the ground upon which conversation can flourish.

Conclusion

Examining perspectives on leisure throughout the history of the Western world is helpful to understanding the shifting emergences of leisure. Historical periods provide multiple perspectives and inform how we understand leisure today. Leisure has experienced a rhetorical shift or eclipse from original interpretations. This shift may be considered as inevitable because of the historical unfolding of our modern and postmodern world. Nevertheless, we can invite this approach to communication back into humanity as one remedy to the crisis of human communication. Philosophical leisure can enrich human interaction. An enriched experience is an aesthetic experience.

To situate philosophical leisure as communicative praxis, this study considers the aesthetics of philosophical leisure. Chapter four considers how the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure can provide the content for contributing to idea-laden conversation. Through a consideration of the over-abundance of phatic communication that limits ongoing idea-laden conversation, this chapter seeks a recuperative action for ailing human communication. The works of Richard Rorty's hermeneutics, Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetic rhetorical theory, Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of play, and Søren Kierkegaard's aesthetical realm guide this discussion.

Chapter 4

Otium: Fundus Colloquii

(Leisure: Foundation for Conversation)

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him [her]; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself [herself] against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (Burke, Philosophy 110-111)

For Kenneth Burke, human communication is an unending or “interminable” conversation (111). All of human communication occurs in the middle of a larger, ongoing conversation. To be able to catch the tenor and proceed as a participant, one must restrain from immediate interaction and listen/reflect upon what one hears. As one listens, one is also considering and synthesizing the possibilities of engagement. Calvin Schrag calls this “new humanism” (Praxis 197) in communicative praxis. To ethically engage others, one must consider a fitting response; this required responsiveness is what

makes up our moral character and our moral selves. We are obliged to enter this conversation in a space of subjectivity (Schrag, *Praxis* 204). The rules of engagement for Schrag involve transversal rationality, where three co-efficients are always at play with each other, as one at a time emerges as the guidepost to human communication. Play is the action of leisure in human communication. The action of play is nourished by leisure as an edifying philosophy. This chapter first considers the state of human communication through the lens of “maladies of the soul” in a leisureless world (Kristeva 3). This discussion situates the problem of human communication inside the human being. Second, this author considers contributing to conversation through the works of Richard Rorty, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Calvin O. Schrag. Third, the significance of leisure to this ongoing conversation within humanity is developed by a renewal of human interest as recuperative to the maladies of the soul.

Maladies of the Soul

Julia Kristeva opens the conversation with her concern for the human condition. Her evaluation of the human condition is consistent with this author’s discussion of the communication eclipse. Kristeva offers another perspective to this problem in human communication.

“Maladies of the soul” are passions of the soul, that is, “sadness to joy and even delirium” (Kristeva 3). Concerned over the state of human communication as Christopher Lasch, Julia Kristeva also identifies the modern human being as a narcissist who is “stress-ridden and eager to achieve, to spend money, have fun, and die” (7). She argues that unreflective actions, or actions without contemplation, have an inherent futility and have replaced contemplative actions of the soul. Without contemplative

action, meaning is invaded by lustful pockets of illusion. The “culture of narcissism” (Lasch 10) and sense of “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential* 230) pervades human beings, as well as human communication in general.

Julia Kristeva calls for a nourishment of these maladies of the soul. These maladies thwart human communicative efforts and impede meaningful human communication. Together with Burke’s idea that life is an ongoing communicative event and that as human beings we are compelled to partake responsibly, Kristeva adds that we do this through cultivation of the soul (9). She calls for a revitalized grammar and rhetoric that will enrich those who “see” their condition. Kristeva argues that to nourish the soul is to find meaning (9-10). This author argues that philosophical leisure is a way to nourish the maladies of the soul.

Nourishment conversation is necessary for recuperative communication to engage ideas. The art of “philosophical conversation” is the ability to express the content of one’s ideas (Walker 34). Richard Rorty considers the significance of the art of conversation to human communication. Contributing to the conversation is an infinite exercise. Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work on play addresses Rorty exhorts. Mikhail Bakhtin’s aesthetic rhetorical theory (ART) is employed in Gadamer’s play and we can aesthetically ‘see’ how philosophical leisure can nourish human communication. Understanding how leisure can help to nourish conversational ground invites a regenerated perspective of the condition on human communication.

Phatic Communication

Kenneth Burke asserted that “only angels communicate absolutely” (Permanence xlix). Human communication depends upon “conditions of time and place” (Burke,

xlix). In a postmodern age the therapeutic culture of psychologism and the culture of narcissism (Lasch, Narcissism 33) shape human communication. Communication is often reduced to phatic encounters that are the primary genre of everyday human communication. Phatic communication is a concept that “surfaced in semantics, sociolinguistics, and general communication research” (Coupland, Coupland, and Robinson 207). Phaticity suggests that a “speaker’s relational goals supercede their commitment to factuality and instrumentality” (207). Phatic communication implies superficiality. In other words, phatic communication is driven by emotional tendencies and often contained within the boundaries of small talk. This exchange of small talk is superficial and outside the I-other relationship (Bakhtin, *Author* 125).

Phatic communication is a “type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words [... when people] aimlessly gossip” (Malinowski, *Problem* 315). Phatic communication includes greetings, sociabilities, and “purposeless expressions of preference or aversions, accounts of irrelevant happenings, [or] comments on what is perfectly obvious” (316). Phatic conversation is not always purposeless or aimless gossip. There is a functionality to phatic conversation, such as its use when we encounter others in the course of our daily existence. Functional phatic communication would be akin to Martin Buber’s I-It relationship. In the I-It encounter, one can only respond to the other “fictitiously on the personal level – responding only in his [her] own sphere” (Buber, I-Thou 117). We engage I-It encounters when we respond to the cashier at the grocery store or the toll taker when driving on a toll road. We engage in small talk conversation by utterances that would include, “Hello, how are you?” “It is a nice day

today, isn't it?" or simply, "Thank you and have a good day." This phatic genre of communication is necessary for one's negotiation in the world.

Gossip, as posited by B. Malinowski, is purposeless. However, Jorge Bergman identifies gossip as a genre of everyday communication (35). A communicative genre demonstrates uniformity and can project a next step in the communicative event (27). Gossip is chaotic and disruptive to social order (135). There are a variety of teleological considerations inherent in the practice of gossip. Gossip aims to control social construction, preserve social connections, provide management of information, and is a form of social indiscretion (140-149). These considerations of the function of gossip in human communication are viewed as negative or unethical behavior. In contrast to Malinowski's focus on the aimlessness of gossip, Bergman argues gossip does have an aim, albeit, negative and sometimes ruthless.

Bronislaw Malinowski argued that phatic conversation develops in a context similar how "savages" would use it (*Problem* 315). This study views phatic conversation as a place where "acknowledgement" occurs. Michael Hyde defines acknowledgement to be "communicative behavior that grants attention to others and thereby makes room for them in our lives" (Life 1). Acknowledgment is "a moral act" (9). Acknowledgement can be positive or negative. Positive acknowledgement makes people feel good because people believe they are worthy to receive the acknowledgment of another (Hyde, Life 1). Negative acknowledgment also creates a place for people to be noticed but does not make people feel good. To the contrary, negative acknowledgment can make people feel bad (2). Phatic conversation is a form of acknowledgment, positive or negative. Phaticity in

acknowledgment allows people a superficial connection between one person and another person.

Positive acknowledgment is a “life-giving gift” from one person to another person. Negative acknowledgment can be a “life-draining force” in another person’s life (Hyde, Life 2). The act of no acknowledgment is barren and cannot sustain life (2). The distinction between acknowledgment, positive or negative, and no acknowledgment is helpful to this discussion of phaticity. Phaticity can be either positive or negative acknowledgment.

Like the ontological and rhetorical experience of acknowledgment, phaticity can offer hope and creation (Hyde, Life 9). Acknowledgment announces one’s connection with other human beings. Likewise, phaticity can make the same announcement. An overabundance of phaticity can also be a detriment to human communication, like no acknowledgment. Phatic communication that becomes thoughtless, superficial, and habituated reminds human beings of their invisibility among fellow human beings.

Long term reliance on phatic communication has negative consequences for human communication. When ideas are not part of the conversation, the communicative event may cease. Once human beings begin to relax and believe conversation is only one thing, complacency sets in and the conversation becomes stagnant, settled, and taken for granted. Phatic conversation is ‘flat’ in contrast to natural conversation, which John Stewart notes is organic and responsive to the other (123). Good conversations are good because of the connection between ideas and human interest.

In this historical moment, phatic conversation follows Richard Rorty’s idea that most conversation does not continue because interactions are reduced to small talk.

People are complacent and there is little or no attempt to contribute to idea-laden conversation. Rorty would suggest that phatic communication cannot contribute substantively to conversation (Mirror 371). One's inability to contribute to conversation risks silencing idea-laden conversation. Silence is not bad; it can and does have a rhetorical significance in human communication. However, silence as a consequence of phatic conversation is not functional to the development of the ideas in human communication (Coupland, Coupland, and Robinson 211).

Richard Rorty's concern for phaticity is that it negates ideas in human conversation. John Laver found positive attributes of phatic communication or at least is not as suspicious of it as Rorty (Laver 189). Phaticity has been defined as "dull and pedestrian" (Leech 62), "empty" (Turner 212), and mere politeness (Aijmer 24). Phatic communication becomes problematic when it becomes the normal mode of communication. Phaticity in conversation "shows degrees of reticence or withheld commitment to openness, seriousness, and truth. Prototypically, phatic discourse may involve a suspension of commitment to a speaker's own factuality" (Coupland, Coupland, and Robinson 213). Divergent perspectives of phatic conversation suggest that phaticity has power to shape and shift human communication.

In contrast to phatic genre of communication, small talk has been linked to storytelling that provides information which aids in the development of rapport and credibility between human beings (Bauman and Briggs 306-307). In this case participants in small talk are "embodied conversational interface agents" (Bickmore and Cassell 1). Phaticity responds to a social need for a relationship that is biologically or

functionally necessary for existence. The function of small talk by these embodied interface agents then remains limited to “social and task-oriented” occasions (1).

Hans-Georg Gadamer lamented about phatic communication in “Hermeneutische Entwurf,” as “young people today grow up with very little confidence, without optimism, and without an unqualified potential for Hope” (qtd. in Grondin 287). This lack of hope is illuminated in the pervasiveness of phatic conversation.

Conversation is an art that is very difficult to initiate and continue (Wardhaugh 117). The difficulty is placed at the intersection of talking and acknowledging the other. Once this connection happens, the conversation will organically move. Once the conversation turns phatic, the conversation is at risk of its own demise (117). Human communication risks cessation when the communicative environment is missing human interest.

A conversation that is open and responsive to the element of human interest is a “perfectly tuned conversation” (Tannen 19). When phaticity is less apparent conversation comes together and settles into what participants perceive to be as a few “moments cut off from instrumental tasks” (Goffman 14). The ability for conversation to be distinct from instrumentality or functionality opens the communicative space for idea-laden conversation. The imbalance of phatic communication is not the only threat human communication. Self-talk can also hinder the regeneration of human communication.

Erving Goffman argued that conversation that does not allow co-reactive human connection is deemed unresponsive and considered “self-talk” (79-80). Self-talk as a melting pot of impulsive, vocalized actions is an appropriate description (120). Self-talk

happens when one person generates “full complement of two communication roles” (80). Some cultures have taboos against talking to one’s self, which can be seen as a perversion. Nevertheless, self-talk is not satisfactory because of the necessity to embed conversation with the other. The inability to be embedded in conversation with the other hinders the communicative situation and immobilizes any communicative possibility (84).

Phaticity in conversation or solitary utterances of self-talk in interaction limits the presence of the other. This degeneration exemplifies the contemporary state of human communication as a communication eclipse discussed in chapter one. The human communicative moral crisis is a crippling of authenticity in human communication where ‘false communication’ cripples public discourse. The crippling of communication between human beings is revealed in a lack of trust that pervades human communication.

Phatic Conversation and Moral Crisis

Phaticity is pervasive in human communication. Phaticity in conversation degenerates quality in communication. A consequence of phaticity is a communication eclipse between people. Phatic communication has contributed to the development of and continuance of the communication eclipse.

“Everyday conversations are pivotal to unfolding human relationships” (Step and Finucane 93). Human beings depend on conversation as a means of connecting with other human beings and developing of subjective “individual truths” (Change 27). Personal truths shape how we engage the other and are essential to the ongoing conversation.

During the middle of the modern era, language was considered “an organism which ‘grows’ or ‘evolves’ through definite stages and expresses the values or ‘spirit of the nation’ which speaks it” (P. Burke 2). In a postmodern world when change is constant and uncertainties flood the daily lives of human beings, communication is the bridge that keeps human beings connected to each other. Without an emphasis on human interest, crisis advances and resistance is foregrounded in human communication (Change 28).

Ronald C. Arnett’s announcement of “existential homelessness” (*Existential* 229) suggests a lack of human interest. Arnett argues that trust is a much needed foundation for human communication. This mistrust and uncertainty has decreased the opportunity for one human being to invite another human being into a communicative interaction (Arnett, *Existential* 230). A common center can invite the opening to a conversation but the lack of accessibility can impede a human being’s ability to participate or encounter conversation (232).

Mistrust emerges when the loss of a common center cultivates a “haven for emotivism” (Lasch, Narcissism 27) and a “survival impulse” (Arnett, *Existential* 232). Once human beings encounter this decline in conversation, a directionless preference inhibits communication (233). Therefore, if a human being approaches life through emotivism and a survival impulse, the ability to turn toward the other in conversation is obscured because the phenomenological focus of attention is on the self rather than on the other or ideas. The condition of existential homelessness propagates a risk in the growth of conversation because one might get hurt or be offended. This risk fuels the cycle of

distrust and uncertainty between human beings. This continuance of distrust and uncertainty leaves human beings conversationally impotent (Wardbaugh 3).

Narcissism, “a preoccupation with survival in the present” (Arnett, *Existential* 234), also does not invite potential conversation because the communicator is more concerned with his or her present place than with the other or the idea. When this narrow direction occurs “the common center for conversation ceases” (234). Being open to the other perspectives, while not being in agreement with them requires trust between participants. The lack of trust obscures the other perspective, reinforces narcissism, and conversation ceases. The cessation of conversation impedes any rhetorical situation and fuels the human communicative moral crisis.

Conversation that relies on phaticity is a consequence of “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential* 229) and a culture of narcissism (Lasch, Narcissism 27). The distrust, uncertainty, and lack of desire to acknowledge the other prohibits conversation from regenerating in a fertile playground of ideas. Phatic conversation does not contain or invite ground to sustain a conversation. Functional, superficial, and sometimes unnecessary, the conversation is no longer a potentiality of ideas and cannot harbor connections between human beings. Developing content and ideas for conversation through leisure can provide the common ground necessary for enriched idea-laden conversation. The next section explores how philosophical leisure enables one to contribute to conversation.

Contributing to Conversation

Scholars writing in the modern era posited an epistemological approach to life. This approach had preset terms or boundaries that served as guideposts. The teleological

consideration of an epistemological framework was consistent with the modern metaphor of progress. Rorty argued that this epistemological approach is no longer adequate in a postmodern age. Rather, he considered an approach to life through an edifying philosophy that does not preset terms or outcomes, but is open to growth and potentiality in human communication. This openness enables one to contribute to the conversation through a textured expression of ideas.

Edifying Philosophy

Richard Rorty claimed there is “pure” and “impure” philosophy of language (Mirror 257). A pure philosophy of language considers problems in meaning and reference but attempts to preserve the truth, meaning, necessity, and name, as fitting together. There is no epistemological aspect to pure philosophy. Epistemology leads to an impure philosophy of language because it attempts to provide a permanent ahistorical framework for inquiry as a theory of knowledge (257). Rorty argues that an impure philosophy of language does not allow for a person to play with intuitive meaning (257). Impure philosophy of language impedes or ends the conversation because it offers no connection between human beings. An impure philosophy does not allow or provide a way for the conversation to be on-going. The art of conversation, for Rorty, would engage pure philosophy of language which implicitly allows continuation of the conversation. There is a distinct divergence in Rorty’s philosophy between hermeneutics and epistemology. Rorty’s idea of hermeneutics:

[S]ees the relations between various discourses as those of strands in a

possible conversation, a conversation which presupposes no disciplinary matrix which unites the speakers, but where hope of agreement is never lost so long as the conversation lasts. (318)

Epistemology, from Rorty's perspective:

[s]ees the hope of agreement as a token of the existence of common ground which, perhaps unbeknown to the speakers, unites them in a common rationality [...with] a special set of terms in which all contributions to the conversation should be put – and to be willing to pick up the jargon of the interlocutor rather than translating it into one's own. (318)

Rorty points out that for epistemology to be rational or routine, it must have a set of “proper” terms from which one does not deviate (318). For hermeneutics to be rational or routine, the route of inquiry is conversation (318). Conversation happens when human beings gather together around a common theme, which is not necessarily a common goal. This commonality keeps a creative conversation going but does not create boundaries in which human beings must engage.

Richard Rorty sees culture as conversation “rather than a structure erected upon foundations” (319). Culture can continue and grow but once confined within a limited area, the possibilities or potentialities become restricted. This would serve to mute the conversation. Rorty's application of hermeneutics can inform our discussion of philosophical leisure as a means to keep the conversation going. Edifying philosophy, according to Rorty, is “the *love* of wisdom” (372). This love of wisdom is an “attempt to prevent conversation from degenerating into inquiry” based on epistemology (371). An

edifying philosophy never ends: it is always on-going and aims at continuing a conversation rather than claiming to discover a truth and end the conversation (373).

Leisure as an edifying philosophy works the same way. Philosophical leisure keeps the conversation going because the conversation is not an inquiry.

The action of ‘play’ is always on-going in philosophical leisure, which will not allow a degeneration into inquiry (Rorty, Mirror 371). Philosophical leisure does not begin with an objective goal. Philosophical leisure involves the play of ideas that nourishes one’s soul as a by-product of the action of play. If one intentionally engages leisure to nourish the soul, the intent destroys any possible transformation that will nourish the soul. Human beings can disillusion themselves. Disillusionment happens when the conversation turns into an inquiry, searching for objective truths. Like Buber’s dialogic philosophy of the I-Thou, these moments are fleeting and unintentional, but they occur (124). Dialogic moments are moments of genuine conversation but cannot be contained within a predetermined framework guided by a set of terms. Buber warns that one cannot make an I-Thou moment happen. If one tries, the event will not occur – intentionality kills the dialogic possibility. In the same way, an intention to learn objective truths already identified and accepted by a unifying consensus will kill the conversational possibility. Intentionality is a self-imposed limit that can never meet expectations because it is imposed rather than discovered. A conversation ought not be an inquiry but a consummated discovery.

Misperceptions of philosophical leisure exist. More like an inquiry than a conversation, people find themselves unsatisfied with their postmodern ideal of leisure. This dissatisfaction is a consequence of the faulty approach to leisure activities, a forced

intentionality of effect or goals that prohibit an experience of philosophical leisure. Conversation is a play of ideas as a craft not as an epistemological game. Bakhtin's aesthetic rhetorical theory frames how human communication can be aesthetically and rhetorically grounded, open to the play of philosophical leisure in human communication.

Mikhail Bakhtin's Aesthetic Rhetorical Theory (ART)

Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects-thematic content, style, and compositional structure-are inseparably linked to the whole of the utterance. (Bakhtin, Problem 60)

This section briefly recounts Mikhail Bakhtin's rhetorical theory and focuses on the aspects of answerability and consummation, which make up the core of his dialogism. Bakhtin's theory is distinct from other rhetorical theorists. His dialogism is significant to human communication because its aesthetic principle of "the ought" generates and cultivates the ground of conversation (Bakhtin, Toward 4). Bakhtin's dialogism shows how one engages philosophical leisure and how philosophical leisure keeps the conversation going.

Mikhail Bakhtin is considered one of the most important Soviet thinkers and greatest theoretician of literature in the 20th century (Holquist, Speech ix). His thought arose during the late formalist period, in which "[l]anguage, a socially constructed sign-

system, is itself a material reality (Selden et al 38). Bakhtin's rhetorical theory is not abstract. In fact, Bakhtin argued that "verbal art can and must overcome the divorce between abstract 'formal' approach and an equally abstract 'ideological approach' (Bakhtin, *Discourse* 259). He situated form and content as one social phenomenon, with every word anticipating a reply (259). Since the placement of dialogism is the heart of his rhetorical theory, the cornerstones of this theory are utterance, answerability, heteroglossia, and consummation.

Utterance

Utterance is a speech act "made specifically social, historical, concrete, and dialogized" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 433). Mikhail Bakhtin posited that each utterance is a "living dialectical synthesis [...] constantly taking place between the psyche and ideology, between, the inner and outer" (Bakhtin, *Discourse* 433). In each speech act "subjective experience perishes in the objective fact of the enunciated word-utterance, and the enunciated word is subjectified in the act of responsive understanding in order to generate [...] a counterstatement" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 434). Each utterance is "an unrepeatable, historically individual whole" (Bakhtin, *Text* 127). This means that each complete utterance as whole can never be reproduced because utterances are related to each other dialogically (128).

The "lack of a well-developed theory of the utterance as a unit of speech communication leads to an imprecise distinction between the sentence and the utterance" (Bakhtin, *Problem* 75). Bakhtin argued that "real-life dialogue [...] is the simplest form of speech communication" (75). He suggested that "a study of the utterance as a real unit of speech communication will also make it possible to understand [...] the nature of

language units (as a system)” (67). Therefore, the utterance is the key to Bakhtin’s dialogism and a hermeneutic entrance into the cultivation of conversation.

Mikhail Bakhtin was concerned with relationships between utterances, words, and sentences and how these relationships shape and continue dialogue. This relationship provides for a better understanding of how to contribute to a conversation. Bakhtin argued that “all real and integral understanding is actively responsive [...] and the speaker himself/herself is oriented precisely toward an activity responsive understanding [...] he/she expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution” (*Problem 69*). This connection of one’s utterance to the utterance of another person recognizes that this is a complex and “organized chain of other utterances” (69). In other words, the utterance connects to the next cornerstone of Bakhtin’s rhetorical theory, which is the notion of answerability.

Answerability

Mikhail Bakhtin’s answerability rests on the notion of connectedness between utterances. He stated the beginning of any utterance “is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances (or although it may be silent, other’s active responsive understanding, or finally, a responsive action based on this understanding)” (*Problem 71*). According to Bakhtin, the finalization of the “wholeness of the utterance guarantee[s] the possibility of a response [or of a responsive understanding], [and] is determined by three aspects (or factors) that are inseparably linked in the organic whole of the utterance” (76). These aspects of utterance are the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme, the speaker’s plan, and compositional form (77).

Once these aspects are finalized there is a “capability of determining the active responsive position” of the other, which is inherent in dialogue (82).

How does responsiveness occur? For Mikhail Bakhtin there is a third party, referred to as the superaddressee (*Text* 126). This superaddressee has an “absolutely just responsive understanding” either in a metaphysical sense or in a distant historical frame (126). The superaddressee can be God, absolute truth, human conscience, the people, science, or anything else. What it does is to nourish the responsiveness between the speaker (author) and the addressee (second party). The two participants cannot fully understand the other outside the superaddressee (126). Bakhtin’s intellectual position depended upon the “sphere of a myth of truth and responsibility ‘above’ the concerns and problems of historical, secular existence” (Hirschkop, *Myth* 581). Bakhtin aimed at truth transcending “the fallible judgments of mortal human beings [...] and at a perspective from which every error would be forgiven” (582).

Mikhail Bakhtin argued that understanding “itself enters as a dialogic element in the dialogic system and somehow changes its total sense” (*Text* 126). The author of the utterance presupposes this higher superaddressee and can never “turn over his [her] whole self and his [her] speech work to the complete and final will of addressees [...] and always presupposes [...] some higher instancing of responsive understanding” (126). For Bakhtin, all dialogue has this element of superaddressee which is a “constitutive aspect of the whole utterance” (126).

Answerability implies consciousness; “for every person consciousness does not appear as something we have and that others have in the same way we have it; it is something which exists in two, absolutely distinct registers, consciousness is either our

consciousness [...] or the consciousness of the *others*” (Hirschkop, *Dialogism* 585).

Answerability suggests a polyphonic conception of consciousness. We acquire consciousness in the world differently from each other, another pointing toward polyphony.

Heteroglossia

Mikhail Bakhtin’s rhetorical theory also includes his concept of heteroglossia. Heteroglossia is described as “a completely new type of artistic thinking” (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky* 3). While utterances require form and responsibility, heteroglossia is that which acknowledges multiplicity and diversity. Answerability governs the utterance, in that it is the “base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 428). Within the orchestration of dialogue, these themes combine the “totality of the world of objects and ideas [...] by means of the social diversity of speech types [...] and by the differing individual voices” (Bakhtin, *Discourse* 263). Bakhtin believed that this social relationship was essential for his rhetorical theory and his aesthetics, which is why he found heteroglossia to be social rather than logical categories of speech (Silverman 128). He argued that by keeping this a social phenomenon, it would “have freed language from residual mentalism” (128). He described “dialogized heteroglossia” as “always proliferate[ing] from the outside” (130). Heteroglossia was Bakhtin’s attempt to “find a single name for variety” (Clark and Holquist 5). This was Bakhtin’s way to look at sameness and hear differences as he “re[thought] the ways in which heterogeneity has traditionally been assigned the appearance of unity” (5).

Heteroglossia, in musical terms, is polyphony – many voices, both individual and collective, working together as a whole. In language terms, heteroglossia is “like mirrors

that face each other, each reflecting in its own way a piece, a tiny corner of the world [...] more multi-leveled, containing more and varied horizons than would be available to a single language or single mirror” (Burton 39). Bakhtin’s dialogue dwells among heteroglossia, the backdrop to answerability between and among utterances, *inter homines* (to be among human beings). Answerability is one aspect of contributing to a conversation. Answerability cannot move in this direction without nourishment from the superaddressee. The superaddressee is the nourishment pointed to by that Julia Kristeva, Josef Pieper, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Regardless of what one calls it, the aesthetic of human communication is how the ground for conversation becomes nourished. In Bakhtin, the aesthetic of human communication happens in consummation.

Consummation

The aesthetic dimension of human communication concerns itself with issues of consummation. Consummation describes how parts shape together to make a whole (Holquist x). Wholeness is a creation and has an aesthetic value, whether of material form or of emotional tone. Bakhtin’s aesthetic has little to do with *beauty*, rather it deals more with concepts of isolation, outsidership, and consummation (Holquist xv). More often, Bakhtin’s aesthetics deal with perceiving an object, text, or person as something fashioned into a whole. This study considers consummation connected to philosophical leisure and cultivating of the art of conversation. Bakhtin’s aesthetics bridge the link between conversation and art, making conversation art, uniting rhetoric and aesthetics, which cultivates conversation.

The idea of consummation considers the role of otherness. For Mikhail Bakhtin, consummation is a first philosophy toward the other that drives the conversation. The

triangulated convergence of author, hero, and the superaddressee is the consummation of the event. It is always responsive and is never completely concretized. Consummation invites the acknowledgement of the human element, the other.

Mikhail Bakhtin's "aesthetic is found within the seeing, it is the creation or process of the seer, within" (Art 75). To follow this further, the aesthetic seeing that occurs is nourished and cultivated by the third party. Consummation occurs and sensation is driven by the very act of aesthetics. The whole of experience and situation is larger than each individual. Bakhtin visualizes voices, "he senses their proximity and interaction as bodies" (Dostoevsky xxxvi). A voice is a point of view in the world and its orientation is measured by the responses it evokes (xxxvi). This responsiveness is central to Bakhtin's theory of language. Responsiveness is subsumed by the presence of that third party Bakhtin places between the participants. This consummated environment is hardly possible in an unreflective world of accumulation and discontent. Bakhtin's consummation calls for a contemplative seeing focused ontologically rather than teleologically. 'Seeing' calls forth the other.

Mikhail Bakhtin argued that form should aid the co-experiencing of communication. Form does not consummate content, rather, form expresses it (Hero 67). For consummation there needs to be a communicative nourishment. Without form there can be no expression. Unconsummated form leads to the destruction of the whole of the aesthetic object (Gadamer, Truth 135-140). Unconsummated form is like contemporary misperceptions of leisure – flat, unreflective, temporal, and unsatisfying.

Mikhail Bakhtin's rhetorical theory is also important to the ability to contribute to a conversation. Utterance is primary because it is the object of inquiry. Intonation is

important because for Bakhtin, intonation is how one plays at language and shapes meaning. However, the most significant aspects of Bakhtin's work are his ideas of answerability and consummation, which conjoin his aesthetic/rhetorical theory. This joining leads to the rediscovery of human interest in the ongoing conversation. Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetic rhetorical theory is a playground for understanding how the ground for conversation can be cultivated.

Play and Philosophical Leisure

Play is the action of philosophical leisure. Play is not only child's play – or frolic – but “the mode of being of play” (Gadamer, Truth 102). Play need not focus on the object or outcome, rather it is experimentally subjective (not objective). Subjectiveness allows for the experience, which means all play has its own essence – independent of the consciousness of the one who does it. Play occurs in a horizon which emphasizes the experience of coming into being rather than the awareness of a particular object (Gadamer, Truth 102). Play does not presuppose a spectator – it simply imagines (Bakhtin, *Author* 74).

Subjectivity in play allows for a “to – and – fro” movement (Gadamer, Truth 103) not tied to an end result but to an aesthetic consummation (Bakhtin, *Author* 75). The movement of play “renews itself in constant repetition” (Gadamer, Truth 103). The actor of the play is not important. The action of the play, its coming into being, is important as nourishment for the soul. This nourishment is primary (104). Play is not daily work. Play is focused on the idea of aesthetic nourishment of the soul and not physical nourishment for the body. “The structure of play absorbs the player into itself and thus

frees him [her] from the burden of taking initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence” (105). Play is a natural process, essential for self-preservation (105, 108).

Play is the action of philosophical leisure, and includes self-presentation and self-potentiality (Gadamer, Truth 108). Play is dialogic because it takes place in between and in response to a consummation. This in between does not necessarily refer to two individuals, rather the in between refers to ontological betweenness in the aesthetic realm. The focus is not on a single player or the consciousness of two players, rather it is the aesthetic place where the play “draws him [her] into its dominion and fills him [her] with the spirit” (109). Like Bakhtin’s superaddressee that nourishes the conversation, there is an aesthetic nourishment in the course of play that guides philosophical leisure.

Play opposes social institutionalization. Chamber music is not played to draw consumers to buy a piece of the ‘play,’ rather, chamber music is played for the music brought into being by the musicians/players (Gadamer, Truth 110). Like chamber music, play as the action of leisure is not for spectators. Play as the action of leisure comes into its being through consummation – transformation that emerges detached from the representing activity – or objectification and consisting of the pure appearance of being (110). This is like the “unforeseen elements of improvisation” (110). This focus of coming into being is embedded within *ergon* (deed) and *energia* (fuel). *Ergon* and *energia*, not the diminished seventh chord, are the structure of play.

As one plays, one learns the rules well. In understanding the rules, one has earned the right to violate the rules. This is the serendipitous element coming into play. An example of this would be modulation through keys that deviate from form. This play brings into light what is otherwise constantly hidden and withdrawn (Gadamer, Truth

112). The emergences of a philosophical leisure activity illuminate, through contemplation and play, what is otherwise hidden (Pieper, Leisure 97). The activity of play nourishes the soul.

Without nourishment for the soul, life is mere appearance or imitation. Therefore, cultivation of the soul is necessary to move human communication away from these imitators or imposters – toward an aesthetic non-differentiation where human communication is authentic. Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical play is the aesthetic action of philosophical leisure. Aesthetic activity of philosophical play is a hermeneutic clue to understand philosophical leisure as communicative praxis.

Aesthetics and Hermeneutics in Communication

The intersection of aesthetics and hermeneutics provides understanding of how philosophical leisure can shape human communication. By enriching one’s ability to engage conversation, the aesthetic activity of philosophical leisure invites interpretive action of human interaction. This section will consider this intersection through a discussion involving Kierkegaard and Gadamer.

Sören Kierkegaard’s Hermeneutics and Aesthetics

Sören Kierkegaard has often been disregarded as a philosopher (Strathern, Kierkegaard 7). Kierkegaard questioned what it means to be alive (55). He wrote about how human beings get along in the daily-ness of living, choosing, and being-in-the-world. Kierkegaard.

Three cornerstones of Sören Kierkegaard’s philosophy are helpful in considering how philosophical leisure contributes to communication through aesthetic activity. The aesthetical, the ethical, and the religious are central ideas in his thought (*Either/Or* 97).

Kierkegaard's distinction between the aesthetical and the ethical provides a framework for considering how leisure can be situated as aesthetic activity. Kierkegaard's work is helpful to the understanding of philosophical leisure as aesthetic activity. But Kierkegaard's attitude toward the aesthetical might oppose the argument of this study. Nevertheless, his understanding of the aesthetical provides a hermeneutic opening for this study that announces the embeddedness of philosophical leisure in aesthetic activity and communicative praxis.

The "aesthetical" was detestable to Søren Kierkegaard (*Either/Or* 83). The aesthetical was equated to interruptions in the daily-ness of everyday living. Kierkegaard connected the aesthetical with the biological, sensory, lowest form of living, because he saw it as fulfilling the lowest levels of human physical needs (22, 24). The aesthetical reduces action to a biological function. Kierkegaard warned the aesthetical could be a trap for idleness (24). Kierkegaard tolerated this realm because he considered the "aesthetical" as the place where one finds ground for interaction in the "ethical" (22).

Søren Kierkegaard pointed to two ways of seeing aesthetical. The first way of seeing aesthetics is connected to the place of boredom, which can lead to evil actions. The second way of seeing aesthetics as connected to the place of amusement, which can lead to the play of thought (*Either/Or* 22). In the case of the latter, the aesthetical can lead to a play of one's thoughts, which leads to "rotation" (a change of field) or cultivation of one's mind that can provide fertile ground for one's inventions or thoughts (25). Conversational ground, regardless of fertility, is useless unless one moves to the next level, the ethical, where human action occurs.

The ethical is a place one takes action. Human action is a willing volition, which ought to have a struggle otherwise there is no true volition (Kierkegaard, *Either/Or* 58). Human action should involve an aesthetical consideration of ideas that play with opposing tensions. Otherwise, for Søren Kierkegaard, there is no value to the action taken. In philosophical leisure, as one engages the play of ideas ground, is cultivated, unintentionally because the focus of attention is on the ideas. As a result, the ground on which the human being rests is enriched. This rotation is enriched by philosophical leisure can enhance human conversation, thus providing a place for ideas to emerge and develop.

Søren Kierkegaard's three realms are helpful in a discussion of philosophical leisure as an aesthetic activity because leisure, according to Aristotle and others, cultivates one's mind, which enables one to contribute through conversation to the good of the community. Leisure allows for the free play that Immanuel Kant and Kierkegaard argue is needed to use reason or to make decisions. Philosophical leisure does not focus on the specific decision at hand, rather it develops one's ability to interpret and understand the world. Complimented by Hans-Georg Gadamer, this study offers another way of understanding aesthetics and hermeneutics of philosophical leisure.

Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics in Communication

Hans-Georg Gadamer posited that the "work of art [...] speaks to most of us directly" (Philosophical 95). Gadamer suggested that art is a form of "Absolute Spirit" (95). This directness involves a familiarity between the work of art and the beholder of the art. The work of art is an expression of truth of itself, instead of creator (95). The encounter with art belongs within an integration of human life and tradition (96).

Hermeneutically, the work of art communicates itself. In short, a ‘timeless present’ interpretation of the work of art and philosophical hermeneutics does not intend to be understood historically but offers an absolute presence (96). The absolute presence does not allow for comprehension, rather, it is open to possibilities for comprehension (96). If there is one prescribed understanding or one set of text with which to gain understanding, conversation will shut down. Because of this ongoing openness, the intersection of aesthetics and hermeneutics occur in a space of subjectivity as communicative praxis.

Aesthetic play affords an opportunity to cultivate one’s soul (Gadamer, Truth 140). Philosophical leisure is the play that occurs in the aesthetic of human communication. A life without leisure is all ‘work’ and Gadamer would see this as a life of “plastic arts” (34). Gadamer argues that human beings can overcome the trap of plastic arts through aesthetic differentiation by engaging in philosophical play (134). Play is the aesthetic activity that removes subjectivity from the ontological understanding of a thing, or in this case, of leisure. Philosophical leisure is important to Gadamer’s theory of aesthetics because leisure is play removed from subjectivity. Philosophical leisure is an intellectual activity that moves toward interhuman communication. The movement shaped by aesthetic differentiation is more significant to interpretation than aesthetic consciousness. Understanding philosophical leisure as an aesthetic activity can counteract the misconceptions held by persons who consider leisure to be recreation or entertainment. Philosophical leisure as an aesthetic activity allows for the possibilities of communicative praxis. Unlike recreation and entertainment, which are merely social practices, philosophical leisure is the aesthetic dimension of human communication.

Conclusion

Søren Kierkegaard and Hans-Georg Gadamer each offer a distinct way of thinking about aesthetic activity as it occurs in communicative praxis. Kierkegaard separates the realms of contemplation (aesthetical) and action (ethical), yet these realms are not mutually exclusive. They require each other to engage in ethical human communication. Philosophical leisure occurs in the aesthetical realm for Kierkegaard. Engagement of philosophical leisure would be one way for Kierkegaard to find the ground for which to take an ethical action in his ethical realm. Gadamer offers an aesthetic action of philosophical leisure through aesthetic play, similar to the play in Kierkegaard's aesthetical realm. Gadamer's aesthetic differentiation is the hermeneutic opening that occurs in the play of philosophical leisure. An inquiry about the relationship between aesthetics and hermeneutics leads this study to the final chapter that argues the aesthetic activity of philosophical leisure is an application of communication praxis. Additionally, Calvin Schrag's work with communicative praxis is considered through an examination of transversal rationality and new humanism. Communicative praxis reintroduces the significance of the relationship with the philosophical other. An example of philosophical leisure is offered through a discussion of music in the southern black communities before and during the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century in the United States. Implications of philosophical leisure are considered through concepts of rhetorical interruption and the distinction between spectator and participant. Lastly, a set of metaphorical maps are offered that summarize this work and point communication scholarship in a new direction.

Chapter 5

Aesthetic Experience of Philosophical Leisure and Implications for
Communicative Praxis

This study has considered how philosophical leisure enriches human communication. This chapter first situates philosophical leisure as aesthetic experience of communicative praxis. Second, the relationship between communicative praxis and the philosophical other is discussed. Third, an example of music in the southern black communities, during the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, portrays philosophical leisure as an aesthetic experience that nourished conversational ground. Fourth, implications and significance of philosophical leisure are discussed through concepts of the “rhetorical interruption” (Hyde, Call 77) and the distinction between spectator and participant (Sennett, Fall 209). Fifth, a set of metaphorical maps are offered to summarize this work and invite the communication discipline to continue this rhetorical journey by encountering philosophical leisure. Finally, dimensional overtones of this work are offered. Philosophical leisure as communicative praxis opens this discussion.

Communicative Praxis

Philosophical leisure is an approach that one may take to living-in-the-world and to engage others. Philosophical leisure is an application of an aesthetically consummated experience of communicative praxis. Philosophical leisure invites one to enter the aesthetic space of communicative praxis.

In Calvin Schrag’s perspective, communicative praxis is a ‘place’ where communication happens “by someone, about something, and for someone” (Praxis 179).

The subject is an embedded agent rather than a decentered subject, which allows for the interpreted communicative event. The aboutness of communication suggests that meaning equals content. Aboutness is enriched when ideas are interpreted within the rhetorical environment of communicative praxis.

Calvin Schrag posits three aspects of communicative praxis: distanciation, idealization, and recollection (Praxis 53). These three aspects of communicative praxis are components of the architectonic of philosophical leisure. Distanciation allows for a distance when entering a conversation (53). The reflection of the distances allows for new understandings to emerge. Distance is important for philosophical leisure because it provides opportunity to experience aesthetic differentiation. Idealization suggests that distance invites the possibilities of ideas (54). In idealization, conversation is enriched through new ideas and responsiveness to ideas. Recollection is an embodied knowing that is reflective and not one dimensional (64). Recollection is an aesthetic activity that allows one to make sense out of things. Distanciation, idealization, and recollection work together with Schrag's three coefficients of "transversal rationality" (*Communication* 126) to enable communicative praxis. Philosophical leisure invites distance, idealization, and recollection to occur in human communication.

This section considers communicative praxis through Calvin Schrag's "transversal rationality" and "new humanism." The rhetorical environment of communicative praxis is open to the interaction of transversal rationality.

Transversal Rationality

Transversal rationality is what happens in the space of communicative praxis (Schrag, *Communication* 126). Transversal rationality involves three coefficients at play

(131). The coefficients at play are like a matrix spinning a web that is the interface of communicative praxis.

The first coefficient, involved discernment, is an evaluative coefficient of communicative praxis (Schrag, *Communication* 132). Involved discernment involves a deconstruction or reflective contemplation of the transaction between human beings because it is communal and happens situationally. This co-efficient involves contemplative action because communication calls for reflection, not haphazard consideration.

The performative coefficient of communicative praxis, engaged articulation, may interplay with involved discernment. Engaged articulation focuses on the “relationality” of engagement and articulation of perspectives between human beings (Schrag, *Communication* 133). Relationality continues and shapes the art of conversation. Inherent to this interplay is the aesthetic movement that keeps the conversation going. The aesthetic movement necessarily acknowledges human interest.

Encountered disclosure is the third coefficient that also interplays with the first two. Encountered disclosure’s pathetic appeal “forces us beyond the system of signs, outside the bonds of textuality, and out of the difficulties of narrativity [...] determining our discursive and nondiscursive practices as elicited by, and being about, something, as solicited by, and being with, someone” (Schrag, *Communication* 133). The serendipitous happens in conversation, guided by the idea of answerability. In encountered disclosure it is being in the “situated play of similarities and differences, [that] this incursion into intentionality is the ongoing pathos of alterity in practice” (133). The interplay of these three co-efficients is the consummation of the communicative event, never fully whole,

always open to possibilities. The transversal rationality of these co-efficients is significant to Calvin Schrag's call for a new humanism to guide human communication.

New Humanism

Calvin Schrag's theory of communicative praxis calls for a "new humanism" in which communicators engage the space of human communication as embedded agents (Praxis 197). Schrag argues that humanism as a "philosophical position and as a cultural attitude" (197) is approached cautiously. This caution is due primarily to the saturation of technology in our society and the questioning of human values (197). Humanism has traditionally been understood as the custodian of moral values. Schrag offers a redefinition of humanism which remedies the suspicion-laden understanding.

New humanism resituates a decentered subject in the space of communicative praxis as an embedded agent, one that regains subjectivity "as a multiplex persona within the hermeneutical space of praxis" (Schrag, Praxis 210). He argues "this new humanism no longer promises invariant definitions of a foundational subject, but instead moves about in a hermeneutical play of perspectival descriptions of the life of discourse and action" (214).

Calvin Schrag calls for a "new humanism" to frame how human beings communicate responsively toward one another (Praxis 197). He calls new humanism a dialogical consciousness that consists of "the interplay of discourse and action" (159). Central to this new humanism is the distinction between human agency and embedded agents. The focus in human agency is the speaker him or herself. The focus in embedded agents is not the self rather it is the embeddedness of the agent to the horizon in which one is situated. The embedded agent recognizes the larger picture of

relationships rather than considering only one's standpoint (201-214). A decentered self has no place in Schrag's new humanism, which "moves about in a hermeneutical play of perspectival descriptions of the life of discourse and action" (214). Distinguishing agency from embeddedness and how communication is impacted by both, Schrag suggests that agency can cause disillusionment and have pervasive influence upon others (214).

This distinction can also be considered in relation to leisure. Postmodern disillusionment of leisure would be a place where human agency flourishes, disregard for one's place in one's horizon. Philosophical leisure provides a playground for embedded agents. Interplay, contemplation, and involved discernment can be nourished in this realm.

For Calvin Schrag, an embedded agent can keep the conversation going. An agent driven by human agency can impede conversation because human agency cannot contribute to the ongoing story (Praxis 213-214). Schrag considers how one is situated within a given story. For example, visualize two agents both who are message receivers and both can be persuaded by each other and the historical moment. There are multiple dimensions of communication that allow for a textured communication rather than a flat, agent-driven communication.

Calvin Schrag's new humanism is essential for the movement of philosophical leisure into the public realm. While philosophical leisure begins as a private action, it is foregrounded through public discourse and human interaction. Serendipitous communication occurs as all three co-efficients encounter and overlap each other. The

exchange of transversal rationality occurs between embedded agents. The event is consummated by a co-constructing of meaning.

Philosophical leisure is engaged in this communicative space. Contemplation, innerplay/interplay, and serendipity happen when one approaches life through philosophical leisure. Philosophical leisure is a reflective, inward intellectual play that allows content to manifest outside the individual in conversation driven by ideas. The rhetorical turn that Calvin Schrag presents repositions rhetoric within the space of communicative praxis (Praxis 179). Philosophical leisure invites rhetoric of ideas to participate in discourse.

Philosophical leisure differentiates phatic conversation from communicative praxis. As the co-efficients are at play within and between individuals, the ground of conversation is cultivated. The philosophical play of leisure opens relational possibilities. Postmodernity calls for a different responsiveness toward the other. Postmodern differentiation seeks acknowledgment, answerability, and responsiveness to ideas between human beings. Postmodern differentiation foregrounds the aesthetic play that enhances human conversation.

An example of communicative praxis is offered by David Engen's communicative imagination (41). Communicative imagination is a way of seeing things, a "state of mind making [human beings] especially atuned to both [the] significance and complexities of the meaning" in social interaction (41). Engen's teleological insight of the communicative imagination invites effective and humane participation in complex social worlds (41). Communicative imagination invites one to see oneself outside one's work. Philosophical leisure cultivates this communicative imagination. A by-product of this

cultivation is the enhancement of human communication. Philosophical leisure as communicative praxis is an aesthetic experience.

Aesthetic Experience of Communicative Praxis

Aesthetic experience and philosophical leisure provide content that drives communicative praxis. What allows communicative praxis to be aesthetic is the consummation of the experience that is an “extra-esthetic” (Dewey 329). The consummation invites a social relationship that is not only beautiful but it is also a fully whole engagement of the other. John Dewey and his idea of the “extra-esthetic” (329) and Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of “aesthetically valid” (*Author* 59) situate their aesthetic understanding to extend to a social relationship. This study considers John Dewey’s “extra-esthetic” essential to understanding aesthetic experience and philosophical leisure as communicative praxis. The work of Mikhail Bakhtin is necessary for this study because Bakhtin’s “aesthetically valid” condition of human communication is illuminated through the ‘doing’ of philosophical leisure.

The idea of philosophical leisure as aesthetic experience is consistent with the philosophies of John Dewey and Mikhail Bakhtin. Both of these scholars describe an aesthetic experience as consummated experience. Their work is consistent with Calvin Schrag’s theory of communicative praxis. Aesthetic experience of practicing philosophical leisure informs communicative praxis by revealing content for idea-laden conversation. Aesthetic experience is a social experience or an experience outside of the limits of the self that invite a connection with a philosophical other. Communicative praxis is the home for Schrag’s new humanism, which argues that human beings ought to communicate as embedded agents rather than individual, separate entities. John Dewey,

Mikhail Bakhtin, and Calvin Schrag offer a seamless understanding of how the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure is a necessary but not sufficient condition of communicative praxis. It is necessary to find one's ground for conversation but not the only component of communicative praxis. This discussion begins with the philosophy of John Dewey.

John Dewey

John Dewey (1859-1952) notes a distinction between art experience and scientific experience. Dewey states that an aesthetic experience fully engages an individual in the world as a consummated engagement (326). Scientific experience focuses on epistemology, thus, compartmentalizes experience and separates the engagement from a consummation (Dewey 3). Aesthetic consummation can not occur in scientific experience. Compartmentalization offers an understanding within limits because the experience is not fully engaged.

For a person to have a fully engaged experience is to be an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience is one in which the engagement of the whole human being is reached in a meaningful way. An aesthetic experience is consummated in that it allows possibilities to exist and shape the communicative event (Dewey 3). Experience is aesthetic as participants "enter into an ordered rhythmic movement toward a consummation" (326). An aesthetic experience is a "manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development, and it is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization" (326). When a subject is separated from "both conditions of origin and operation in experience," a wall renders almost opaque their general significance (Dewey 3). When this separation occurs, the

ability to have a consummated understanding is limited. An aesthetic experience provides opportunity for consummated understanding. Scientific inquiry limits the aesthetic consummation of an idea or experience.

A gestalt understanding of an aesthetic experience suggests the aesthetic experience is a consummated experience of the practical, the social, and the educative (Dewey 327). Consummation of the aesthetic experience allows for a broader understanding of ‘how’ an aesthetic experience is understood. Dewey suggested that a life devoid aesthetic experience can kill an individual and a civilization (328). An individual or civilization may cease to exist when “instead of connecting arts with an expression of the life of the community, the beauty of nature and of art [is] regarded as an echo and a reminder of some supernal reality that had its being outside social life” (328). The social relationship that allows the consummation of experience is necessary for the existence of an aesthetic experience. In human interaction, the aesthetic consummation happens when the participants encounter each other in the space of communicative praxis. John Dewey described this gestalt understanding of art as “extra-esthetic” (329).

Philosophical leisure is an experience that rests in the “extra-esthetic.” While John Dewey’s work provides insight for understanding the aesthetic, his work does not speak directly about aesthetic experience and philosophical leisure. However, Dewey’s “extra-esthetic” offers a clearer understanding of philosophical leisure. Contemplative engagement characterizes philosophical leisure and provides cultivation and development of ideas for conversational contribution. Mikhail Bakhtin extends John Dewey’s “extra-esthetic” (Dewey 329) theory with the architectonics of dialogism and permits application of “extra-esthetic” (Bakhtin, *Author* 59) to human communication.

Mikhail Bakhtin

Human interaction occurs continuously “because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living (Dewey 35). This process is not characterized as a scientific hypothesis, method, compartmentalized experience, and end. Instead, the process that is “extra-esthetic” is not a cessation but rather a flow that is marked by “continuous merging” with no “holes, mechanical junctions, [or] dead centers” (Dewey 36). The aesthetic experience is an “interaction between a live creature and some aspect of the world in which one lives” (Dewey 44). In application, Mikhail Bakhtin offers the method of experiencing this “extra-esthetic” in human communication. Bakhtin stated:

There is one thing that, indubitably, has essential significance for us here: the actual, concrete axiological experiencing of another human being within the closed whole of my own unique life, within the actual horizon of my own life, has a two-fold character, because I and others – we move on different planes of seeing and evaluating (not abstract, but actual, concrete, evaluating), and in order to transpose us to a single unified plane, I must take a stand axiologically outside my own life and perceive myself as an other among others.” (*Author 59*).

Bakhtin’s concept of being outside one’s place of experience can inform how the consummated experience of Dewey’s “extra-esthetic” can be applied to human communication. The experience outside oneself invites the communicative event to be “aesthetically valid” (Bakhtin, *Author 59*).

An aesthetic understanding of consummated human communication is central to Mikhail Bakhtin's life-in-the-world. Consistent with Calvin Schrag's communicative praxis, Bakhtin opposed a compartmentalized understanding of human interactions that separated a human being from consummated experience. Bakhtin argued, "to abstract myself from my unique place in being, in order to understand the world fully as an ongoing event and in order to orient myself in the world as in an open and once-occurrent event" (*Author* 58-59) is an "extra-aesthetic" consummated understanding of dialogism governing conversational ground.

Understanding philosophical leisure as an application of John Dewey's "extra-aesthetic" and Mikhail Bakhtin's "aesthetically-valid" experience situates philosophical leisure as aesthetic experience of communicative praxis. Revisiting communicative practice as the interactive space of subjectivity where human communication occurs in transversal rationality suggests that the aesthetic consummation, which is "extra-aesthetic" and "aesthetically-valid" experience happens in an idea-laden environment. The phenomenological focus of attention is on ideas, rather than agency.

Phenomenological focus of attention is the heart of aesthetic experience and necessary for aesthetic consummation. Philosophical leisure shifts one's phenomenological focus of attention to the idea, not to the self or to the end result. The key to philosophical leisure as an aesthetic application of communicative praxis involves the shifting of the phenomenological focus of attention from the self-in-the-world to the ideas that emerge as human interaction exists. Once the phenomenological focus of attention shifts toward this idea-laden experience, the aesthetic consummation unfolds as the intersubjective space is encountered between human beings. The space where the

aesthetic consummation occurs cannot exist without the phenomenological shift through contemplative engagement.

Communicative praxis and the philosophical other have an important relationship. Because the aesthetic experience in communicative praxis involves human engagement, the relationship between communicative praxis and the philosophical other¹² is discussed.

Communicative Praxis and the Philosophical Other

The real benefit of philosophical leisure gives one something to talk about – public human interest that is not private – yet connected with interest for the other. This is public communication that is content driven not driven by private emotivism. Turning toward the other shifts one’s focus of attention from the present and from the self to an acknowledgement of the other. Philosophical leisure is one way to develop opportunity for common ground to emerge between human beings. In this study the focus of attention toward the other is not meant as a therapeutic approach to understanding the other. Rather, in this context, the other is mirrored after Emmanuel Levinas’ Other and Mikhail Bakhtin’s I-Other relationship.

Emmanuel Levinas is concerned with the ethical relationship between the Self and the Other. Mikhail Bakhtin is concerned with the primacy of the utterance and his responsive ethics of answerability in the I-Other relationship. Both Levinas and Bakhtin suggest an ethical responsibility toward the other. Levinas’ philosophical approach and Bakhtin’s rhetorical approach can provide this study with the frame to understand how

¹² When this study refers to the “Other,” it refers the philosophical Other of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas or Mikhail Bakhtin. The use of “other” by this author refers to the general other of human communicative encounters.

human interest can enrich human communication in the aesthetic space of communicative praxis.

Emanuel Levinas' Other and Communicative Praxis

When Emmanuel Levinas described the ethical self-other relationship, he referred to it as an “unlimited responsibility” that existed “prior to or beyond essence” (Otherwise 10). However, there is no demand for the Other to return a response back to the Self. Levinas called this null demand a “peculiar inequality” (Reader 286). As Levinas considered the Self-Other relationship he suggested it is an “openness of the self to the other” (Otherwise 181). The “presentation of the face” places the self in relation with the other (Totality 212). This openness refers to a relationship that reveals meaning only in a relationship with the Other (Otherwise 181; Totality 212). This relationship is where “the ‘I’ finds identity in response to the Other” (Arnett, *Responsive* 39). Arnett refers to this relationship as derivative of the other because the “self emerges as a by-product, a responsive derivative construction” (39). Levinas referred to the relationship with the Other as an inspiration that transcends the self (Otherwise 182).

A relationship with the Other has implications for human communication (Arnett, *Responsive* 49). We are reminded by the face of the Other that we have a responsibility to live our lives beyond “self-occupation” (49). In other words, Levinas reminds us that by looking toward the face of the Other, we turn toward the interhuman communicative action. According to Ronald C. Arnett, Levinas’ ethical responsibility toward the Other is a “philosophical starting place” for encountering the other (49).

Alterity is the consummation of the Self-Other relationship. This consummation occurs when there is human interest or an “interestedness” (Levinas, Otherwise 183).

Interestedness manifests in “inter-human speaking,” which means “entering into the thought of the other” (Levinas, *Entre Nous* 162). Derrida explained this interestedness through the hermeneutic clue, ‘welcome.’ “To dare to say welcome,” one is implying that one is at home, one knows what it means to be at home, and one offers hospitality (Derrida 15). Derrida suggested that welcoming the other also can appropriate oneself over the other (15). ‘Welcome’ should not be the usurpation of one human being over another human being, rather, a ‘welcome’ is hospitality.

Jacques Derrida posited that ‘welcome’ implies a “tending toward the other, attentive attention, intentional attention [...] intentionality, attention to speech, welcome of the face, [and] hospitality” (22-23). Derrida’s understanding of a Levinasian welcome includes intentionality that holds an infinite opening toward the other (23). There is an ethical relation in the receptivity of receiving and welcoming/hospitality (25). To welcome, to be called into existence by the face of the Other, is a first gesture in the direction of the Other (25). The welcome or turn toward the face of the Other reinforces human interest in conversation.

The phaticity of conversation in this historical moment is a “decay of human relations” (Levinas, *Alterity* 107). However, Emmanuel Levinas found that, “goodness is possible” (107) in this decay. The goodness is revealed in the Self-Other relationship (109). This is where human interest can prevail and cultivate an ongoing conversation. Human interest is nourished by the goodness in the relationship and the goodness does not succumb to the elements of narcissism and “existential homelessness” (Arnett, *Existential* 229).

The experience of human interest is infinite and “occurs in the relationship with the other (*Autru*)” (Levinas, *Philosophy* 108). In this relationship the Other “overflows” the Same as it breaks the “inward play of the soul” (112). When a human being is at play in his or her soul, a philosophical cultivation occurs. This cultivation by philosophical leisure begins with the interiority of one’s soul and moves toward the consummation of the Self-Other relationship. In this consummation human interest cultivates the art of conversation – in the interplay of souls. Mikhail Bakhtin’s aesthetic approach to human interest compliments Levinas’ I-Other relationship.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s I-Other Relationship and Communicative Praxis

A living experience can never rest in one’s self. To be consummated, the experience has obligations outside of itself (Bakhtin, *Author* 125). Thus, conversation needs self and other in order to continue. The self is obligated to continue the experience or risk missing communicative meaning (125). A consummation of this communicative experience is revealing and innovative (Biancofiore 110). Consummation of this event is communicative praxis.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s perspective suggests that meaning in life cannot emerge from within one, rather meaning is found in motion from outside oneself. Meaning emerges in the interplay of experience outside an individual with the Other (Bakhtin, *Author* 127). Bakhtin argued “the other coincides with himself [herself] and through this integrating coincidence that consummates him [her] positively, I enrich the other from the outside and he [she] becomes aesthetically significant” (129). This aesthetic significance is the art of conversation. This interplay of experience requires the cultivation of human

interest. Without consummation of the I-Other relationship conversation might die or simply remain overall phatic in nature.

Mikhail Bakhtin also considered this ethical I-Other relationship through “answerability” (Toward 75). Bakhtin considered answerability to be the “highest architectonic principle” (75) because it lays out the consummation of the I-Other relationship. Consummation is ethically driven and the only way to cultivate the ground of conversation. Bakhtin scholars consider the I-Other relationship to be an aesthetic transcendental experience (Tiupa 96). The element of the aesthetic is significant because the social relationship that plays with ideas is pleasant and satisfying, not in the sense of a personal agreement but rather the interplay of the social relationship itself. The enrichment and regeneration of conversation is ontological and that in itself is aesthetic (Gadamer, Truth 101). The aesthetics of an emerging conversation is transformative to individuals and to the relationship. In aesthetics there is a nourishment of the soul cultivates the ground of conversation.

The element of human interest enriches human communication by cultivating the ground of conversation. Cultivated conversation, driven by ideas generated by human interest and not social function, can reduce the risk of conversational cessation. When ideas drive conversation it becomes ongoing, much like Kenneth Burke’s parlor metaphor (Burke, *Philosophy* 110-111). Individualism has shaped conversation to negate the other. “Conversational narcissism” (Derber 65) allows the individual to seek attention for the self in face to face conversations. Enhancing human interest in human communication can play off one’s attempt to engage narcissistic tendencies in

conversation. The space of communicative praxis welcomes a turning toward the other in human interest.

Philosophical Leisure and Engaging the Other

Philosophical leisure invites communication that engages the other by providing the content for engagement. As one begins the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure in the private sphere, the ground for one to find content for human engagement is nourished. Philosophical nourishment for a ground of ideas enables one to move into the public realm and engage the other with idea-laden communication. The ideas enrich the experience and provide opportunity for the experience to grow and develop into a larger communicative occurrence. The growth of the occurrence is responsive to the engagement of the other.

Philosophical leisure invites interest in the other. Martin Buber's Hasdic tales posit that in order for an individual to engage the other, the individual must first begin within one's self (Buber, Way 28). In other words, to be at peace with the other the individual must first be at peace with herself or himself. The way to be at peace with one's self is through "accessory elements of his [her] own self" (29). This is done through contemplation which is central to philosophical leisure. Conversation can be cultivated only after attention to one's self. The innerplay of philosophical leisure enables an interplay in human relationships. As the conversation unfolds, ideas are regenerated – seemingly from the souls of the participants.

Relationships have an "inside, a dynamic center, from which all operation has its source and to which all that is received" (Pieper, Leisure 81). The inside of the relationship is cultivated through philosophical leisure. Philosophical leisure can create a

“sense of place” that is socially constructed through communication (Stokowski 368). A “sense of place” is not only a geographic location but it can be “fluid, changeable, dynamic social interaction and memory” that creates common ground (368). People create these places through human interest and interaction with others. Philosophical leisure is a catalyst for the ideas of these conversations that shape the sense of place (372). These places do not exist until the human interaction occurs (372). This author asserts these places are first contemplated in the individual at play in philosophical leisure.

Once individual nourishment begins, the ground of conversation begins to regenerate (Pieper 81). Conversation works through social activity and requires people to exhibit trust in others (Wardbaugh 5). Trust in the other is the cornerstone of social living (6). Human beings are social animals and trust helps to nourish the social relationship. Conversation without trust dwarfs the possibility for regeneration of ideas and impedes a serendipitous response that is needed for idea-laden human communication.

In periods of swift social change, established norms and stereotypes are called into question as human beings try to make sense out of the changes. Linguistic confusion reflects the social disorder (Wardbaugh 17). As a result of this confusion, conversation quickly reduces to phatic communication or self-talk. To contribute to a conversation, an individual must first reflect upon herself or himself and then reflect upon others to “keep the cooperative enterprise going” (138). Beginning with one’s self is consistent with Buber’s Hasidic tales. These stories point out that in order to turn toward an other, one must first turn within and reflect upon one’s self. Philosophical leisure can assist a

human being to turn toward the other because leisure begins with a turning toward the inside. The turning toward the inside is deep and reflective, grounded in contemplation.

Josef Pieper considers contemplation to provide the ultimate gratification of human beings (Pieper, Contemplation 18). Through contemplation, human beings can reach satiation of happiness (18). Contemplation is the play of the imagination through reason (81). That play is a “form of knowing arrived at by not thinking but by seeing, intuition” (74). Therefore, understanding contemplation is necessary to realize leisure is not relaxation. To contemplate one’s soul enables one to engage other souls – in play.

The contemplation of one’s soul and the element of human interest penetrates the interplay of ideas and invites the serendipitous response for nourishment the ground of conversation. This play in human interest allows the phenomenological focus of attention to be on ideas and not on simple events or people (gossip).

The connection between turning toward the self, the development of human interest, and the cultivation of conversational ground is supported historically. Aristotle’s ethics would not allow for conversation to be reduced to small talk or self-talk because ethically engaging conversation in the polis requires focusing on the common good. Cultivation of human interest occurs when a human being is at home with herself or himself in philosophical leisure (Crick 310). Seneca also notes turning toward the other enriches human conversation by cultivating the ground for nourishment of the soul (II.1). An example of the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure as communicative praxis emerged out of the music of the civil rights movement.

Example: Music Engaged as Philosophical Leisure

Aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure provides an opportunity for encountering the other in the interaction of communicative praxis. Understanding philosophical leisure as a consummated aesthetic experience directs this author toward an exemplification of the argument in this project. This work argues that southern black communities in the middle of the 20th century engaged music as philosophical leisure, which enabled development of conversational ground that transformed social justice in the United States. While music has always demonstrated a role in the black community, this study limits inquiry to the 1950s and 1960s, some of the most active years of the civil rights movement in the United States.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream included a social conversation between black and white communities. King wanted social change so that minority voices had equal access to communicative opportunities. During the 1950s and 1960s, King and other emerging leaders spoke out on behalf of an oppressed black people. King's message included the call for turning toward the other, regardless of color (4). Southern black communities experienced significant violence and resistance to their attempt to participate in conversation with the other, the white community. This section discusses how music for the individual black person and music in the collective black churches is an application of the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure as communicative praxis.

The civil rights movement did not begin as a political movement. Instead, the civil rights movement was born out of southern black church leadership calling for an end to oppression of one human being over another human being. Individuals in the southern

black community engaged the consummated aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure when they sang their “freedom songs” (King 48). In the words of Martin Luther King Jr.:

An important part of the mass meetings [church] was the freedom songs.

In a sense the freedom songs are the soul of the movement. They are more than just incantations of clever phrases [...] I have heard people talk of their beat and rhythm, but we in the movement are inspired by their words [...] we sing the freedom songs today for the same reason the slaves sang them, because we too are in bondage and the songs add hope to our determination [...] that we shall overcome someday. (48)

Martin Luther King, Jr. described music in the black communities as giving black people hope for social change and the ability to pursue this social change. Music unified the black voice and provided the ground upon which they could articulate ideas to achieve social justice (King 49).

Martin Luther King Jr. referred to entering conversational ground with the white community as a “negro revolution” (1). The revolution was “generated quietly” (King 2) through individual engagement of ideas. King argued for nonviolent resistance and peaceful responses to violence (67). King argued the ability to remain civil upon entering a conversation in opposition to the status quo is primary to keeping the conversation going. King argued if the conversation does not allow their participation, their call for social justice will remain a monologue (68).

The ability to keep the conversation going rests in the engagement of ideas with a focus of attention on the idea of social change, not agency. King understood the value

and the role of music in the southern black communities. His understanding helped to nourish conversational ground that advanced the civil rights cause.

In the PBS video, We Shall Overcome, Pete Seeger discussed the power of music as not to win over an enemy but to find a friend on common ground where conversation occurs. Music that nourished the black southern communities represented an individual's struggle to enter the conversation. Black individuals were kept from entering conversation about rights and freedom by white majority. For the black community, music was a response to their inability to participate in human conversation that directly impacted daily existence. During the beginning of the civil rights movement and through the height of it, music opened almost every meeting and occurred at almost every protest (Graetz 66).

Music engaged as aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure was not for entertainment but it was for gathering people to become involved. Prior to the civil rights movement, during the 1940s, labor movements used music to announce struggle and a call for change in labor practices and laws (We). Songs like "We Shall Overcome" opened conversation because freedom songs announce a struggle and unite people to advance a resolve. This requires the ability to engage in an idea-laden conversation. Many of the freedom songs from the civil rights movement were taken from days of slavery in America. In any situation where oppressed people seek a voice, music can give confidence and the framework for a philosophy of nonviolence (We).

"We Shall Overcome" represents the significance of music as an aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure. The words of "We Shall Overcome" express a social relationship with the other:

1. We shall overcome
 We shall overcome
 We shall overcome some day

Chorus:

Oh deep in my heart
 I do believe
 We shall overcome some day

4. We are not afraid
 We are not afraid
 We are not afraid today

Chorus:

5. We are not alone
 We are not alone
 We are not alone today

Chorus:

2. We'll walk hand in hand
 We'll walk hand in hand
 We'll walk hand in hand some day

Chorus:

6. The whole wide world around
 The whole wide world around
 The whole wide world around some day

Chorus:

3. We shall all be free
 We shall all be free
 We shall all be free some day

Chorus:

7. We shall overcome
 We shall overcome
 We shall overcome some day

Chorus: (We)

Pete Seeger suggested the significance of music, and specifically “We Shall Overcome” rests in the social relationship of “We.” He argued that human beings will either “make it together or we are not going to make it at all” (We) This author argues music that drove the civil rights movement was an “extra-aesthetic” experience (Dewey 329) that brought together individual contemplation and collective social action. The consequences of this “extra-esthetic” (Dewey 329) experience forged social justice and transformation of a country. In the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, music that came out of the civil rights movement was “aesthetically valid” (*Author* 59) because the human connection emerged outside the self in a consummated experience.

Considering music during the civil rights movement as a consummated aesthetic experience can be demonstrated by the genre that shaped it. Music that drove the civil rights movement was folk music, often in protest to particular situations. The key word here is ‘folk’ music, which means, music of the common people. Music provided a way

for individuals to nourish their souls by uniting people and shifting the focus of attention from fear for themselves to strength for the collective community. Music enabled the southern black community, which at the time was the heart of the civil rights movement, to focus attention on the issues and ideas. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s exhortation for a nonviolent response helped to cultivate the conversational ground from which freedom and equality would eventually grow. Music enabled the black community to focus on the ideas and not on their own fear (Thomas 10).

Music like “We Shall Overcome” belongs to human beings in struggle. To nourish the soul of human beings in struggle (Thomas 13), the individual engages philosophical leisure and shifts one’s focus of attention toward ideas. The individual is then able to enter a public conversation in the spirit of social change. Focusing on inward reflection first can help to overcome dehumanizing experience. Focusing on the broader issues and ideas invites human interest of the other and enriches the content for human conversation. Music reaches into the soul of the musician (We). During the civil rights movement these musicians were common, everyday people living a struggle and fighting for a chance to enter the human community through conversation.

Music enabled the oppressed black community to embrace their human condition at a time when the daily toil of life was no longer tolerable. As people sang these freedom songs, souls were aesthetically nourished and strengthened. Strength afforded the black community with the ability to enter into a conversation and respond confidently. Music may not have taken the fear out of taking action but music did provide the sustenance to guide southern blacks in entering the conversation and advancing social justice.

Music of the civil rights movement, during the 20th century in the United States, is an application of this argument that aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure enters Calvin Schrag's space of communicative praxis. Through inward reflection of the human condition, outward expression through song, and the responsiveness within the southern black community, music of the civil rights movement as aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure is communicative praxis. The next section offers implications of this work and a set of metaphorical maps that remind the reader of the ideas encountered in this work and point the reader toward a new direction for communication scholarship.

Implications

The crisis of philosophical leisure is not new to this historical moment. Early Roman writers, such as Seneca, and Renaissance philosophers, such as Petrarch and Rousseau, captured the same concern as this study. The fear that human beings would begin to unreflectively engage philosophical leisure and turn it into a marketable commodity emerged throughout history as social change altered the way human beings engage daily existence. A return to the classical understanding of philosophical leisure often emerges when there is a need, which is represented by the voluminous writings about classical leisure. There is an ethical mandate for this work when recreation, relaxation, or entertainment has generated this moral crisis. Philosophical leisure provides redemptive action. In this historical moment, ethics and philosophy merge together in a turn toward philosophical leisure. The emergence of concern regarding philosophical leisure is established through this rhetorical journey and the issue of capacity and opportunity is also co-present.

The question of capacity and opportunity pervades the discussion of philosophical leisure. Like Aristotle, some scholars might critique philosophical leisure as being limited to those who have the capacity to understand the difference between philosophical leisure and recreation. Perhaps the question of intellect arises that might disqualify some individuals from this capacity. Josef Pieper's understanding of philosophical leisure as a contemplative action would offer a perspective unshared by critics of capacity.

Contemplation is not a learning, rather, it is a knowing, a revealing of something already present (Pieper, Happiness 73). Contemplation does not limit because of intellect. Instead, contemplation allows all intellects to have the capacity for engagement of philosophical leisure because at any level, the capacity is already present. Therefore, the engagement of philosophical leisure is not limited based upon intellectual level. However, the limiting of philosophical leisure does occur today.

Today, human beings limit themselves by choosing not to reflectively or contemplatively encounter ideas. Any limit placed upon the engagement of philosophical leisure does not exist due to capacity, rather limits exist from individual volition. The choice to not be reflective or contemplative is an active choice where one chooses deliberately to engage life superficially because it is easier, quicker, and requires less commitment. The question of capacity for the engagement of philosophical leisure is a question of whether a human being is a spectator or a participant (Sennett, Fall 209). Those who are spectators must prepare to witness action through the act of "self-suppression" (Sennett, Fall 209). The spectator often does not know how to express her or himself in public (Sennett, Fall 209). Due to theatre, television, and the internet,

human beings are reduced to spectators as they witness, think, and feel what they are told. This often disables volition to choose reflective or contemplative engagement.

Consistent with Neil Postman's work and Richard Winter's work in their critique of rapid technological advances, it is easier for human beings to be spectators today. Human beings have the capacity to engage philosophical leisure and this study reminds human beings of that capacity.

When a human being engages philosophical leisure, he or she becomes a participant, one who chooses the opportunity to be an active agent. Richard Sennett considers this active agent as "play" (Fall 266). Play as a social-aesthetic relation is easier for children and more difficult for adults (Sennett, Fall 266). Play is not difficult for children because they do not limit their creative social experiences. Adults have often been limited by impressions of technology and epistemological foundations that thwart their ability to play (267). Play often contradicts the governance of adult life (315). Therefore, human beings have the volition to engage philosophical leisure and can be participants rather than spectators.

The inability to play as an adult is not new to the lower socioeconomic class of people. Hard work and long work days have always impeded the opportunity for engagement of philosophical leisure. The middle and upper middle socioeconomic classes of people often embrace recreation, relaxation, and entertainment for show. These activities are confused with the idea of leisure. The emphasis on what they deem as leisure is the main focus of Thorstein Veblen's critique of the leisure class. The problem is found in the inability to be satisfied with any type of activity because nothing is quite good enough for these classes of people. The addiction to technology and the

therapeutic framework that has given rise to a culture of narcissism is the first step in a middle class of people learning that their leisure time is not what they believed it to be. This eclipse of leisure or one's ability to play is new to the middle classes. This study offers a remedy to the realization of this communicative problem.

The first step of relearning to play is to understand the fundamental difference between philosophical leisure and recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. This study offers that first step of recognition. To deny the distinction between philosophical leisure and recreation, relaxation, and entertainment would be the "corrosion of character" (Sennett, Corrosion 33). The choice or will to engage philosophical leisure depends upon the action of the individual not on natural predestination. An individual must choose to be a spectator or a participant. This choice invites a rhetorical interruption that allows play and nourishment to cultivate ideas for conversation.

A "rhetorical interruption" acts as a response to a particular historical moment (Hyde, Call 77). It calls forth ideas and is rhetorical because it invites a change or new perspective that is open to possibilities for transformation. Philosophical leisure can be a rhetorical interruption for a narcissistic culture or a human being's sense of existential homelessness. Once engaged, philosophical leisure as a rhetorical interruption can be referred to as "habits of the heart" (Tocqueville 116; Bellah et.al. 37). "Habits of the heart" are notions, opinions, and ideas that help to shape "mental habits" and the sum of "moral and intellectual disposition" (Bellah et.al. 37). Philosophical leisure, as a "habit of the heart" can bring human beings together through idea-laden conversation. Philosophical leisure broadens one's world to move from an individualistic perspective to a perspective embedded in community and ideas. Philosophical leisure can shift

language of “therapeutic individualism” (56) to a language that invites the other into the conversation, rather than isolating the self in individualism (Arnett and Arneson 262). Philosophical leisure as a “habit of the heart” (Bellah et.al. 37) can recuperate human beings dependent upon an individualistic vocabulary and invite idea-laden conversation. Philosophical leisure can be considered portable “habits of the heart” because philosophical leisure is not limited to a particular space, rather it is an activity that human beings can participate in anywhere.

The implications for philosophical leisure as a “rhetorical interruption” (Hyde, Call 77) and as a “habit of the heart” (Bellah et.al 37) provides a new depth of understanding philosophical leisure within a classical perspective. Philosophical leisure offers enrichment and recuperation to human communication, as well as a new avenue of study within the communication discipline. Understanding the implications for philosophical leisure to the communication discipline includes understanding this rhetorical interruption or these habits of the heart as aesthetic activity.

The main argument of this work is the aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure provides the content for engagement of communicative praxis. An interesting tension is revealed through the advance of this argument. The aesthetic experience of philosophical leisure provides content for conversation, which invites human interest toward the other and builds a social relationship. The social relationship can be transformative to the individual and the human community. The mirror image of this argument suggests the relationship that meets the other and fosters human interest enables development of content through philosophical leisure and the aesthetic experience. The

key to enriching human conversation is embracing philosophical leisure in one's approach in life.

This section reminds the reader of salient philosophical aspects which inform this inquiry. Through an offering of two metaphorical maps this section considers the eminence of this work linked to human communication and implications to the communication discipline.

Metaphorical Maps of Eminence

A synthesis of this work can be considered in two metaphorical maps. The first metaphorical map posits the problem in human communication. The second metaphorical map advances a renewed understanding of philosophical leisure through rhetoric of this historical moment. These maps guide the reader through an in depth examination of human communication and embark the reader toward one possible pathway that is a recuperative response to the communication eclipse. This journey begins with the metaphorical map of the human communicative problem.

As a starting place, this study considers the rise of psychologism through a therapeutic culture and the saturation of technology that has rapidly changed existence for all human beings in the Western world. These swift changes have shifted the focus of attention in human communication. The shift is described as a communication eclipse between human beings. An inability to communicate ideas with another human being is masked by an over abundance of phatic communication. A society driven by phatic communication is rendered impotent in the exchange of ideas. Impotence in human communication points toward a moral crisis, which is a debilitation of human communication due to false communicators or communication imposters. False

communication is represented through the Western world's "culture of narcissism" (Lasch, Narcissism 27) and the sense of "existential homelessness" (Arnett 229). Narcissism and existential homelessness suggest there is less certainty in human communication and in one's negotiation of daily life.

When uncertainty pervades our lives and relationships, phaticity in human communication increases. The inability to find ground upon which one is able to communicate in idea-laden conversation is pervasive in the Western world. Phaticity is the absence of content in communication that is often superficial conversation. While phaticity is necessary for daily functional movements between human beings, it can also be deadly to human relationships. An abundance of phaticity, in place of enriched conversation, impedes one's attention to ideas. The focus instead becomes task-oriented, self-oriented, people-oriented, gossip or small talk. If these are the only topics for human communication, atrophy sets in – which is a broader problem that cripples human relationships.

The moral crisis in human communication is proliferated by linguistic confusion of the terms; leisure, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. Using these terms synonymously creates a diversion that causes confusion in the meaning of the terms. To consider leisure equal to recreation, relaxation, and entertainment, human beings become helpless in their pursuit of ground for conversation. Recreation, relaxation, and entertainment are driven by the self, they are short-term, and considered a mere interruption of one's daily work-a-day activities. Recreation, relaxation, and entertainment are framed by Hannah Arendt's social realm, where one is not really engaged in the private or the public realm, rather, one is in a realm skewed by blurred

boundaries, rendering nourishment of the soul an impossibility. Human beings often recreate, relax, or entertain without reflection, as conspicuous consumption, and often for pecuniary emulation. Human communication in this realm falls under posturing or communication imposters. It is with in this context that human communication represents suffering from a moral crisis. The metaphorical map that has reminded the reader of the human communicative problem now shifts in a new direction on a path of recuperation for human communication.

The redemptive approach to the moral crisis in human communication begins with a new understanding of leisure as philosophical leisure. Through a distinction between leisure, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment, this study advances a linguistic shift toward philosophical leisure. This work posits a new term, philosophical leisure, as the hermeneutic entrance that announces this renewed understanding and significance of philosophical leisure to human communication. Philosophical leisure shifts one's focus of attention from closed-ended topics, such as people, tasks, gossip, or small talk, to the infinite realm of ideas. Philosophical leisure edifies the ground for conversation.

Through the engagement of philosophical leisure human beings contemplate and play with ideas that emerge from the inneraction and interaction. These ideas develop depth and become *topoi* (topics) for conversation between human beings. Philosophical leisure begins with the inward contemplative act of ideas at play. Conversation becomes ongoing and dynamic – open to serendipitous thought. A consequence of philosophical play is a transformation of the inner individual and often the individual's connection outside of him or herself. The transformation happens as the consummated aesthetic experience of play cultivates the inner playground of ideas that embed the player in an

ongoing story. Conversation at this deeper level becomes idea-driven instead of self-driven. Conversation void of this depth is flat and phatic – ultimately saying nothing and leaving human beings with nothing left to say.

The aesthetic playground that cultivates ideas for conversation occurs through utterances at play with ideas and other utterances in answerability. Aesthetic play begins with inward contemplative thought that offers one ground to stand upon in the communicative space of subjectivity, where one encounters the other. The play that one engages is that of an embedded agent, one who cares about the ideas and the continuing conversation. The social relationship of human communication is an “extra-aesthetic” (Dewey 329) activity or “aesthetically valid” (Bakhtin, *Author* 59) because the experience is fully consummated. Consummation of ideas situates the activity as communicative praxis.

Philosophical leisure provides communicators with content for conversation. Philosophical leisure as action of communicative praxis demonstrates how human beings can pragmatically engage philosophical leisure in every day living and in communication between human beings. Philosophical leisure is a consummated aesthetic activity. The metaphorical journey points to an aesthetic approach to understanding human communication.

Dimensional Overtones of this Project for the Communication Discipline

Aesthetically informed human communication can enhance civic virtue and performance (Mattson 107; Greene 190). Aesthetic communication can “push us to reach for interpretive meanings we cannot quite capture” (Pillow 197). The beauty of coming to this virtue and performance happens through one gaining ground, having a conviction,

found through aesthetic activity (Mattson 107). Once ground has been found, a standpoint has been taken, or the ground for conversation is idea-rich, “language is the medium in which Spirit or social subjectivity exists” (Hegel 575). Philosophical leisure is the aesthetic activity that inwardly enhances the ground for civic engagement or human conversation, which then manifests outside the human being – and occurs between human beings.

Philosophical leisure is necessary to have enriched human communication. The aesthetic play of philosophical leisure transcends time and removes the dailyness of life experience (Gadamer, Truth 102). The shift of one’s phenomenological focus of attention invites one’s deliberation into eternity (102). Being at play occurs in a world determined by the play not the existentialness of living. The ontological moment of coming into being happens and removes time as a measurement and time as eternity becomes space that situates Leisure. Gadamer refers to this as “timelessness” (121). Philosophical leisure, as ontologically a priori and as a pragmatic action-lived-in-the-world-experience, both encounter a dialectical antithesis.

Aesthetic activity of leisure does occur in a time that is measurable but that time is antithetical to the sacredness of the act of coming into being. This is a suprahistorical time in which the present measurable time or the “existential” temporality is present and they co-exist (121). This existence is eternity not an historical time. Philosophical leisure as aesthetic experience of communicative praxis offers a rediscovered approach to engagement in the world. Scholarship that focuses on philosophical leisure can also provide new avenues of research in the communication discipline

In summary, philosophical leisure informs communication theory and offers an alternative approach to the enhancement of human communication. This study offers four points of significance that legitimize the continued scholarly inquiry of philosophical leisure. First, few communication scholars consider the engagement of philosophical leisure as an approach to the enhancement of human communication (Welch 8). Negation of philosophical leisure in scholarly literature is not exclusive to the communication discipline.

Second, there is linguistic confusion between the terms, leisure, relaxation, recreation, and entertainment. Often these are used interchangeably when they mean very different things. A linguistic misunderstanding occurs, which consequently creates a negation of philosophical leisure's nexus to human communication.

Third, the study of philosophical leisure can broaden understanding of sophisticated philosophical ideas that are often overlooked in current communication scholarship. For example, philosophical leisure informs understanding of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's aesthetic 'reduplication' (Hegel 3). 'Reduplication' suggests that a human being brings herself or himself into her or his own consciousness through thinking. From this thinking (*theoria*) the human being realizes herself or himself by reshaping external things through setting the "seal of his [her] inner being" upon them – thus, endowing and imprinting the thing with her or his own characteristics (Hegel 3-4). Aesthetic activity, such as philosophical leisure, is a human-made sensuous thing and a "true work of art" (Hegel 4), brought into being through the mind, reduplicating or making overt what was once covert or hidden within. Philosophical leisure is communicative praxis of reduplication and the action of Hegel's rhetorical aesthetics.

‘Reduplication’ is a communicative act and can enrich philosophical inquiry from a communication perspective.

Fourth, philosophical leisure can contribute to the hermeneutic inquiry of the rhetoric and aesthetic interface. Communication scholarship often focuses on the scientific inquiry of human communication. Yet, the aesthetic experience exists in human interaction but is often overlooked. This author suggests that the interface of rhetoric and aesthetics open new avenues for communication scholarship. There have been studies concerning philosophical inquiries dealing with the nature of aesthetics (Mattson 88). However, there are few communication scholars publishing in this area. The emphasis on epistemology in the study of human communication in the early twentieth century shifted to an emphasis on hermeneutics in the study of human communication in the later part of the twentieth century. This study suggests that the relationship between aesthetics and rhetoric ought to be pursued from a communication perspective because the next shift in the study of human communication is in the direction of aesthetics.

Considering aesthetics as a social relationship consummated through answerability informs how communication scholars study human communication. The interface of rhetoric and aesthetics within a hermeneutic setting allows the study of human communication to be viewed as a multidimensional architectonic of humanities research. Considering the study of human communication in this light protects the discipline from the epistemological confinement that is found in the social sciences. We confine the discipline by asking “what is this?” and we open the discipline by asking “why is this ...?” or “how does this ...?” An aesthetic approach to the study of human

communication is grounded in the questions “why...how?” Without the aesthetic approach to human communication, the content of what is studied may be limited.

This study has re-illuminated the idea of philosophical leisure, identified a communication eclipse in human communication and offered philosophical leisure as one remedy that can enrich human communication. A postmodern world is open to competing narratives and stories that can divert one’s attention-in-the-world. Philosophical leisure is one alternative that enables human beings to regain a focus of attention in their world, which can better prepare them for civic engagement and everyday human communicative encounters.

Consummatum Est

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