

LABOR, LEISURE, AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

Author(s): Mortimer J. Adler

Source: *The Journal of General Education*, October 1951, Vol. 6, No. 1 (October 1951), pp. 35-45

Published by: Penn State University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27795370>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Penn State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of General Education*

JSTOR

LABOR, LEISURE, AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

Mortimer J. Adler

ALTHOUGH the title of this paper is "Labor, Leisure, and Liberal Education" and although it begins and ends with a consideration of liberal education, its main concern is with the distinction between labor and leisure. This is so because I have found it almost impossible, in my own thinking about the subject, to understand liberal education except in terms of what its *end* is. And the end of liberal education, it seems to me, lies in the use we make of our leisure, in the activities with which we occupy our leisure time.

In support of this thesis, that liberal education is to be understood in terms of leisure, I should like to proceed in the following order: first, to make some approximations to a definition of liberal education in terms of leisure; second, to try to reach—and this is the main part of the article—a deeper understanding of the significance of this definition by examining more closely the distinctions between work or labor, on the one hand (I shall use the words "work" and "labor" interchangeably), and leisure, on the other; and, third, to draw from this analysis some implications or consequences for the place of liberal education in an industrial democracy like ours.

Let me begin where anyone has to begin—with a tentative definition of education. Education is a practical activity. It is concerned with means to be employed or devised for the achievement of an end. The broadest definition with which no one, I think, can disagree is that education is a process which aims at the improvement or betterment of men,

in themselves and in relation to society. Few will quarrel with this definition because most people are willing to say that education is good; and its being good requires it to do something that is good for men. The definition says precisely this: that education improves men or makes them better.

All the quarrels that exist in educational philosophy exist because men have different conceptions of what the good life is, of what is good for man, of the conditions under which man is improved or bettered. Within that large area of controversy about education, there is one fundamental distinction that I should like to call to your attention.

There seem to be two ways in which men can be bettered or improved: first, with respect to special functions or talents and, second, with respect to the capacities and functions which are common to all men. Let me explain. In civilized societies, and even in primitive societies, there is always a rudimentary, and often a very complex, division of labor. Society exists through a diversity of occupations, through different groups of men performing different functions. In addition to the division of labor and the consequent diversity of functions, there is the simple natural fact of individual differences. So one view of education is that which takes these individual and functional *differences* into consideration and says that men are made better by adjusting them to their occupations, by making them better carpenters or better dentists or better bricklayers, by improving them, in other words, in the direction of their own special talents.

The other view differs from this, in that it makes the primary aim of education the

Mr. Adler has been at work during recent years on an extended series of essays dealing with the primary ideas and concepts in the great books of the Western World.

betterment of men not with respect to their differences but with respect to the *similarities* which all men have. According to this theory, if there are certain things that all men *can* do, or certain things that all men *must* do, it is with these that education is chiefly concerned.

This simple distinction leads us to differentiate between specialized education and general education. There is some ground for identifying specialized education with vocational education, largely because specialization has some reference to the division of labor and the diversity of occupations, and for identifying general education with liberal education because the efforts of general education are directed toward the liberal training of man *as man*.

There is still another way of differentiating education in terms of its ends. Aristotle often talks about the difference between the useful and the honorable. What he means by the "useful" and the "honorable" can sometimes be translated into extrinsic and intrinsic ends. An educational process has an *intrinsic* end if its result lies entirely within the *person* being educated, an excellence or perfection of his person, an improvement built right into his nature as a good habit is part of the nature of the person in whom a power is habituated. An *extrinsic* end of education, on the other hand, lies in the goodness of an *operation*, not as reflecting the goodness of the operator but rather the perfection of something else as a result of the operation being performed well.

Thus, for example, there can be two reasons for learning carpentry. One might wish to learn carpentry simply to acquire the skill or art of using tools to fabricate things out of wood, an art or skill that anyone is better for having. Or one might wish to learn carpentry in order to make good tables and chairs, not as works of art which reflect the excellence of the artist, but as commodities to sell. This distinction between the two reasons for learning carpentry is connected in my mind with

the difference or distinction between liberal and vocational education. This carpentry is the same in both cases, but the first reason for learning carpentry is liberal, the second vocational.

All of this, I think, leads directly to the heart of the matter: that vocational training is training for work or labor; it is specialized rather than general; it is for an extrinsic end; and ultimately it is the education of slaves or workers. And from my point of view it makes no difference whether you say slaves or workers, for you mean that the worker is a man who does nothing but work—a state of affairs which has obtained, by the way, during the whole industrial period, from its beginning *almost* to our day.

Liberal education is education for leisure; it is general in character; it is for an intrinsic and not an extrinsic end; and, as compared with vocational training, which is the education of slaves or workers, liberal education is the education of free men.

I would like, however, to add one basic qualification at this point. According to this definition or conception of liberal education, it is not restricted in any way to training in the liberal arts. We often too narrowly identify liberal education with those arts which are genuinely the liberal arts—grammar, rhetoric, and logic and the mathematical disciplines—because that is one of the traditional meanings of liberal education. But, as I am using the term "liberal" here, in contradistinction to "vocational," I am not confining liberal education to intellectual education or to the cultivation of the mind. On the contrary, as I am using the phrase, liberal education has three large departments, according to the division of human excellences or modes of perfection. Physical training, or gymnastics in the Platonic sense, if its aim is to produce a good co-ordination of the body, is liberal education. So also is moral training, if its aim is to produce moral perfections, good moral habits or virtues; and so also is intellectual training, if its aim is the

production of good intellectual habits or virtues. All three are liberal as distinguished from vocational. This is not, in a sense, a deviation from the conception of liberal education as being concerned only with the mind, for in all three of these the mind plays a role. All bodily skills are arts; all moral habits involve prudence; so the mind is not left out of the picture even when one is talking about moral and physical training.

After this purely preliminary statement, I should like to spend most of the remaining time on the problem of what labor is, and what leisure is, and how these two things are related. For as understanding of these two terms becomes clearer, I think understanding of liberal education and of the problem of liberal education in our society will become clearer.

Let me begin by considering the parts of a human life—and by “the parts of a human life” I mean the division of the twenty-four hours of each day in the succession of days that make up the weeks, months, and years of our lives. The lives of all of us today are divided roughly into thirds. This was not always the case. The lives of the slaves of antiquity and, until recently, the wage-slaves of our modern industrial society were divided into two parts, not three. We are, however, accustomed to think of our lives as having three parts.

One-third is sleep. I include with sleep—because they belong to the same category, and I shall use “sleep” as a symbol of all such things—*eating* (in so far as it is not liberal, in so far as it is quite apart from conversation, eating just to sustain the body); the acts of *washing* and *cleansing* the body; and even *exercise*, in so far as it is indispensable for physical fitness. These things are like sleep because they maintain the body as a biological mechanism.

Sleep, then, is one-third; work or labor, one-third; and one-third is free time or spare time. I am defining the latter negatively now, as time not spent in sleep

or work, time free from work or biological necessities. Now I say this threefold division of the parts of a day (and, therefore, of a human life) into sleep and the adjuncts of sleep, work or labor, and free or spare time is not entirely satisfactory. A further division is required. Free time, it is clear, may be used in two ways when it is not used, as some people use it, for sleep and other biological necessities. One of the two ways in which free time can be used is play—and by “play” I mean recreation, amusement, diversion, pastime, and, roughly, all ways of killing time. The other use of free or spare time I should like to denominate roughly for the moment—I will analyze it more carefully later—engagement in leisure activities. If you say, “What do you mean by leisure activities?” I answer, “Such things as thinking or learning, reading or writing, conversation or correspondence, love and acts of friendship, political activity, domestic activity, artistic and aesthetic activity.” Just think of that list of things. They are not work, and they are not, or they seem not to be, play. Here is a group of activities which occupy time free from sleep and work and which are distinct from recreation or amusement. But the line of distinction is not clear, nor is the definition of the class of activities.

Before I push the analysis further, let me ask another question. Do these four things—sleep, work or labor, play, and leisure activities—exhaust the parts of a human life? I have two answers to the question. If you look at a human life on the purely natural plane, I think these consume all its time. But I think there is a fifth part of life not reducible to any of these four, though I cannot fully account for it on the purely natural plane. That fifth part I call “rest.” Now you might think that rest is identical with sleep, or with recreation by which one is “rested” from fatigue. But I do not mean that when I use the word. I mean by “rest” something that is quite distinct from sleep, an activity that is specifically

human. No animal could possibly rest in the sense which I intend when I use the word. An animal sleeps. I mean rest in a sense quite distinct from play or recreation or refreshment, for all these things are for the sake of work, and rest is not for the sake of work at all.

The only way I can begin to convey what I mean by "rest" is to say the most obvious thing: that it is to be understood philosophically, as the opposite of motion. The easiest way to understand the connotation of the term "rest" is to consider the phrase "heavenly rest" and to ask whether there is any rest on earth. I think there is none because by "rest" I mean not merely a terminal activity, one which is done for its own sake, but also a nonrepetitive or, if I may employ a phrase that I have learned from Professor Simon, an exhaustive activity, one that does not require repetition because it in itself exhausts the need for activity. But I must then add immediately that, as I understand rest, its meaning is supernatural. It is the sense in which God rested on the seventh day, the sense in which the commandments of God bid us observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy as a day of rest. It is in terms of this conception of rest that I distinguish between contemplation and thinking. Thinking, it seems to me, is a leisure activity; contemplation, an activity of rest. Accordingly, if rest exists at all in this earthly life, it exists only, I think, in religious activity, only in prayer and worship and in the contemplation practiced by religious orders. From this point of view, all human life is either work or rest. Everything I have subdivided into sleep, play, work, and leisure becomes, as compared with rest, work, though there are distinctions on the natural plane that make work just one of four parts.

Leaving rest aside for a moment, let me see if I can explain the differences of work, play, and leisure activity. Certain criteria, which are often used to distinguish work, play, and leisure, fail, I think, to define these three things. For

example, persons often use the criterion of pleasure and pain, somehow thinking of work as painful and play or leisure as pleasant. It is immediately apparent, I think, that this is incorrect. Play can be quite painful. What does one mean by speaking of a "grueling" match of tennis, if one does not mean that there is often physical pain in playing a long, fast tennis match? Work certainly can be pleasant. There is actual pleasure in a skilled performance, even if the performance is part of a laborious activity. And leisure activities, if I am right in thinking that learning is a typical leisure activity, certainly can be quite painful. Note, moreover, a very common phrase, one used in school, namely, *school work* or *home work*. Though school work and home work are study and are therefore a part of learning and belong to leisure activity, we call them "work." Why? Because there is some pain involved? I think not. I think we call them "work," as I shall try to show you subsequently, not because pain is involved in them but because we do them under some obligation, under some compulsion. This is the first indication that the meaning of "work" somehow involves the compulsory.

Fatigue is a second criterion that is often used to distinguish work, play, and leisure. All forms of activity can be tiring, and all forms of activity which involve both the mind and the body call for sleep to wash away fatigue. Nor is it true to say that work is difficult and play and leisure are easy, for play and leisure activities can be difficult, too. Nor do I think that the Thomistic division of the good into the useful, the pleasant, and the virtuous will by itself (although I think it comes near to it) perfectly distinguish between work as the useful, play as the pleasant, and leisure as the virtuous. Unless those terms are more sharply restricted, I think one could regard work as pleasant or even virtuous in a sense; play as useful in so far as it is recreative and performs a biological function; and leisure activities, although they may be

intrinsically virtuous, as useful and pleasant. Let me therefore offer a criterion which I think will succeed in drawing the line between labor and leisure and will take care of play as well.

Though it may not perfectly account for play, I would like to propose that the distinction between labor or work, on the one hand, and leisure activities, on the other, is to be made in terms of what is biologically necessary or compulsory and what is rationally or humanly desirable or free. Let me see if I can explain this criterion by applying it. Labor, I say, is an economically necessary activity. It is something you do to produce the means of subsistence. It makes no difference at all whether the worker gets consumable goods immediately by his laboring activity or wages wherewith to buy consumable goods. Let us think of this for a moment in the following way. Let consumable goods—either direct consumables or money—be the compensation of the laborer; and, further, let us assume for the moment that no man gets his subsistence, in the form of either consumable goods or money, without labor. Then the definition of work or labor is: that activity which is required, is compulsory, for all men in order for them to live or subsist and which therefore must be extrinsically compensated, that is, the laborer must earn by his labor the means of his subsistence.

Let us test this. Men who have ample and secure means of subsistence have no need to labor. This is the historical meaning of the leisure class. Provide any man or group of men with ample and secure means of subsistence, and they will not work. I do not mean that they will not be active, that they will not be productive, that they will not be creative. But they will not work. They will not labor in the sense in which I tried to define that term sharply. Anything they will do will have to have for them some *intrinsic compensation*. Strictly, the word “compensation” is here wrongly used. The ac-

tivities in which they engage will have to be *intrinsically rewarding*. What they do will somehow be done for its own sake, since they are provided with the means of subsistence.

Let us consider what I regard as the great experimental station for all thinking about man, namely, the Garden of Eden, peopled by men who have not sinned. Suppose the race of man had continued to live in the Garden of Eden. Not having sinned, man would not have inherited labor, disease, and death as punishments of sin. Man would have had no *need* to labor; he could have lived on the fruits of the trees and the grains of the earth. He would not have played, and neither would he have slept. In other words, life in the Garden of Eden would have consisted entirely of leisure activities. Because the body of sinless man would have been quite different from the human body as it is in the world, there would have been none of the peculiar divisions of life that exist in the world.

Leisure activities, in sharp distinction from labor or work, consist of those things that men do because they are desirable for their own sake. They are self-rewarding, not externally compensated, and they are freely engaged in. They may be morally necessary, but they are not biologically compulsory. You can see the trouble with this definition as soon as you say it. You may ask at once, What is play? Is not play self-rewarding? Is not play distinguished from labor by the negative distinction that it is something you do not have to do? Something that you freely choose to do?

I think we can get some light on how to sharpen the definition of leisure, and keep it distinct from play, by etymological considerations. I must confess to being genuinely fascinated by the background of the word “leisure.” The word which in Greek means “leisure” is *scole*. Notice that our English word “school” comes from *scole*.

Now the Greek word *scole* has two

meanings, just as the English word "pastime" has two meanings. In the dictionary the first meaning of "pastime" refers to the time itself, to *spare* time. The second meaning of "pastime" refers to what is done with such time, namely, *play*. It is this second meaning that we usually intend by our use of the word. So the first meaning of *scole* refers to the time; the second, to the content or use of the time. The first is leisure in the merely negative sense of time *free from* labor, or spare time; but the second meaning, which appears very early in Greek literature, refers to what men should *do* with this time, namely, learn and discuss. It is the second meaning—what one does with time free from labor—which permits *scole* to become the root of the word "school." This, it seems to me, throws a fascinating light on a phrase that was used frequently in my youth when boys of sixteen faced, with their parents, the question, "Shall I go to *work* or shall I go to *school*?" Making this a choice of opposites is quite right, because work is one thing and school is another. *It is the difference between labor and leisure.*

When we look for the Latin equivalent of the Greek word *scole*, more light is thrown on the subject. The first meaning, time free from work or labor, appears in the Latin word *otium*. *Otium* is the root of the word *negotium*, which means "negotiation" or "business." *Otium* is the very opposite of *negotium* or "business"; it simply means time *free from* work. What is wonderful here is that the English word "otiose" is not a very complimentary word—it means "unemployed, idle, sterile, futile, useless." The second meaning of *scole* is translated by the Latin *schola*. This again is a source of "school." Finally, the first meaning of *otium* has a synonym in Latin, *vacatio*, from which we get the word "vacation" and also, interestingly enough, "vacancy."

The English word "leisure" comes down a totally different line. It comes from the French *loisir*, and from the

Latin *licere*; it has the root meaning of the permissible and the free. The Latin *licere* is also the root of "liberty" and "license," in addition to "leisure." I think it is extraordinary to see these three words related in that one Latin root.

In the light of this etymology, I think we can distinguish leisure from play as two quite different uses of free or spare time, that is, *not-working time*. Play may be one of two things. It may be biologically useful like sleep, just as vacations and recreational activities are biologically useful. Just as sleep is a way of washing away fatigue, so a certain amount of play or vacation or recreation has the same kind of biological utility in the recuperation of the body. Play may be, however, something in excess of this. Obviously, children play to excess; they do not play just to refresh themselves. And I often wonder whether this does not have a bearing on the role of play in adult life, that is, whether or not the role of play in adult life is not always a temporary regression to childhood. I ask this question quite seriously, because after one has passed the point where play is biologically useful, all it can be is otiose, sterile, and useless.

One can admit, I think, that life involves two kinds of play: play for the sake of work, when it serves the same purpose as sleep, and play for its own sake. Sensual pleasure is admittedly a part of human life, but only in a limited quantity. Beyond that you have licentiousness; so, too, licentious play is a misuse of leisure.

Certainly, no quality attaches to useless play other than pleasure. I, for one, can see no perfection, no improvement, resulting from it. But leisure consists of those intrinsically good activities which are both self-rewarding and meaningful beyond themselves. They need not be confined to themselves. They can be both good things to do and good in their results, as, for example, political activities, the activities of a citizen, are both good

in themselves and good in their results. This does not mean that leisure activities are never terminal, never without ends *beyond* themselves; it means only that they must be good *in themselves*, things worth doing even if there were no need for them to be done.

The results of leisure activity are two sorts of human excellence or perfection: those private excellences by which a man perfects his own nature and those public excellences which can be translated into the performance of his moral or political duty—the excellence of a man in relation to other men and to society. Hence I would define leisure activities as those activities desirable for their own sake (and so uncompensated and not compulsory) and also for the sake of the excellences, private and public, to which they give rise. This means, by the way, that *leisure activities are identical with virtue*.

It would be an excellent intellectual exercise for students to undertake a term paper under the title “The Parts of Life” and try to rewrite the whole of Aristotle’s *Ethics* without using any of his words; that is, not using such phrases as “goods of the soul,” “goods of the body,” and “external goods.” Let him use only the five words I have suggested—*sleep, work, play, leisure, and rest*—and see if he can reconstruct the whole of Aristotle’s *Ethics* by saying how these five parts of life are related to one another.

Suppose I try now to do a little of what I have just suggested. Suppose we draw a line between economically or biologically useful activities and those which are morally or humanly good, what Aristotle calls the “honorable” or “noble” activities. What results from making this separation? We get a three-fold division: from the biologically necessary, we get sleep, work, and play (in so far as these serve to recuperate the body or to remove fatigue); from the humanly, morally good, the noble or honorable, we get all leisure activities;

and from the superfluous, the otiose, we again get play, but here we mean play as it consists entirely in killing or wasting time, however pleasant that may be.

We see, furthermore, that the very same activities can be either labor or leisure, according to the conditions under which they are performed. Let us take manual work again—for instance, carpentry. Manual work can be leisure if it is work done for the sake of the art that is involved and for the cultivation of an artist. It is labor if it is done for compensation. That example may be too obvious, but we can see the same thing in teaching or painting, composing music, or political action of any sort. Any one of these can be labor as well as leisure, if a person does it in order to earn his subsistence. For if, to begin with, one accepts the proposition that no man shall get food or clothing or shelter, no man shall get the means of subsistence, without earning them, then some activities which would otherwise be leisure must be done by some persons for compensation. This makes them no less intrinsically rewarding but gives them an additional character. This double character causes certain activities to be labor, looked at one way, and leisure, looked at another.

This accounts for the fact that in professors’ lives or statesmen’s lives the line between labor and leisure is almost impossible to draw. In the *Protagoras*, the *Meno*, and the *Apology* Socrates was horrified at the notion that anyone would take pay for teaching. That the Sophists took pay for teaching aroused a moral repugnance in Socrates. This is not a minor matter. It was the first time anyone had done so, and it raised a very serious moral problem. For the first time an essentially leisure activity, like teaching, was compensated.

Not only can the same activity be both leisure and work; but even play, or things that I would call play, can be work for some people. Professional football is

work to those who play it. Think also of all the persons whose working lives are spent in the amusement business.

This leads to further interesting points about the kinds of work. I would like to abstract this discussion from the distinction that Professor Simon makes between manual and mental work, and particularly mental work as preparatory for, or directed toward, manual work. Taking both manual and mental work into consideration together, I would like to make the distinction between productive and nonproductive labor. I would say that work or labor is productive when it is economically useful, that is, when it produces means of subsistence in one form or another.

Here it is proper for the mode of compensation to consist of wages (or, as they are called more politely, "salaries"), with some basis for what we call a fair wage in a relation of equivalence between the amount of labor and the product of labor. Nonproductive labors, on the other hand, are activities which may be called work only in the sense that they are compensated—such things as teaching, artistic creation, the professional work of medicine and law, and the activities of statesmen. Here it is wrong to use the words "wages" or "salary"; and it is interesting to note that the language contains other words. We speak of an "honorarium" or "fee"; but the word I like best is the word "living" in the sense in which a priest gets, not wages or a salary, but a *living*. He is *given* his subsistence. He has not earned it by *production*. He has done something which it is good to do, but he also has to live; and there is a sense in which he can be said to have "earned his living." Here there can be no calculation of fair compensation. When one talks about fees or honoraria, the only thing one can talk about is the amount of time spent. Lawyers very often set their fees entirely in terms of time.

I would like to make a second distinction—between servile and liberal work.

I think it is difficult to draw the line between these two, except in extreme cases, because many kinds of labor or work are *partly servile* and *partly liberal*. But the extreme cases are quite clear; and it is important at least to recognize the mixed cases or the shadowy ones that lie between.

By "servile work" I mean work done only because it is economically necessary and done only for compensation—work that no one would do if the means of subsistence were otherwise provided. "Liberal work" is work or activity which, though sometimes done for compensation, would be done even if no compensation were involved, because the work itself is self-rewarding. In other words, liberal work contains, at its very heart, activities that are essentially leisure activities, things that would be done for their own sake, even though subsistence were otherwise secured. The consequence of this is that the man who is a liberal worker—a teacher, lawyer, statesman, or creative artist—may, and usually does, work many more hours than are required for his compensation. He does more than is necessary to do a fair job for the person who is compensating him, because he cannot determine the point at which his activity passes into strictly leisure activity. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that all his time is spent in leisure activity, though some part of it earns his compensation. I think examples of the research scientist, the teacher, or the statesman make this perfectly clear.

Finally, in terms of these distinctions, there is at least the beginning of an order for the parts of life. It would seem to me that, by the very nature of the terms themselves, sleep and its adjunct activities and play as recreation must be for the sake of work; and work must be for the sake of leisure. Earning a living, in short, and keeping alive must be for the sake of living well. Many of the obvious disorders of human life result from improper understanding of the order of these parts—for example, sleeping for

its own sake, which is at least neurotic and at worst suicidal; working as an end in itself, which is a complete perversion of human life; working for the sake of play, which is certainly a misconception of leisure; or free time as time to kill in pleasure-seeking. Play for its own sake, in order to kill time or escape boredom, is as neurotic as sleep for its own sake. And perhaps I should add the error, which many of us make, of confusing leisure with rest. Among those who share this confusion are persons who think that Sunday is a day to be spent in aesthetic, speculative, or liberal activity or that going to the theater or a concert or indulging in some form of sport is the proper observance of the day. I am not trying to preach the doctrines of a strict Sabbatarian—that is not the purpose of this lecture—but, nevertheless, I keep asking myself, “What can be the meaning of the admonition ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy?’” A day of rest cannot be identified with a day of play; and a day of rest, just as clearly, I think, cannot be identified with a day of leisure, for leisure activities are not rest.

In terms of this very brief and sketchy analysis of the parts of life, and of these fairly difficult distinctions between work, play, and leisure activities, we now can see clearly the difference between vocational training and liberal education. Vocational training is learning for the sake of earning. I hope I step on nobody’s toes too hard when I say, as I must say, that therefore it is an absolute misuse of school to include any vocational training at all. School is a place of learning for the sake of learning, not for the sake of earning. It is as simple as that. Please understand that I do not mean vocational training can be totally dispensed with; I mean only that it should be done on the job. It should be done as preparatory to work; and as preparatory to work, it should be compensated. No one should have to take vocational training without compensation, because it is not self-re-

warding. To include vocational training in school *without compensation* is to suppose that it is education, which it is not at all. In contrast to vocational training, liberal education is learning for its own sake or for the sake of further education. It is learning for the sake of all those self-rewarding activities which include the political, aesthetic, and speculative.

There are three further comments I should like to make on this distinction. First, professional education can be both vocational and liberal, because the kind of work for which it is the preliminary training is essentially liberal work. The work of a lawyer is liberal, not servile, work. In Greece free men who were citizens were all lawyers; there education for legal practice was liberal education. Professional education is vocational only in so far as this kind of leisure activity happens to be a way that some men, in our division of labor, earn their compensation.

Second, liberal education can involve work simply because we find it necessary to compel children to begin, and for some years to continue, their educations. Whenever you find an adult, a chronological adult, who thinks that learning or study is work, let me say that you have met a child. One sign that you are grown up, that you are no longer a child, is that you never regard any part of study or learning as work. As long as learning or study has anything compulsory about it, you are still in the condition of childhood. The mark of truly adult learning is that it is done with no thought of labor or work at all, with no sense of the compulsory. It is entirely voluntary. Liberal education at the adult level can, therefore, be superior to liberal education in school, where learning is identified with work.

Third, if schooling is equivalent to the proper use of leisure time in youth, then the proper use of leisure time in adult life should obviously include the continuation of schooling—without teachers, without compulsion, without assignments

—the kind of learning that adults do outside school, the kind they do in conversations and discussions, in reading and study.

Finally, we may ask the place of liberal education in an industrial democracy. We can do this quickly by considering two basic errors or fallacies peculiar to our society: the first I would call the aristocratic error; the second, the industrial fallacy.

The aristocratic error is simply the error of dividing men into free men and slaves or workers, into a leisure class and a working class, instead of dividing the time of each human life into working time and leisure time. In the last few weeks I have been reading Karl Marx's *Capital* and, quite apart from the theory of surplus value—Marx's special notion of capitalist production—the book, as you know, is filled with the horrible facts about the life of the laboring classes until almost our own day. We must face the fact that, until very recently, the working classes did nothing but *sleep and work*. When we realize that children started to work at the age of seven; that whole families worked—men, women, and children; that the hours of working time were often twelve and fourteen hours a day, sometimes seven days a week, then we realize that the distinction between the leisure class and the working class is something you and I no longer can appreciate because it has disappeared from our society. It does not exist in the world today, at least not in the United States. But, if we consider the past, in which workers were like slaves, the aristocratic error consisted in the division of mankind into two classes, a leisure class and a working class.

To correct this error, we must say not only that all men are free but also that all men must work for their subsistence (which is nothing but a democratic or socialist variant on the biblical admonition that man must eat by the sweat of his brow). You will see the educational consequences of this fallacy when

you stop to think how little point there would have been in talking about liberal education for all men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when much more than half the population had no time for education. It would have been just as meaningless for them to have been given a liberal education, doomed as they were to lead lives of work and sleep.

The second fallacy arises from the fact that industrial production has created an abundance of leisure time for all. I do not mean that the working classes today have as much leisure time as the leisure classes of other centuries. I mean simply that more leisure exists today, *per capita*, than ever existed before. Though industrial production has produced this abundance of leisure, industrialism as such has made all men servants of productivity; and, when productivity itself is regarded as the highest good, leisure is debased to the level of play or idleness, which can be justified only as recreation. The man of leisure is regarded by industrialists, interested solely in productivity, as either a playboy or a dilettante. Leisure loses its meaning when industrial society reduces it to an incidental by-product of productivity.

If these two fallacies are corrected, we reach, I think, the obvious conclusion that in a rightly conceived industrial democracy, liberal education *should be* and *can be* for all men. It should be because they are all equal as persons, as citizens, from a democratic point of view. It can be because industrialism can emancipate all men from slavery and because workers in our day need not spend their entire lives earning their livings. Liberal education in the future of democracy should be and should do for all men what it once was and did for the few in the aristocracies of the past. It should be part of the lives of all men.

But I may be asked whether I have forgotten about individual differences. Even if all men are citizens, even if they are emancipated from the complete

drudgery of labor, it still is not true that all men are equally endowed with talent or have an equal capacity to lead the good life. Let me give you an un-Aristotelian answer to this objection, because I cannot help feeling that Aristotle's opinions on such matters were affected, to some extent at least, by the fact that he lived in a slave society.

The good or happy life is a life lived in the cultivation of virtue. Another way of saying this is that the good life or the happy life is concerned with leisure. The good life *depends on labor*, but it *consists of leisure*. Labor and all conditions that go with labor are the antecedent means of happiness. They are external goods, that is, *wealth*. Leisure activities are the ends for which wealth is the means. Leisure activities are the constituents of happiness. Leisure activities constitute not mere living but living well. They are what Aristotle calls "virtuous activities" or the "goods of the soul."

Happiness so conceived is open to all men, *when all men are both workers and free men*. As regards both work and leisure, each man should do the best work and participate in the best sort of leisure activities of which he is capable, the highest for which his talents equip him. So conceived, happiness is the same for all men, though it differs in actual content, in degree of intensity, according to the individual differences of men.

It is clear, I think, that liberal education is absolutely necessary for human happiness, for living a good human life. The most prevalent of all human ills are these two: a man's discontent with the work he does and the necessity of having to kill time. Both these ills can be, in part, cured by liberal education. Liberal schooling prepares for a life of learning and for the leisure activities of a whole lifetime. Adult liberal education is an indispensable part of the life of leisure, which is a life of learning.