**Contemplation Exercises**

Caleb Cohoe, inspired by Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 10 and Plotinus, *Ennead* III 8, *On Nature and Contemplation and the One*

*Phase 1: Preparation and Anticipation*

Pick an activity or art of craft you will be doing within the next week. It should be an activity you enjoy doing for its own sake (e.g. running, watching a movie or tv show, reading a novel, playing a video game, playing sports, sharing knowledge, going hiking) or an art or craft you enjoy practicing (e.g. baking, painting, woodworking, doing your makeup, fishing, decorating, etc.). It should not be part of your job or something you are doing because of obligations to family, friends, etc. Pick something you would choose to spend your free time on. First answer the following questions:

* What is the goal of this activity or craft? What are you trying to do and what are you meant to get out of it?
* How often do you engage in this activity?
* What do you enjoy in this activity? Why do you continue to do it?

*Phase 2: Practice with and without Contemplation*

In the period leading up to the next time you do this activity or craft, avoid thinking about it or talking about it with others. Then the next time you do the activity avoid sharing it with others (i.e. no telling your friends about it, no taking pictures of yourself doing it or of the product that results etc.). Later this week, do the activity or craft again after thinking about it and talking about it. Sharing what you do with others (i.e. tell your friends about it, take pictures of yourself doing it or of the product that results etc.)

* How hard was it to refrain from thinking and sharing about this activity or craft?
* Did the lack of attention and sharing make this activity less enjoyable? Did seeing it together with others and sharing it make it more enjoyable? Why or why not?
* How much of your enjoyment comes from awareness of and sharing this activity as opposed to the activity itself?

*Phase 3: Reflection*

After you’ve had some time, reflect on and answer the following questions:

* Was the activity as enjoyable as you thought it would be?
* Were you engaged and enjoying the activity the whole time or did you start thinking ahead to the future?
* Do you think this activity contributed to your happiness and made your life better or did it just provide temporary amusement and distraction?

**Submit a reflection which incorporates your answers to all the bulleted questions in Phases 1-3. (300-500 words)**