

The concept of happiness in the new era of leisure*

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Abstract: Entering the "Era of Leisure" we will see how strong is the seeking of happiness, issue which has now full legitimacy in our societies, and even became a marketing issue. To understand what is going on we have to remember that in homogeneous and well-structured society, individual felt happy when approved by the upgrades of the relevant hierarchy. In this context, during the Era of Work, to succeed being an approved professional could be a good base to reach happiness. Nowadays, when clear-cut criteria are no more available and even long round confirmation in the professional field is something that threatens to vanish, individual must look for happiness in a new direction. Now happiness can appear only thanks to intimate and individual Inner resources. This seeking for personal and individual happiness is a by-product of the economical, social and cultural changes in this transitional period between end of work and the new Era of Leisure. The purpose of Leisure Education has to point out the main highlights how can we transform freed time into Leisure state of mind, and upgrade vulgar wellness into happiness. This can be the great opportunity and the important contribution of Leisure Studies.

Key Words: Era of leisure. Era of work. Leisure studies. Educational leisure.

O conceito de felicidade na nova era do lazer

Resumo: Ao entrarmos na "Era do lazer" podemos ver quão forte está a ênfase na busca pela felicidade, tema que tem sido legitimado pela nossa sociedade e se tornando um tema de *marketing*. Para a compreensão do que ocorre, temos que nos lembrar que, em uma sociedade homogênea e bem estruturada, os indivíduos se sentem felizes quando são aprovados por seus superiores hierárquicos. Nesse contexto, durante a Era do Trabalho, ser bem sucedido profissionalmente poderia ser uma boa base para se alcançar a felicidade. Atualmente, quando estes parâmetros não estão mais claramente disponíveis e a segurança no campo profissional é algo que tende a desaparecer, os indivíduos devem procurar a felicidade em outras direções. Agora, felicidade pode ser um indicativo do bom uso dos recursos próprios de cada um. Esta procura pela felicidade pessoal e individual é um produto das mudanças econômicas, sociais e culturais neste período de transição entre o fim da era do trabalho e o início da era do lazer. O objetivo da Educação para o Lazer tem que apontar os principais meios pelos quais nós podemos transformar tempo livre em estado mental de lazer e fazer crescer o conceito vulgar de bem-estar para o de felicidade. Esta pode ser a grande oportunidade e a importante contribuição dos Estudos do Lazer.

Palavras-chave: Era do lazer. Era do trabalho. Estudos do Lazer. Lazer educacional.

Introduction

To be or not to be", Hamlet asks himself, as have many others in every land, throughout the centuries. Hamlet has no problem with existence, but rather with the meaning of his existence.

Day after day, people are exposed to the perturbing question: "What am I doing here?" Worse yet, they ask: "Where am I going?". These penetrating questions are a significant expression of the yearning for happiness. Hopefully, one may realize there is an alternate existence, so that he is carried beyond his physical existence and the weight of his steps, to dream of a bird's vision¹. A dream is

How can man, rooted in his life's circumstances, prevent his soul from going after the light movements of the bird?

Long live freedom! Let's reach out for happiness!

What longing! What confusion!

Man works so hard, sacrifices a lot and pays a high price trying to rebel against the decisions of parents, teachers, governors and their employees who prevent him from attaining happiness.

Man hasn't discovered yet that his real subjugation (slavery) is to his beliefs, his prejudices, and the decisive statements that determine his own life.

Like the bird which gives itself up to the limited space that ensures refuge and food, the individual sees the views commonly held by those around him, as the bars of a mental cage providing a protected but sterile existence.

For the important issue is not the bird but the precious inner being. It is man's responsibility to offer this inner being the possibility of rising up above the common life where he splashes about; existence captured in mortgaged time.

There, on high, when he attains freedom, he will discover, in his inner and intimate being's landscapes, the virgin spaces of his potential self.

To fly far away to ourselves: that can be also the great lesson of the bird which flies through the landscape of our life.

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¹ *Man sees the bird take off elegantly takeoff far from the confined topography of human life. He looks at it gliding peacefully, so far away from of earthy worries.*

something not connected to a reality that, for hundreds of years, has flooded every moment of existence without a real alternative.

Hence, for generations, individual time has been inextricably linked to the right for survival in the community, and if hopes have arisen, they have primarily brought forth a desperate hope, like someone waiting endlessly to win the lottery.

However, in the last few decades, large segments of time have been liberated from a tight daily schedule and from close public scrutiny. The perception of life is now changing to something that is spread over different time spaces, some of which are still mortgaged, some of which have been liberated, and some of which are entirely free. People have discovered that they are separate entities and that they own their lives. With our increasingly deep entry into a new age, which we may call the Leisure Era, the individual is exposed to the possibility of comprehending the deeper essence of time.

The perception of time is the perception of life. The perception of life includes within it different levels of the quest for happiness; a search that is inherent to each person, in that they are human.

In the brief time at our disposal here, we will try to illuminate the concepts of time and happiness, and their relationship to the process in which we find ourselves, between the Era of Work and the new Leisure Era.

I - Time

Time is an infrastructural resource for human beings because it is spread over the course of one's lifetime, during which s/he hopes and expects to experience happiness. Let us differentiate between mortgaged time, liberated time and free time, which express three central perspectives on life.

We will start by clarifying that reality has never been one-dimensional and that people living in the same chronological period lived, in parallel, in "different periods". In the 18th century, small groups in Europe experienced excitement about the incredible benefits of the Enlightenment movement, while at the same time the masses lived with the beliefs and behaviors of the Middle Ages. Today we can also differentiate between different systems of perceptions, beliefs and customs that run rampant, and occasionally conflict with one another – and here is the novelty of our age -on the same stage.

Though some define this as multiculturalism, I prefer to speak of different realms of perception of time and meaning of life. In the West, in which the dominant culture has ceased to display its sole superiority, the perceptions cross, wrestle², and cast a shadow over one another, but here and there also illuminate one another in the fog of concepts that is required for constant clarification.

Mortgaged time

² Consider the Moslem minority attempting to deal with the prohibition of traditional dress in the schools in France, which wishes to preserve the secular nature of the republic.

Human beings who are dedicated to structured tradition do not relate to time as their personal space, as they do not feel that they belong to themselves. The aspiration is that all of their time will be mortgaged to the hundreds and thousands of tasks and roles with which each individual is commanded to be occupied from dawn to dusk, and from birth until death. In this type of awareness, the individual sees himself and his time as belonging to the community of which he is a member. In return for the 'mortgaging' of his time, he receives a framework which is meant to ensure his survival under adversity, a personal identity which is part of the collective identity, and a proper prescription regarding the meaning of his life, which appears to be quite obvious to him.

One's life is thus orderly and controlled by a carefully planned timetable which both the group and the individual (as an inherent part of the group) are required to fulfill, not only on regular days but also on prescribed weekly days of rest and holidays. This control attains practical expression in that most of the individual's activity takes place along with other members of the community. Thus one can see how the commandment of common prayer at specific times, similar to one's attendance at work, is a type of attendance-belonging monitor, as occurs at school, in the army and so forth. Attempts are made to fit life into familiar moulds that can be seen by others. The main idea is for each individual to be occupied most of the time with what each s/he is expected to do. Consciously or not, one knows that control over a person's schedule means control over that person.

In my family tradition, it is told that our grandmother used to counsel men who complained excessively about their wives as follows: "Give her another child! That way she'll be busy with the diapers and leave you alone!". In a similar vein, one can see parents running around trying to find "frameworks" in which their children will spend more time under supervision. In another example, found during the Industrial Revolution, one supposedly decisive in the dispute regarding the great number of working hours in the factories was: As long as the workers remain busy in the factory, they won't be busy getting drunk in the pubs!

Liberated Time

With the development of technology and communications, time has become a kind of Swiss cheese full of empty holes. It is sufficient to recall the many working hours from which agricultural workers were released when the modern combine arrived. We have all seen, at least in films, how large numbers of auto workers in the 1940's and '50's worked for weeks to build a small number of cars, and can compare this to today, when a few individuals can easily make a fleet of cars far more efficiently.

A similar thing has happened with housework. Who can even conceive of life without a refrigerator, without the ability to store food and plan a family menu a week ahead of time? Can anyone even recall how long it used to take a housewife to make three daily meals?

In other words, survival requires less time and the individual's schedule is becoming full of holes in which he is not supposed to do anything; that is, no one expects him to do

anything, and he is not subject to anyone's supervision. If control over one's time means control over that person, the then this 'freeing up' of time leaves one liberated.

I wish to emphasize that we are talking about liberated time that is not yet free time. Liberated time is still just a space that is now 'emptied' out of one's schedule. It is a vacuum that threatens to become a strain, and thus in the end, it will be filled quickly with anything lying around that attracts attention and excites the senses.

Liberated time is empty time³, also time that is free from supervision and tends to become more 'loose' as such spaces of time become greater. The contours of normative conventions dim and even dissolve. In other words, we are witnessing the fact that the hold of the whole over the individual is becoming weaker, particularly vis-à-vis the multitude of alternatives that are now seen as legitimate. In the individual's consciousness, the change is felt as: a cancellation of prohibitions and an increase in options. Nevertheless, freedom can be seen more as a burden than as open horizons; one may feel that, "That's how it is, and there's nothing I can do about it". This is an expression of the individual getting lost, feeling disconnected from direction and dedication, and falling easy prey to all those who know how to hunt the energies that are liberated.

Liberated time is a circumstantial phenomenon. As opposed to this, time which we call 'free' is created by the will and the energy of the individual who wishes to invest in changing time that has been liberated into truly free time.

Free time

Between 'liberated time' (a space that is empty of tasks in any individual's life but that is still tied to moulds of 'mortgaged time'), and free time (the perception of one who is master of his own thoughts), the difference is in the essence.

A free person is one who experiences, in the intimate awareness of his existence, the essence of time, that is: uniqueness, opportunity, perspective and exploration. He then feels inside that time is an open space of his freedom; he is able to understand consciously, that "time is an invention, or that it is nothing" (BERGSON, 1983, p. 341).

This is time that belongs solely to the individual; an open space for opportunities which comprise actual alternatives to what now exists. It is a space that is exposed to that which is novel, beyond the routine and the obvious. Free time no longer requires the borders of a role, nor supervision of its contents.

We find ourselves in the special space of creativity. Here the individual can experience the sensation that he is on the brink of a new "Genesis"⁴, a sensation similar to that of the

night before a journey with an open ticket for any destination (BUBER, 1980, p. 238).

In most places, mortgaged time is cracking and being breached, and liberated time is being created, in which one must determine whether to respond to the challenge to find his unique self, to fulfill his personal freedom, and thus to change the time that has been liberated into truly free time. This is a process that is occurring more and more as the end of the working era (RIFKIN, 1995) is being felt, and as we notice the opportunities found in what we call: The Leisure Era.

II - The End of Work, Heading into the Leisure Era

When we say that we are at the end of the working era, this does not mean that the individual is not required to have an occupation and to develop a professional career. The end of the working era means that one's occupation and workplace stop being the main or even sole focus via which people view almost all of their personal existence.

In the working era, one's occupation and job gave the individual his or her identity and place in the social mosaic. Work was the stable axis around which the individual could settle in a safety zone. It was thought to be very important to remain in the same workplace until one retired.

Today, we know that no job can provide the stability that it once held and every young person today knows that s/he will experience several transitions among different workplaces, may have periods of unemployment, and may have to make professional transitions from one field to another.

There is no doubt that one's profession and job are still central focal points however, everyone knows that it is difficult to base one's entire life on work. *In other words, more and more, people are discovering that life no longer centers on work, and that work is just one part of life.*

In order to understand the process that is occurring at this time, despite the fact that few notice it, we will use an analogy of what happened to women during the second half of the 20th Century. Until that time, and for several centuries, women were seen by others and by themselves in accordance with the specific and central place that they held in the family, as a man's wife, as a mother and as a housewife.

Although today most women continue –with some form or other of help—to manage the household and raise the children, they are no longer identified solely with these roles, and indeed seek out their individual self-image on a broader horizon, particularly in the professional arena. The home, which was previously the woman's entire world, has now become only a part of her life. Similarly, professionals in our day look to broaden the borders of their identity beyond their professional occupation. The Era of Leisure hovers in our consciousness, though it is still vague.

The place of work in life, and not the opposite, is possible due to growing segments of time that are freed up from the time that they used to occupy. We can compare today's 35

³ Diderot provides an interesting definition in the encyclopedia: "Leisure, the empty time that our duties leave us; time which we can make use of in a pleasant and appropriate manner".

⁴ "At this moment, as at every moment, something new that didn't exist until now bursts forth into the course of reality and reveals its many faces... Grace is in one's hands; one has the chance to go back and begin, to go back at any time, to return and start again right now".

Motriz, Rio Claro, v.12, n.3, p. 269-276, set./dez. 2006

hours work week to a 50 hour work week as was common in the 1950's and 60's.

Let us return and emphasize that free time is not leisure, and that for most people, this time is still liberated time that somehow found itself in their hands. *We mentioned previously that time that is freed up is a fact that occurs primarily outside the realm of the individual's will, as opposed to "free time" which is one's willful and personal achievement.*

Liberated time still belongs to the changing Era of Work, while in free time, one can smell the scent of the new leisure era. Those who open up to the new era, know that the space of leisure is a field in which one can discover one's self and one's uniqueness. Gradually, the 'doing' in leisure becomes a replacement in one's awareness of what was previously thought to be obtained primarily via one's professional occupation; that is, of continuity and personal identity.

The space of leisure invites the individual to experience his or her uniqueness. Here one is likely to discover that one's unique identity cannot be just another 'ready-to-wear' identity. Leisure as a state of mind allows one not only to discover his uniqueness but also to find a variety of ways to fulfill it. If in the previous era, the main thing was visible achievement and maintenance of these accomplishments, in this new Leisure Era, the main thing is discovery. From this point of view, the individual who has succeeded in changing his time into free time sees both work and profession as only one field of personal development. We are talking about the fulfillment of the whole person, and the whole realm of performance and observation.

In the spirit of the leisure era, one broadens the feeling of real life in his internal self and his surroundings. This view does not stem from the perspective of societal roles that identify and are identified with, but rather from dynamic individualists who do not cease to discover the many faces in fruitful contact in every aspect of existence.

And so, life is not just another narrow passage that is fit into defined roles, where the individual is very careful not to head into unknown territory. In the Leisure Era, we see that life broadens the horizon. *Thus the individual, full of his varied internality, and free from a limiting identity, can fulfill many roles without becoming locked into any one of them; s/he can dive in and identify with different aspects of existence without being dissolved in them.*

In this new era, the world is at once a small town and a universe; the individual feels and experiences every meeting as a revelation of the world around him, but also specifically, as a revelation of his own self.

Human geography is changing. It no longer moulds the person, but rather the person is the one who creates his own relationship to it. The place no longer dictates the identity of the person; rather the person is the one who re-invents the place.

The course of life in this era can be a great and real journey, where the destination will no longer be the same starting point. It will be a thrilling journey outwards to all latitudes and inwards, to infinite perspectives of self-hood.

This will be a journey not just on the surface of existence but rather into the many folds that are hidden in every site; sites which provide repeated and changing invitations such that the wealth found in these internal folds of individual existence will bloom.

Human history teaches that these processes are personal and not automatic.

With the perspectives that are opened in this new and free era, we can differentiate between numerous pathways to personal processes. Many will feel lost, of course, outside of their routines and of the frameworks from which they have been thrown, and they will try to find some kind of cover in which they can sit once again in passive conformity. For others, these will be happy pathways in which their 'selfhood' will grow and be fulfilled by the strength of their efforts.

The Leisure Era means that people will be free, which means orienting oneself within an ongoing process of an open search leading everywhere; that is the quest for happiness, of course.

III - Happiness

Though we have proofs that the quest for happiness has always been present in human thought, the active contemplation and the practical search for happiness have generally been the prerogative of the few.

It is difficult to speak of a quest—that is always the search for an alternative to a given reality—where personal fate appears to be an integral part of the common fate, and where the whole space of the individual's time is mortgaged to ensure this existence. And if we consider Cinderella, we will recall that the appearance or non-appearance of the savior-prince was not related either to the girl's will or to her deeds.

For the individual mortgaged—both himself and his time—to the community and to its common fate, happiness is a concept that is reserved for another world—perhaps the "world to come", of which the priest speaks in his sermons, where one wins a place there as a direct result of the complete fulfillment of all of the rules determined by his faith. Even in a Greek tragedy, the hero nevertheless stands up and rails against his fate.

There are certainly those who will say that the full acceptance of one's fate has a kind of peace and even happiness in it. However, we are then talking about the individual's acceptance of the existing order without a possible alternative, similar to acceptance of the fact that one cannot fly.

In a documentary film about the tradition of female circumcision, I recall the shocked face of a European correspondent who tried to understand how it happens that women are willing to allow their daughters to suffer. The woman interviewed answered without hesitation in a totally calm acceptance: "We are women; we are born to suffer". This statement came out of the woman's mouth, yet she spoke the words of her tradition and her tribe. The speech was hers but the responsibility was that of the whole tribe.

But what happens to acceptance, which look so similar to happiness, with the expansion of liberated time, when filling this time is not pre-determined in an obvious manner? The individual may be frightened of this vacuum that has no institutionalized tasks or requirements, and is alienated from collective supervision. The fear of a lack of limits and directions shows that the individual finds himself left entirely to his own personal responsibility.

With the broadening of liberated time, the individual is “doomed to be free” (VERGELY, 2001, p. 47) and tends to feel distress that is often expressed in depression. “Depression teaches us about the current experience of the individual, because it is a pathology of a society that is no longer based on feelings of guilt and discipline, but rather those of responsibility and initiative” (EHRENBERG, 2000, p.16).

This is the drama of the abandoned person, without the bands of required frameworks of thought, and without the close supervision of the community; that is, without societal responsibility. He is doomed to be only that which he alone succeeds in being and discovers the paucity of his deeds vis-à-vis seemingly unlimited opportunities. How hard is it for most individuals to look into the mirror that reflects their limited existence when the newspapers and television screens tell about endless, tempting alternatives, where happiness is presented as being just around the corner. “We desire happiness with all our strength, and are disappointed in ourselves because we do not succeed. We hate ourselves and have complaints vis-à-vis the society in which we live” (BRUCKER, 2000, p. 24).

But who said that the time that is liberated from work and from various commitments really does belong to us? Can personal time really belong to the individual when he does not belong to himself?

Only a free person such as La Mettrie (apud NEYME, 2003, p. 58) believes so: “Without hope and without fear--what happiness!” Free from the inspecting eye of the Church, which rallies for hope only in the world-to-come, La Mettrie feels the broadening of the horizon of universal existence, and of the wealth of his human capabilities, which are invited to express themselves without diversion and without fear. The individual is no longer caught on a collective train that leads him along the tracks of a life that has been determined for him; rather he holds the steering wheel of his own fate. The personal journey to happiness can begin.

People are now free to listen to the voices of a different kind of quest for happiness. Justification and ratification of one’s existence are no longer just the result of fulfilling a role properly. And what was just a break to renew one’s physical energies in the working era will become meaningful periods of time that require special treatment. There, in the space external to roles, as opposed to those who look at what is expected of them, the person turns inward, and is now free to become legitimately excited by languid observation of the leaves falling from the trees on a winter breeze, to feel the thrill of the colors that are crowded onto a piece of white

paper, to notice the individual voices in a piece of music, or the magic of a meeting with no defined objectives...

This, of course, is a personal process, and we can see the various stages within it. We refer to the feeling of happiness that is part of something that gives added value to existence, and thus we will not discuss the perspective that is attributed to Epicurus, of the avoidance of an objective in order to avoid suffering. Because absence is not necessarily presence; absence is, like a flat landscape, empty monotony that can calm in terms of a promise for survival, and only that. *Happiness is full and not empty; it is presence and not absence.*

We will begin with the quest for happiness in the pleasures of the senses and try to end by describing something of the pleasure of the spirit. I propose here to make a distinction among three stages of the search for happiness.

1. Happiness of the first order: Here we discover the hedonistic temptation that runs straight to every thing that gives us immediate pleasure. This is a basic feeling of happiness that is available to everyone whose physical senses are in working order. Eating things that are tasty, soaking in hot water, fulfilling a basic need, if only to obtain relief of the pressure that the temptation causes; “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it”, writes Oscar Wilde (1891) who admits that he was not searching for happiness but only for immediate pleasure. However, quite quickly, the individual discovers that these pleasures fade, and leave him in the same place; a kind of horizon that moves away every time we seem to have reached it. *Every person consumes his time*; that is, his life. These pleasures leave him like a dream which is erased as time goes by, as s/he is lifted up and then crashes down into the inertia of existence. Daily life seems to go on automatically, in some kind of ongoing fatal cycle. Time flows for such people like a stream which carries all kinds of inert objects along with it; it also carries along the person who becomes eroded along with his ‘small pleasures’. In fact, we are looking at the presence of marketed happiness; happiness dwarfed by spoiled, soft comforts which dissolves existence into a meaningless mediocrity.

This is a stage which is available to everyone by virtue of their being born. However, one may ask not only for experience but also to understand what he has experienced. Here he will be required to break the vegetative circle of life and turn to a quest of the second order of happiness.

2. Happiness of the second order: As we have stated, liberated time returns the individual to his essence as a free being and to the meaning of time that stops running in an obvious manner. Here the individual seeks to understand himself. The quest for pleasure has ceased to be pleasure of the senses, and has moved from the initial stage of need to the higher plain of aspiration (GONZALEZ- PECOTCHE, 1957, p. 49).

In the first of Kishlovsky’s Decalogue, a ten year-old boy begins his day by successfully performing an exercise in physics, with a visit from a pigeon that has come to eat crumbs that he has laid out for him on his window-sill, and

with a meeting with a nice girl on the way to the store. When a dead dog at the edge of the lake shakes him briefly out of his pleasure-filled day, he asks, "So what if I did my assignment well, so what if the bird came to get the crumbs I put out for him?" The boy wishes to understand the meaning of his pleasures. Happiness is no longer a circumstantial and momentary thing, but rather something that concerns his whole existence.

The human quest for happiness is focused on the effort to understand one's life as a whole, and its destiny. Happiness is seen as the accumulation of illuminating revelations. *This is no longer about simple pleasures of the senses but rather pleasures of the spirit.* The relationship to time, which is the space in which life is spread, is not just as a product for consumption but rather a resource for investment. *One's life is more than the series of events and occurrences that fade into the black hole of anecdotal memory.*

In this second order search for happiness, one deals with life in its entirety and views the time that passes as a space that allows him to extract understanding from the meaningful elements within it. In a quest of the second order, the individual attempts to attend to each discovery, wonder, and happiness, but he is not able to see the whole picture. The quest for happiness does not necessarily promise that moments of happiness will be formed into one whole. This is thus the third level, which demands personal effort as an essential, but not a sufficient, condition.

3. Happiness of the third order: Happiness of the third order is focused on conscious attention to the experience of life, which is interwoven, in a sublime harmonization, between emotion and wisdom. The emotion waits patiently and tolerantly for the clarification of wisdom, and the wisdom respects the immediate utterances of the feelings. Gaston Bachelard (1992, p.103) spoke of the instantaneous metaphysics of poetry. This is the ability to see in every aspect of existence the entire entity, and to become entwined with all one's strength in the balance that prevails in moments of grace; thus all of the powers present at the same moment create a strong, yet fragile harmony. This harmony is strong because it transcends the immediate and instrumental aspects that divide and split life, and the people within it⁵, yet fragile because the experience of real life shakes all of its concepts and balances endlessly (FAURE, 1964, p. 15).

The quest for happiness of the third order is a search that a person performs when he knows that happiness exists, when he has invited it to appear before him, and is able to identify it. We are talking about happiness that is independent of events. *One no longer expects that the circumstances of his existence will provide him with moments of satisfaction. He knows that he is able to extract from the flow of life, in which he is fully present, the array of possible balances between him and the world; balances that join the most intimate feelings with wisdom that attains universality.*

Those who find themselves in such a quest walk back and forth, in happy comfort, between these two presences; between the inclusive presence of the universal and the presence of the individual. They experience the passion of the spirit that "dreams of the world before creating it, and creates it only because he first dreamed it, fulfills himself in it and finally meets his self-hood within it" (MISRAHI, 1983, p. 204).

"And so we go, following the rhythm of the wave, as our infinite essence sways to the finite seas [...]" (BAUDELAIRE, 1857).

One's ability to orient himself in a quest for happiness of this third level is similar in strength to that of a conductor who holds, at the tip of his baton, the many and varied instruments and sounds, from which he *knows* his hand will bring a wondrous harmony that will burst forth from the incredible cacophony of sounds.

Because "time stops flowing; it bursts forth" (BACHELARD, 1992, p. 106). For the person who has embarked on a quest of this third order, time is no longer eroded in the repetitive cycles of life. Now one has been exposed to the hidden purpose of time; that is, to his intimate life mission: the process of creating his unique being --his sole creation.

At this stage, one feels that he has released his real life spaces, and those things he longs to make happen, from the claws of circumstantial conditions. Time, with all that happens within it, has once again become a resource that belongs entirely to him. *This is the realm in which the events do not mould the person, but rather in which the person is the one who determines their meaning.*

The quest for meaning becomes the work of conducting a rich and varied ensemble that allows continual development of a musical score that is characterized by that which it lacks, as in life --a finishing touch.

In Summary

Happiness of the first order is entirely given to the forces that flow in the individual and his surroundings. The pleasures of existence are perceived as small, non-contiguous breaks of expendable existence trapped "inside limiting frameworks, when one surrenders to living a non-unique life" (GONZALEZ-PECOTCHE, 1968, p. 35). Only when the individual is no longer satisfied with these breaks, and listens to the question that comes from within, and asks to know 'what for?', does the second order quest for happiness begin. At this point, the individual attends more to his human aspirations that transcend the limits of need, and cause him to want to look at his life in its entirety.

The transition to a quest for happiness of the second order is not automatic; it is an expression of will and of conscious determination on the individual's part. And the transition from the second level is done via a process of gradual readiness that begins to bud as the individual educates himself in the depth of a quest of the second level. In other words, a second order quest for happiness brings about an array of investment that the person has made in development of his

⁵ "Only those who allow the divine voices to sing within them know how to respect the mystery of the works from which their need to share their excitement with others has sprung".

awareness, the fruits of which will be the gradual transition to happiness of the third order. This is a process that demands freedom of thought, maximal and aware personal availability, central elements that the Era of Leisure can provide for the person who knows how to feel them and wishes to exchange the time that is liberated from the field of functioning, to time that is free and allows for creation; that is, when leisure is no longer only found in one's diary, but rather available to seeing and hearing attentively to life –to the whole of life.

IV - Leisure and Happiness

In a short story, Kafka describes a kind of bodily happiness after an unplanned hike. However, beyond the joy of his walking legs, he feels that he was thus lifted up to his true measure of his stature”.

In Kafka's short description, we are witness only to the fully alive budding that has so much energy as to rise above the inertia in and around him that seemed to block the tombstone of normal routine of that evening. He no longer speaks of the ripening process of internal strengths that are needed in order to extract oneself from the fate that determines the time left after completing all of one's daily tasks.

The common sayings about leisure bear witness to the fact that the common perception is that leisure and happiness are almost synonymous. If we consider the concept that exists in most languages for 'having fun', it usually resembles a short break or holiday that appears as a light among the fog of routine life. It is like the exuberant exit of children as they break into a run to get to the playground during recess, a short vacation or break: the sort of breaks that are full of excitement and take us out of the routine that is mortgaged in an inert life. We are speaking here of a first order quest for happiness, in which the individual lives from one pleasant, short-lived event to the next; a sort of small consolation for a life without bumps, as these sink and dissipate as soon as they have appeared⁶. These are the joys that one often asks for, as if via black magic, when one looks at a photo album and tries to convince himself that he did indeed undergo the experience from which only a simple photo remains.

Yet nevertheless, these can be sporadic memories that point to the possibility of another life; sparks of vitality that peek through from the moulds of the non-life. With the increase in periods of free time, when this extends beyond a break from with the individual returns exhausted (RUSSELL, 1922, p. 33) and alienated, just in order to be swallowed up once again in routine, the individual can wake up to a search for happiness of the second order. A revelation, even in a flash, of an alternative that is more worthy, brings about the desire and nourishes the effort to place happiness in the individual's own hands. The individual no longer asks for more than to use the time of life in a pleasurable, passing way. A desire awakens in him for something beyond this...

He is on the brink of realizing that happiness of the first order is no longer enough.

At the same time, however, we cannot be tempted to think that the Leisure Era is necessarily an age of happiness; “the idea according to which the ‘whole’ person will fulfill himself in leisure is just another utopia [...]” (YONNET, 1999, p. 136). The leisure era is an opportunity in which there is great potential for human society, but also, and to a great extent, the risk of appalling brutality. We must remember that freedom means choosing from among various possibilities, and that human nature has already shown us over time that choices can range from superior light to the depths of greatest darkness.

Not everyone is capable of awakening in himself a change in consciousness as did the protagonist in the Kafka story. Still, the quantitative increase in the number of leisure hours, together with the gradual percolation of the ‘state of mind’ of the leisure era, leads to more and more people attending to the deep voices that express fatigue from passing pleasures without aspirations for something else. For such people, the leisure industry, which usually manages to draw most of the time resources, money and energy that are liberated, does not fulfill them. Confused by the discovery that everything that was obvious is no longer so, they ask at least to understand themselves.

Here lies the real challenge of leisure education. We are not referring to instrumental guidance about how to organize one's leisure time. We are talking about the fascinating opportunity to accompany the individual who has removed himself from the cycle of meaningless consumption of his life and wishes to use the resource of free time in order to retrain himself to have a greater capacity for happiness. The vague desire is still for happiness that includes not only sensory experiences but also their folding into spiritual experiences.

And if the leisure era opens the individual's horizons, the search is the individual's responsibility. “Time is an invention or it is nothing”, Bergson (1983, p. 19) tells us. Still, in order to create, one must have the ability to see, in whatever is revealed to his eyes, the elements available for a variety of possible compositions that are not known in advance but come forth as a result of these choices. To see in the reality of life a kind of infinite canvas upon which a never-ending number of colors meet, in which one can create a multitude of shades, in which one chooses according to his developing will and with his clear responsibility, those elements from which he will create his life; his ultimate masterpiece. Free from prior frameworks, one can –if he wants—not only to experience his life, but also to live it.

In other words, the task will be to awaken, to encourage and to nurture *one's thirst for meaning*; that is, one's desire to shift his gaze toward a quest for happiness of the second order. This is a process that is based on full personal commitment, along with conscious hope that the ability to extract happiness from every life circumstance will bloom within him. When one discovers that time is his own personal resource, becomes aware of the qualities and potentials of leisure, fulfills the prerogative that belongs to

⁶ This recalls the mocking of students regarding their "burnt-out" teachers: *S/he lives from recess to recess, and from holiday to holiday!* Motriz, Rio Claro, v.12, n.3, p. 269-276, set./dez. 2006

every human being, regardless of who they are, and empowers his ability to find himself in unfamiliar spaces in order to discover the meaning of his life, it will not be difficult for him to reply, with respect to Hamlet's question, not only "to be", but also "to be happy" (CAMUS, 1942, p. 163, 166).

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