

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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TIME, LEISURE AND THE ARTS

REFLECTIONS OF A LATIN-AMERICAN ON AUTOMATION

We are living today at such a pace of technological development that it is no longer enough for the businessman or the intellectual, when they consider the problems related to their specific interests, work, politics or specialization, to look just at what these problems mean in present, immediate, strictly modern terms. In fact, the very prestige of this word—modern—is in a state of crisis.

It is in crisis, because it is a modernism which is out of step with the times and social conditions necessary if it is to maintain itself in its present form, and this is what it needs if it is to have any significance as a technological, sociological or philosophical phenomenon. Because of the excessive value given to such a modernism, the glorification of work is about to disappear as the basic philosophy of industrial civilization while as a result of other conditions, such as free time, the various arts seem ready to assume

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the psycho-social place left vacant by this previously glorified work. The glorification of work is philosophically linked to what is commonly called the beginning of the modern epoch of human development, an epoch marked by the appearance of urban industrial capital and by reactions against the economic and social abuses of this system. This epoch has now almost completely disappeared. With growing automation, the classic ideologies of the working class, of the Marxist proletariat, are equally well about to become superannuated. They are images of a reality which no longer exists and which for the rest of the world are hardly more than visions: the fat bourgeois with a cigar in his mouth, the scrawny proletarian in the greasy faded overalls of a now superseded era: that of the machine served, instead of being technologically dominated by man or being directed by cybernetics hand in hand with the highest developments of science, transformed into supertechnique.

Before discussing the relationship between leisure and work in today's highly developed societies and economies, we should first define our terms: the word *otium* is positive and *nec-otium* is negative. The positive is represented by time free of all work, activity and preoccupation with utilitarian subjects. The negative is time completely, or for the most part, occupied by laborious, active preoccupations. Rotary club meetings express, in a way, the predominance of the business sense over the spirit of leisure.

Leisure, the synonym for free time, comes from the Greek word for school. This means that the idea of leisure is related to studies freed from utilitarian and commercial preoccupations. The very derivation of the two words seems to imply a use of time which is not only disinterested in economic profits but is interested in recreation. This suggests the affinity of leisure and free time with the recreative sense of the word art, in so much as art is the expression of personal or collective creativity.

It must be understood that the root of the word recreation does not mean frivolous pastime but continued and repeated creation, therefore re-creation. Hence art is above all a recreative use of time, implying a single or multiple creation capable of transmitting a sense of beauty or a vision more profound than the common one, such as a pioneering genius or artist achieves and retransmits

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to spectators, listeners or readers, sometimes his contemporaries, and in some cases his descendants.

The problem of the relationship between leisure and work in modern economies and societies is becoming increasingly critical for sociologists, government leaders, industrialists and educators.

Sociologists, such as Ernest W. Burgess, who have spoken about this subject, recognize that we are in fact at the end of an epoch where the predominating aim in life has been work and at the beginning of another period, where the ideal of leisure begins to be the reason for existence. This is nothing less than a revolution. A revolution which does not imply the extinction of capitalism, as those who glorify the so-called proletariat as opposed to the so-called bourgeoisie would like to pretend, but its eventual substitution by cybernetic capitalism, modified by automation and the economic reinterpretations of Keynes to such an extent that it goes beyond the philosophy of *laissez faire* and accepts the presence of the State in economic activities. Nonetheless, the role of the State is accepted not as the direction but the regularization of these activities, in the name of the public interest, aiming more at healing than preventing crises and imbalances between producers and buyers; this at a time when crises between capital and labor tend, with automation, to become almost impossible because of the growing importance of the worker as technician in industry and transportation.

When businessmen and intellectuals consider apparently modern problems, they must remember that the ever-increasing actuality of the future makes their modernity transitory. This is exactly the situation of contemporary man faced with modernism in science and technique: it is an ephemeral modernism.

One of the essential modern problems, which is in a sense already post-modern, is that of the transition from a mechanized industrial civilization such as already exists in a considerable part of the world and where the most important problem begins to be organizing the leisure time of the population in the most advanced industrial zones. These people are responsible, in various capacities, for the functioning of industries which are about to pass from the stage of simple mechanization to that of advanced automation.

This technological revolution will have an immense effect on the

organization of inter-human relationships of an economic nature. But it will be equally important on the psycho-social level of inter-human relationships, on the cultural level, on the level of human communications, on the objects of man's preoccupations, creativity and pleasure-seeking activities, whether he be an average man, an aesthete or an intellectually superior individual. Therefore it is not an exaggeration to expect from this new type of civilization an equally new type of man and a new type of relationship with the arts.

We can also count on the re-evaluation of some present aspects of human behavior which are usually considered defects—Latin defects as opposed to Anglo-Saxon virtues, in certain cases—which may come to be seen less as defects and increasingly as virtues. There are Pyrenees upon which Pascal did not meditate and about which Montaigne did not write: there are Pyrenees in time, just as there are in space, which does not prevent these other Pyrenees from being realities. An excess of zeal in endless work is, for example, a virtue on the point of becoming a defect. The ardent conquest of fortune, success and social prestige through an all-embracing work, and at the price of sacrificing other means of expressing individual life and its relationship with the community, is another virtue in crisis.

These are qualities which, along with others, no longer appear entirely as virtues to the sociologist or social psychologist who, doubling as a social philosopher, studies the growing influence on contemporary ways of human behavior of increasing automation and increasing average life-expectancy, both of which allow leisure time to assume more importance than work time. Defects, characteristic of individuals who work without allowing themselves to be killed by work and crushed by the Anglo-Saxon concept of "time is money," are about to be reconsidered in part as virtues. Imagine, for example, the relative speed with which tropical and subtropical Brazil will be attracted to automation. The Brazilian, although living in a tropical climate with which one always associates not only a particular climatic pathology but also a tendency, according to some, for inaction, will have the possibility, because of the progress of medicine, sanitation and hygiene, of seeing his average life-expectancy increased as it has been in the United States and in Northern Europe-

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countries with cold climates, where industrial civilization is based on the incessant activity, for the most part, of people with principally Protestant, more or less Calvinist religion or ethics which zealously upholds useful, remunerative work and frowns upon unemployed time, rarely remunerative.

Because of growing automation we are moving towards an era when time will be relatively free of work and there will be more free time than time occupied with gain, remuneration and work productive of individual wealth rather than collective well-being. I have already discussed at length this subject before a Brazilian audience composed mainly of industrial and union leaders. I would like to discuss this subject again in this article which is to be read by an international public, considering the aspects of the problem which may interest people in various countries who are now living or soon will be living in a period with more free time than occupied time.

One can foresee a new democratization of inter-human relationships, promoted if not introduced, by the increase of unoccupied or free time for all the members of an industrial society whose technique of production and system of work will move from mechanization to automatization and result in automation. The tendency of this type of society will be to provide its members with areas and facilities for recreation and diversion and consequently with greater choice in the use of their free time. Therefore it can be expected that people of different origins, where work, sex and age are concerned, will meet in recreational centers which will replace, on a larger scale, the present day sports clubs and centers.

Once people meet freely in recreational centers, united by similar tastes concerning the use of their free time, the association of these individuals of different origins, milieu, age and sex, will be based more on the preference for certain forms of recreation than on an extension of the hierarchical categories in force at work. The tendency will be towards the readjustment of inter-human relationships and may be capable of rectifying the maladjustments caused by hierarchical differences during work. This is a healthy democratic tendency permitting the democratization of inter-human relationships without denying the differences of aptitude, intelligence, capacity for study, and knowledge of the

individuals who form an industrial complex. While engaged in sports and other free-time activities, individuals find affinities and similar interests with other people with different levels of intelligence, knowledge and culture. Great friendships have been formed between individuals of unequal capacities and this sort of inequality is a constant, more for biological than for sociological reasons, among men linked together for months or weeks by the same tastes or the same enthusiasm for adventure, or for fishing, hunting, sailing trips, mountain climbing, gathering wild plants in the woods, raising canaries, cocks or pullets, all of which remain imperishable adventures in their memories. Among South Americans bull fighting is a taste shared by individuals from different environments.

At this stage, *automatization*, “advanced mechanization,” or “the progressive replacement of human labor by machines,” as Professor Wilson Batalha defines it in his “Automação, Segunda Revolução Industrial,” published in 1961 in the *Cuadernos da Industria* (Rio de Janeiro), differs from *automation* which is concerned not only with work but also with control; human control is substituted by the super-machine. Both of these tendencies lead to increasing free time in industrial societies, causing concern for industrialists, sociologists, jurists, psychiatrists, educators and religious leaders. Pope John XXIII considered this problem, and *Automataria operationes* expresses his view of automatization in the Latin text of his *Mater et Magistra*.

The last time I was in England, there seemed to be an excessive fear of the social consequences of automation on the British system of industrial economy. In West Germany, however, leaders faced with this problem see it not only from a negative point of view but also from a positive one. In 1961 I was invited to attend a meeting of businessmen and intellectuals at the Corning Glass Company in Corning, New York. Among the problems studied were the probable consequences of automation in super-developed societies. Among the participants were not only industrialists like David Rockefeller and Carnegie, and union leaders, but also intellectuals such as Julian Huxley, John dos Passos, Raymond Aron, Salvador de Madariaga. What seemed most preoccupying to many of the industrial leaders and government officials was the possibility of constantly increasing unemployment in societies

where automation is most advanced. Actually, although with automation the opportunities for work diminish for unskilled workers, they increase for skilled workers, and with the increase of qualifications and responsibility, there is more participation of new technicians at a higher level because in industrial production the conventional unskilled worker tends to disappear. As specialists foresee, it is certain, that by developing the possibilities of industrial production, with the aid of automation, the better utilization of nuclear energy, and the ability to produce synthetic materials through chemical processes, the possibility for advancement of technicians at all levels in new industries is also developed. With the appearance of new industries along with more traditional ones, it will be necessary to coordinate the two by using new methods of planning based on the collaboration of technicians and managers, or when there are economic conflicts, by the intervention of the State, which will uphold the public interest but at the same time will not abuse its powers, realizing that totalitarianism may be profitable for some technico-economic, political, or military sectors but that it is not beneficial in the long run to the greater interests of psycho-social or cultural life. The examples of Russia and Red China are very much to the point. In these countries human time is organized by the State which is primarily interested—in its present phase of reconstruction—in utilitarian work by its population. Recreation is regulated according to ideology, functioning on behalf of the totalitarian state. Here the arts, or at least many of them, are declining and with them nearly all intellectual life which is not closely connected to technological development. Russia has made notable progress in technical and scientific sectors, especially in physics and agrarian chemistry. Nevertheless, its architecture, painting, sculpture, music, literature, philosophy and sociology lack creativity and real originality. Thus it seems that Russia is about to enter an era of automation, preparing its people for spectacles, games and concerts organized by the State, without however preparing them for a diversified use of free time which might result in creations or artistic experiences, so different as to be anarchic.

But for Brazil, or other Latin American countries, situated in a tropical climate, and still in the process of economic and technical development, is automation—already at an advanced stage in

the United States, in the highly industrialized areas of Western Europe and in Soviet Russia, which at least technologically is so developed—of more than theoretical interest? It would seem not. We must remember that in a world like that of the middle 19th century where a great part of agriculture and industry was dependent on menial labor, there has been an almost unexpected spreading of the modern working system in those regions where it was supposed that the regime of menial labor would endure until the last years of that century and even until the beginning of the 20th century. The plan for the gradual extinction of menial labor in Brazil, based on this schedule, has failed without positive results for agriculture and industry which, in the second half of the 19th century, depended too much on the increasing archaism of menial labor.

The same thing could happen today, considering the way automated systems of industrial production and automation itself are developing in north-eastern zones of Brazil in certain industries, creating unexpected problems of transition from one type of work to another, problems for which industrial leaders, governments and educators were unprepared. I mention educators because every day it becomes more evident that the technical education of young and even older people, in industrialized areas must be changed so that it is not only oriented to the specialized operations linked with the management of machines which are still dependent on human labor. Automation neither needs nor wants such specialization. It requires instead a greater technical responsibility, a greater knowledge on the part of technicians of the different operations of the system of industrial production to which automation is linked rather than familiarity with only one operation. However, since this highly increased responsibility will be used only during a limited number of working hours, the education of post-modern man presents a problem. It is time that governments and industrial leaders, even of countries such as Brazil, consider this problem, keeping in mind that the future is already a reality in advanced industrial areas. A new era of civilization is beginning when the role of leisure is more important than that of work. Post-modern man needs to be educated more for his leisure than for his work, fantastic as it still may seem to

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most people. Part of this education will be artistic in an active, creative sense, permitting the individual to fill his free time with diverting or creative activities.

Professor Sidney Hook suggests in his recent work, *Education for Modern Man*, that the problem of creative education has shifted from the level where creativity stimulated by education was associated with preparation for a specific vocation to the preparation of men for the use of their free time in an automated society. Professor Hook reminds us that for several years electrical technicians in New York City have worked only twenty hours a week. The problem of education is to know what technicians of all types will do with their free time when they work only ten hours a week. Increasing reduction of work hours in industry will cause a multiplication of what Hook calls "vocational opportunities" but it is doubtful that with increased technological development these opportunities will create situations in which the individuals most able to profit from them because of their education or cultural level will actually make full use of them. At this point, one can discern a maladjustment between supply and demand. It becomes increasingly important to develop a certain type of education which will prepare individuals for the leisure and free time which they will have, whether they be individuals with a diminishing work schedule, or individuals who will be difficult to utilize but who must have their share of the economic advantages of the social system to which they belong and be employed according to their knowledge and training. Probably with this new type of education, humanistic studies will become as important again as scientific studies, even if under another aspect. It is equally probable that not only the highest forms of art will be developed but also handicraft in general as happens in industrial societies whose members have a great deal of free time.

Hence there may be a certain sociological simplicity in the cries of alarm of two brilliant South Americans, Professor Uslar-Pietri and Professor Cosío Villegas, when they ask for a new way of teaching in Latin America, freed from parasitic elements, and emphasizing technical and scientific education. These two critics of the present state of Latin American education stress that in a typical Latin American university, such as the University of Mexico, there are seven thousand law students as opposed to a

thousand students of engineering and one hundred and fifty physics students. But this maladjustment with reality is perhaps transitory. The humanistic elements in legal studies are not parasitic if they are considered as part of an education which must adapt itself to a highly automated society. Entrepreneurs, technicians and scholars, required by industrial and democratic civilizations because of their knowledge of mechanics, automated operations and chemico-synthetic processes, will need a humanistic, artistic or religious type of education as well, enabling them to fill their increasing free time happily, creatively, healthily, but also allowing them to prevent the socio-political system from becoming totalitarian because of excessive political and economic planning of the sort required in an automated society.

What Professor Mortimer Adler has to say on this point in his *Liberal Education in an Industrial Democracy*, 1957, is of importance, but we should not forget the comments of Sidney Hook in his previously cited work. Adler's social philosophy is neo-Thomist; Hook is a disciple of John Dewey. Hook singles out individuals, whose training has been exclusively scientific and technical, as being for the most part insensitive to the democratic values, including artistic freedom, political and cultural ideals of the society in which they live. This explains why in a modern society such as Russia's, whose industry is in the process of becoming automated, even though its agricultural system is still antiquated, the protests come from poets, dramatists, artists, and humanists rather than from physicists, mathematicians, and technicians. Hook also notes the great simplicity of Einstein's political views; his scientific training did not make him particularly aware of the social and political values which constitute the basis of an industrial democracy. Hence the necessity, underlined by today's foremost educators, of an education which trains technicians for the use of their free time as well as for their work. This education will include an artistic education so that they may choose the art form they prefer and also give them an understanding of social, political and legal problems according to scientific, social and humanistic criteria. Without such an understanding of the values of freedom and democracy through the study of history, philosophy, religion, sociology, anthropology, economics, and law, people with scientific and technical training will be in danger of becoming robots in

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a highly automated society ruled by a new type of totalitarian manager.

Government and private enterprise in industrial and democratic societies, in order to solve these problems, employ not only technical, medical and legal advisers but cultural advisers as well. Their role is to aid in the understanding of cultural and psycho-social inter-human relationships conditioned by increasing automation.

I do not think it is too early for cultural advisers to join the already existing legal, medical and technical advisers of the government and industry in the areas of growing industrialization in Brazil. Cultural advisers are necessary if government and private enterprise are to understand the general relationship between work and free time and especially the psycho-social problems of an epoch where the role of work is constantly diminishing and art, meditation, recreation, religion and cultural values are taking its place. The arts will not have this role alone since philosophy, religion and recreation are beginning to be authentic values for the man of the atomic era. In some countries, like Sweden, which were unprepared for this change, there is today an acute crisis of psychological maladjustment that is not compensated for but indeed aggravated by technological progress. This may be a reason for the high suicide rate among the rich compared with the limited number of suicides among poor people of countries such as Portugal: the illiterate Portuguese is happy in his poor village.

Which of the arts—using that word in its broadest sense—tends to fill the leisure time of modern man? Who are the artists he likes and admires? This depends, on one hand, on the psychological, social and cultural tradition of the society in which he lives, and on the other hand, on his own particular disposition as a modern individual who conserves respect for traditional forms of artistic significance. As far as Brazil and South America are concerned, there is a clear indication that along with the psychological, social and cultural traditions of Brazilian society there is a predominant taste for music—be it African or indigenous music or music which stems from the Catholic tradition. However, there are other artistic traditions which, with the increase of free time for a greater number of Brazilians, will provide them with considerable artistic activity. Among these traditions are ceramics, wood sculpture, lace work, cabinet-making and cooking.

Here we touch on a subject which requires particular attention. With the increase of free time for a greater number of Brazilians, the problem of artistic and social activities, culturally conditioned by sex, is to be considered from a new angle. Probably social conventions which have suppressed artistic expressions in one sex or another will be overcome: men may embroider, cook, design clothes and women may carpenter.

The increase of leisure time in a civilization where men and women will be free to dispose of the greater part of their time according to their most basic interests may revolutionize the conventions which at present govern the artistic activity of the individual whose social and cultural expression is determined by his sex. A man with more leisure time will be free to dispose of it outside of the framework of activities linked to profession or sex, in order to satisfy those tastes that existing conventions have repressed and he may give himself completely to embroidery, lace work or cooking. The same thing could happen to women who with more free time, will be able to dedicate themselves to arts of their own choice although they may contrast with conventional ideas about which professional activities should belong to men and which to women. The de-professionalizing of these activities will probably create for individuals of both sexes more freedom of choice for the satisfaction of their artistic tastes which have been stifled by tyrannical conventions which still exist in modern societies and which determine that some work belongs to one sex and is dishonorable for the other.

More leisure time will probably result in the increased participation of the middle-aged of both sexes in art or science courses in universities. It is an erroneous belief that universities are for young people and that artistic and scientific training is a privilege reserved for young people and adolescents. It is no longer their preserve.