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The progress paradox

This is one of the big American culture paradoxes (Reese 13). In this paradox, the main focus of the writer is the use of the economic will and financial power of the American people. The writer argues for the popular belief that money cannot buy happiness. Based on the researches and surveys that the writer has managed to compile for the last 50 years, the degree of happiness and satisfaction has not changed for that period of time. Throughout this article, the writer attempts to show how the materialistic acquisitions has continue to increase yet the people, for instance the Americans have continued to be an un happy lot (Schwartz 34).

The incomes of the American people have continued to improve over the last few years. despite this fact, there is still wide spread complains from the American workers on the poor wages and the gap between the rich and the poor. Most of the American people to day live on incomes that their fore fathers would have considered a pipe dream. It is noted that there today more demonstrations and debates on the average American person than in the past. Another aspect that has improved throughout this time is Medicare. In the current society, there is at least a drug for everything (Edwards 34). For the men who are not naturally masculine, there are drugs availed for that. Similarly, for women who need a curvy body, there are drugs and injections to boost their curves. For those who are not able to obtain any sleep, pills have been made. Despite all these, there still complains on the poor state of the American people. The poor health is instead blamed on the junk foods that importantly to note, are very expensive. Pollution and

global warming are other factors that have led to the poor health of the American people. The pollution is mainly from the industries that over the decades have made America one of the economic power houses. The housing section has also improved drastically over the years yet the American majority still complains of poor housing. America today has one of the best architectural designs. Houses even in the so called slums have been made to be able to warm and cool depending on the temperatures outside. Trash from the American homes don't have to be carried around, they are just slid through ducts (Reese 35) .

The above examples clearly show how money cannot actually buy happiness. Throughout this chapter, the author tries to show how people in the western world live lavishly under opulence yet they remain unhappy than the people in the underdeveloped world. They actually take the luxuries that they have for granted. A keen look at all of the above aspects that have been implied by the author of the progress paradox can prove the contrary (Edwards 45) .

From the chapter on the paradox of progress, in an average house in America, there are 5.3 rooms for about 2.6 people. This implies that each American has an average of 2 rooms for his or herself. To build, rent or mortgage such a house, one requires hundreds of thousands of American dollars as at least yearly income. Americans who make such amounts of money on a yearly basis are considered wealthy and rich and should be able to buy happiness (Schwartz 16). Based on this fact, it is quite amazing to find that there are still homeless people in America. Numerous cases of teenagers running away from their homes (where they have two bedrooms for themselves) that they are unhappy. In most cases, their main issue of concern is the infringement of their privacy and freedoms. These children end up in social services centers claiming that they are mistreated in their homes. In these social centers, their right to privacy and freedom is actually

lost. They share rooms and bathrooms. Their movements are always monitored and as far as the author is concerned this is a distressed life (Gillon 52).

In the contrary, there is a lot of happiness that come with having two rooms for oneself. It is important to note that there are some instances where some people seem to be dissatisfied with this particular aspect of having two rooms to oneself. These cases are few and countable and in most cases are teenagers who are still struggling to get their identity in the society. In most normal cases, having an average of two rooms to one's self has a lot of pleasures and happiness that can be derived (Schwartz 26). One of the happiness and privileges is a lot of privacy. When everybody has two rooms to his or herself, there is no reason for one person to go to the others room. Through this, one is able to arrange and maintain the room the way he or she wants. A degree of personal order goes a very long way to make one very happy. Cleanliness can be easily maintained and that makes anybody happy. Having two rooms also enables one to be self-contained in that one can do everything within the confines of the rooms. According to a recent research, one of the reasons for dissatisfaction and distress among most of the American people apart from the work places and workmates are the family members. As much as it may seem draconian, to be able to minimize contact with them can make one happy (Reese 45).

Studies have also proven that one of the major sources of happiness is friends. This implies more happiness can be derived when these friends can stay. Living with friends means that one has more happy times. This is the kind of happiness that the money, directly associated with a big house can buy (Harris 24). The poor who cannot afford the multi roomed house may not be able to enjoy the privilege of having friends coming over. This can be attributed to the fact the lack of privacy that comes with sharing rooms especially with siblings. This can be a source of conflicts amongst the siblings and between the siblings and friends. Constant conflicts make

more than 75% of the Americans unhappy. To that effect, it is quite clear that the money that has enabled one build or leave in a big house has actually bought happiness (Gillon 67).

The amount of income that one earns is another factor that is largely addressed in the chapter on the progress paradox. There have been cases of very rich people committing suicide and blaming it on unhappiness. Some even go to the extent of having sleepless nights wondering on how to spend their money, meetings or the fear of being robbed (Edwards 64). The accountants that they have managed to employ to give them advice on how to spend money, the personal assistants that they have to attend meetings on their behalf and the security personnel and equipment that they have deployed seems not to be solving the problems. This has forced them to turn to sleeping pills which have a very long time in their health. The rich have the problem of poor mannered off springs and even spouses. Their children are usually involved in drug and alcohol abuse and bullying. Unfaithfulness is the order of the day in such families. This is unhappiness that according to the paradox cannot be helped with money (Reese 56).

On the contrary, a lot of money comes with several pleasures. Having children that go to the best schools around and leaving in a big house is pleasurable (Harris 87). The fact that you are able to give people a source of income as guards, personal assistance and accountants definitely brings about happiness. Being able to move from one point to another in a good car makes happy. The rich compared to the poor can afford to take their spoilt children to the best rehabilitation centers. It is not a deniable fact that even the children from poor families also suffer from drugs and alcohol abuse. Instead of being rehabilitated, they are usually left to rot in the society. In this way the poverty in their families continues for generations. It is these poor spoilt children who become future peddlers, robbers and homeless (Edwards 97).

In conclusion, in America at least, money can buy happiness. This fact should not be confused to imply that there is a happiness store where the rich can go to buy happiness but there are a lot of things that a rich person can have that the poor cannot have. As it quite evident above, there is no happiness in the lack of money both pure suffering or perseverance (Gillon 74).

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