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To live well: health care or life project? Part II[☆]



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Abstract On the basis that *life project* is the driving force behind the *life experience*, the quest for human dignity is the way for real progress and the improvement of human condition. The need to be aware of the *meaning of life* is pointed out, understanding the motives behind our will to live, which are the antecedent of a life project.

The proposed life project is a cognitive adventure, capable of transcending consumerism, individualism and passivity, toward the creation of a more inclusive world where the human dignity has a viable improvement in a spiritual, intellectual and moral way.

This life project entails a primary need: to link oneself with like-minded people that synergize against the prevailing order; a core, the everlasting struggle for *sublimated dignity*; a desideratum, the well-being of the majority; and an unavoidable purpose, the creation of a suitable world build on different ethical, political, lawful, cognitive and ecological foundations.

In conclusion, this paper analyzes the influence of projects with an alternate proposal to the endeavors centered in health care that favor individualism, passivity and the current status quo. The best example of the mentioned alternative plans is the commonly called “good death”.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Sentido de la vida;
Proyecto vital;
Experiencia vital;
Dignidad;
Individualismo;
Pasividad social;
Bien morir

El bien vivir: ¿cuidado de la salud o proyecto vital? Segunda parte

Resumen El *sentido de la vida*, la razón profunda del anhelo de vivir y la motivación para actuar en consecuencia, es el antecedente del *proyecto vital*. Se argumenta cómo la lucha por la dignidad es el verdadero derrotero de superación de la condición humana y el eje de proyecto vital que aspiran al *bien vivir*.

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El proyecto vital que se propone es una aventura cognitiva que trasciende el consumismo, el individualismo y la pasividad en la búsqueda de otro mundo hospitalario e incluyente, donde tenga viabilidad la superación espiritual, intelectual y moral de la dignidad humana. Este proyecto vital entraña una necesidad primaria: vincularse con otras subjetividades afines; un núcleo: la lucha incesante por la *dignidad sublimada*; un desiderátum: el bien vivir de las mayorías; y un propósito indeclinable: la edificación sobre otros basamentos éticos, políticos, jurídicos, cognitivos y ecológicos, de un mundo propicio para el bien vivir.

Se arguye acerca de la superioridad de proyectos vitales altruistas en la consecución del bien vivir comunitario, sobre los afanes centrados en la preservación y el cuidado de la salud que favorecen el individualismo, la pasividad y el statu quo. La búsqueda del “bien morir” es el mejor ejemplo de la influencia benéfica de este tipo de proyectos en el cuidado de la salud.

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“...I think that old age is a good age to
fight for human dignity.... like any other.”

Bertrand Russell

1. Introduction

The *meaning of life* (ML) concerns the profound and intimate motives that generate the desire to live in a certain way and the motivation to act accordingly. Some examples are starting a family, loved ones, passion for knowledge, job satisfaction, the pursuit of goals, religion, fighting for certain ideals and values, or helping those who are in need. Some of these or other reasons are the underlying cause for the touching and admirable strength of some adults to overcome adversity, persevere in “the impossible”, perform “the unattainable”, or beat “the impossible”, which reflect vigorous life projects. At present, using individualism as a life philosophy and its counterpart: “every man for himself” in the middle of a wide social decomposition, ML usually is related to family ties and commitments, which imply tacit vital projects aimed, for example, to self-reliance, a safe and gainful job, recreational activities, or health, whose realization is getting increasingly inaccessible for most of the population.

Alluding the point of view of an acute thinker and activist who considers the “struggle for human decency” on all possible fronts, the vital priority *par excellence* at any age.¹ This maxim, as opposed to individualism, reveals ways of thinking and acting of a reality-enlightened conscience of the world and the roots of human problems, aimed at the defense of dignity as the objective of this philosopher, who enlightened his time. Also, with this judgment and his biography, we infer the ML for this deliberative character: the passion for knowledge, where he caught the subjective interdependence in achieving a better world. He recognized dignity as the highest and universal value involved in the growth of the human condition, and he struggled for its preservation as the primary goal of his life (life project).

The life project (LP) is understood as an “evaluative perspective of the personal experience that articulates and orients the decisions, actions and plans for achieving objectives and fulfilling meaningful life purposes.” Currently, hoping for a world where *living well* and having a compelling personal LP requires—quoting Russell—involvement in the struggle for human dignity.¹ This fight, given the intricate problems that humanity suffers—which common denominator is threatening, impairing, or nullifying (usually in a subtle manner) the most elemental dignity—merits a new meaning to recognize and deal with the degrading effects of greediness without limits, with the individualism and with passivity, which numbs us about the generalized debasement that affects everyone (in different forms and extents) and, therefore, is incumbent on all of us.

The idea is to reframe the struggle for dignity beyond its current connotation that downgrades it to the frivolous and individualistic, identifying progressive levels, as phases of a cognitive, collective, and endless process:

- a) The first step would be strengthening values involved in the spiritual, intellectual, and moral improvement of the human condition; this is the level of depth and altruistic dignity
- b) The pursuit of such dignity in exercising new forms of liberty, approaching to higher modes of coexistence integrating horizontal organizations with prominent ties of cooperation, synergy, and solidarity, where individual participation leads to collective self-management of the chosen conditions and circumstances of life; it represents the next level of the freed and self-determined dignity
- c) These LP together, handlers of life’s terms and circumstances, would not be so without a clear awareness of the overall life process, as a matrix which generates all life forms—including the human—in its permanence and evolution^{2,3}; this consciousness implies an appreciation of life as a whole; the struggle for dignity is widespread to other forms of life, as unswerving moral responsibility

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