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Passage 1: John Ciardi writes about the **PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

- 1 The idea “happiness” to be sure, will not sit for easy definition: the best one can try is to set some extremes to the idea and then work in toward the middle. To think of happiness as acquisitive and competitive will do to set the materialistic extreme. To think of it as the idea one senses, in say, a holy man of India will do to set the spiritual extreme. That holy man’s idea of happiness is in needing nothing from outside himself. In wanting nothing, he lacks nothing. He sits immobile, rapt in contemplation, free even of his own body. Or nearly free of it. If devout admirers bring him food, he eats it; if not, he starves indifferently. Why be concerned? What is physical is an illusion to him. Contemplation is his joy and he achieves it through a fantastically demanding discipline, the accomplishment of which is itself a joy within. 5 10
- 2 But, perhaps because I am Western, I doubt such catatonic happiness, as I doubt the dreams of the happiness-market. What is certain is that this way of happiness would be torture to almost any Western man. Yet these extremes serve to frame the area within which all of us must find some sort of balance. Thoreau – a creature of both Eastern and Western thought – had his own firm sense of that balance. His aim was to save on the low levels in order to spend on the high. 15
- 3 Possession for its own sake or in competition with the rest of the neighbourhood would have been Thoreau’s idea of low levels. The active discipline of heightening one’s perception of what is enduring in nature would have been his idea of a high. What he saved from the low was time and effort he could spend on the high. Thoreau certainly disapproved of starvation, but he would put into feeding himself only as much effort as would keep him functioning for the more important efforts. 20
- 4 Effort is the gist of it. There is no happiness except as we take on life-engaging difficulties. Short of the impossible, as Yeats put it, the satisfactions we get from a lifetime depend on how high we choose our difficulties. Robert Frost was thinking in something like the same terms when he spoke of “The pleasure of taking pains”. The mortal flaw in the advertised version of happiness is in the fact that it purports to be effortless. 25
- 5 We demand difficulty even in our games. We demand it because without difficulty there can be no game. A game is a way of making something hard for the fun of it. The rules of the game are an arbitrary imposition of difficulty. When the spoilsport ruins the fun, he always does so by refusing to play by the rules. It is easier to win at chess if you are free, at your pleasure, to change the wholly arbitrary rules, but the fun is in winning within the rules. No difficulty, no fun. 30
- 6 The buyers and sellers at the happiness-market seem too often to have lost their sense of pleasure of difficulty. Heaven knows what they are playing, but it seems a dull game. And the Indian holy man seems dull to us, because he seems to be refusing to play anything at all. The Western weakness may be in the illusion that happiness can be bought. Perhaps the Eastern weakness is in the idea that there is such a thing as perfect (and therefore static) happiness. 35

- 7 Happiness is never more than partial. There are no pure states of mankind. Whatever else happiness may be, it is neither in having nor being, but in becoming. What our Founding Fathers declared for us as an inherent right, we should do well to remember, was not happiness but the pursuit of happiness. What they have underlined, could they have foreseen the happiness-market, is the cardinal fact that happiness is in the pursuit itself, in the meaningful pursuit of what is life-engaging and life-revealing, which is to say, in the ideas of becoming. A nation is not measured by what it possesses or wants to possess, but by what it wants to become. 40 45
- 8 By all means let the happiness-market sell us minor satisfactions and even minor follies so long as we keep them in scale and buy them out of spiritual change. I am no customer for either puritanism or asceticism. But drop any real spiritual capital at those bazaars, and what you come home to will be your own poorhouse. 50

Passage 2: Erich Fromm writes about **OUR WAY OF LIFE**

- 1 In general our society is becoming one of giant enterprises directed by a bureaucracy in which man becomes a small, well-oiled cog in the machinery. The oiling is done with higher wages, fringe benefits, well-ventilated factories and piped music, and by psychologists and “human relations” experts; yet all this oiling does not alter the fact that man has become powerless, that he does not wholeheartedly participate in his work and that he is bored with it. In fact, the blue- and the white-collar workers have become economic puppets who dance to the tune of automated machines and bureaucratic management. 5
- 2 The worker and employee are anxious, not only because they might find themselves out of a job (and with installment payments due); they are anxious also because they are unable to acquire any real satisfaction or interest in life. They live and die without ever having confronted the fundamental realities of human existence as emotionally and intellectually productive, authentic and independent human beings. 10
- 3 Those higher up on the social ladder are no less anxious. Their lives are no less empty than those of their subordinates. They are even more insecure in some respects. They are in a highly competitive race. To be promoted or to fall behind is not only a matter of salary but even more a matter of self-esteem. When they apply for their first job, they are tested for intelligence as well as for the right mixture of submissiveness and independence. From that moment on they are tested again and again – by the psychologists, for whom testing is a big business, and by their superiors, who judge their behaviour, sociability, capacity to get along, etc., their own and that of their wives. This constant need to prove that one is as good as or better than one’s fellow-competitor creates constant anxiety and stress, the very causes of unhappiness and psychosomatic illness. 15 20
- 4 The “organisation man” may be well-fed, well-amused and well-oiled, yet he lacks a sense of identity because none of his feelings or his thoughts originates within himself; none is authentic. He has no convictions, either in politics, religion, philosophy or in love. He is attracted by the “latest model” in thought, art and style, and lives under the illusion that the thoughts and feelings which he has acquired by listening to the media of mass communication are his own. 25
- 5 He has a nostalgic longing for a life of individualism, initiative and justice; a longing that he satisfies by looking at Westerns. But these values have disappeared from real life in the world of giant corporations, giant state and military bureaucracies and giant labor unions. He, the individual, feels so small before these giants that he sees only one way to escape the sense of utter insignificance: He identifies himself with the giants and idolises them as the true representatives of his own human powers, those of which he has dispossessed himself. His effort to escape his anxiety takes other forms as well. His pleasure in a well-filled freezer may be one unconscious way of reassuring himself. His passion for consumption – from television to sex – is still another symptom, a mechanism which psychiatrists often find in anxious patients who go on an eating or buying spree to evade their problems. 30 35

- 6 One of the strangest aspects of this mechanical approach to life is the widespread lack of concern about the danger of total destruction by nuclear weapons; a possibility people are consciously aware of. The explanation, I believe, is that they are more proud of than frightened by the gadgets of mass destruction. Also, they are frightened of the possibility of their personal failure and humiliation that their anxiety about personal matters prevents them from feeling anxiety about the possibility that everybody and everything may be destroyed. Perhaps total destruction is even more attractive than total insecurity and never-ending personal anxiety. 40 45
- 7 Am I suggesting that modern man is doomed and that we should return to the pre-industrial mode of production or to the nineteenth-century “free enterprise” capitalism? Certainly not. Problems are never solved by returning to a stage which one has already outgrown. I suggest transforming our social system from a bureaucratically managed industrialism in which maximal production and consumption are ends in themselves into a humanist industrialism in which man and the full development of his potentialities – those of love and reason – are the aims of all social arrangements. Production and consumption should serve only as means to this end, and should be prevented from ruling man. 50 55