146 - RISK AND DIZZINESS IN THE IMAGINARY WORLD OF UNDERWATER FISHING ENTHUSIASTS

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As can be verified nowadays, various activities that serve as a form of survival for our animal species were reinvented to accommodate the emerging necessities of modern man. They then went on to constitute a new culture, where games became more radical, where the risks experienced were taken to the extreme. The important thing, in the name of playfull sportsmanship, is to seek to increase the challenges, trying to reach the highest peaks of the earth in search of Zeus, seeking to improve aerodynamics to fly faster than Icarus, to dive ever deeper to the bottom of the seas to find Poseidon, dribbling natural and urban obstacles on a board with four wheels with the spirit of Dionysus.

As such, for us to understand the risks and challenges that the neo-adventurers wage on the elements of nature (such as: the sky, rivers, sea, mountains and forests), a qualitative research project of an interpretive ethnographic nature was used, aimed at the sensations reported by those subject to risk and dizziness in the territory of underwater fishing.

Risk in modern society behaves like a question of administration and the principles of probability can be studied to control the result. Uncertainty is an element present in games and sports of risk; to Bernstein (1997), it is also found in the processes of decision-making in modern life, seeing as the risk is in the consequences. And the element of surprise, random, is common in a system that depends on predeterminability and probability. This means that, despite all the rationalization that one employs to maximize the usefulness of the results, the uncertainty of these will always be present, and the risks, too.

Martín (1996) defends the thesis that sports, mainly those involving manifestations of risk and adventure, are adopted and ritualized by modern-day societies as a form of reproducing the context of their culture.

This author adds that we find ourselves in a world founded upon complexity, where men must be permanently prepared to confront day-to-day situations of risk. The search for risky activities serves the purpose of putting individuals to the test, with the intent that they can, in better conditions, live life in these globalized times, where, in adventure sports, one can find values such as uncertainty, challenge, overcoming limits and risk. In modern day societies, the adventure-sport opens up a channel that permits human beings, by free choice, to seek out calculated dares that can prepare them to face the imminent risks of a future which is more and more uncertain.

Costa (2000) supports this line of argument explaining that:

The culture of entrepreneurial excellence and the growing privatization of risks in today's society remit us to the increase in socio-economical and political uncertainties faced with an extremely uncertain future, full of contingencies, that presents itself as a result of our own decisions. Decisions that require knowing how to evaluate, plan and calculate in order to be able to face the surrounding uncertainties through a pondering of the contingencies that happen to us. (P. 90)

Le Breton (1995), demonstrates that modern passions of risk are born of the moral disharmony that emerges in occidental societies, from a highly polluted present and a practically unforeseeable future. The individual, upon facing the world, checks his limits, giving them meanings. His self-inflicted death tests the worth of his existence. Paradoxically, this concerns a society that enjoys an environment of safety never before seen in history. Unsatisfied, he leads himself to leisure in which he ignores the risk, but in which he overestimates his capacities and seeks to surpass them more all the time.

This author says that, if risking is not a measure of the will, it is a personal choice that generates courage. Le Breton speaks of the “contraphobic” attitude, in which an individual, instead of avoiding or fleeing from risk situations, launches himself at them. This deals with a refined manner of fighting against anguish, throwing oneself at it. An urge for a fightout with the test. Once the fear is faced, it is dissipated and one feels the temporary, pleasing sensation of having dominated it.

Looking through this prism, we can then say that the risk faced by post-modern adventurers comes to a meeting with that which Maffesoli (2003) presented, when he said that “excess is a form of pleasure”. In search of this pleasure, post-modern man tries to surpass himself through challenges, and to this end, he makes use of sports of risk and adventure in natural surroundings in order to flee from the chaotic situation in which he finds himself, from the collapse of the family environment and from his own disbelief in social structures, among other things. The situations encountered in these sports make individuals “turn themselves inward to the cowardices of their ways of being, isolated and feared, those which, we can be sure, generate resentment that is, in the end, deadly”. (p. 91)

This sociologist adds that, the harder and more difficult life structures turn themselves, the more men present the will to live. This makes societies go on to realizing manifestations in which excess serves as an escape mechanism from day-to-day monotony.

In a dialog with diver and fisherman Tarcísio, we can identify exerpts that run along the lines of that which was presented by Maffesoli:

The fish is a consequence; even today, we went diving, but didn't catch anything. There were small fish around, but nothing worth capturing. When I leave the house to go underwater fishing, I leave intending to enjoy myself; if there are fish, great; if not, that's okay, I get off on the sea. In all truth, underwater fishing, the fish, are motives for you to not be just anybody, you know, like so many others around you. It's a way for you to not end up hanging out boozing up on street corners without objectives.

The sea, for being an uncertain environment subject to the most varied forms of adversities, provides the neo-adventurers with a perfect place for letting their angers flow, for releasing their excesses. Upon penetrating it, underwater fisherman seek to control, to the maximum, the variables that can compromise their performance while diving, i.e., they try to minimize the risks. Nevertheless, they will always be at the mercy of the imponderable. To exemplify what we said above, we transcribe here an account found in an article, from an e- magazine, about underwater fishing on the open sea, more precisely in the Pacific Ocean.

I know a diver who was near the surface, out of breath, after a big fight with 15 kg fish. His float line loosely curled up around the diving knife that was strapped to his leg. Since the surface was near and the fish was knocked out, he wasn't really bothered. Suddenly, a seal, weighing approximately 200 kg, got hold of the fish and dragged the diver, who was in need of air, downward, precisely when he was about to reach the air of survival at the surface. “Terry, at that moment I knew I was a dead man”, he remembered. Fortunately, his fingers, moved by panic, expelled the knife, enabling him to get to the surface in safety, though unconscious of the scare. Of all the risks to which they are subjected, divers of the blue very greatly dread having a syncopy. This insidious situation reaches the diver in ascension, without warning, causing him a loss of consciousness, typically five meters from the surface. He'll drown, unless he floats, or unless some buddy arrives before the fact occurs.

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This diver, as Le Breton (1996) would put it, upon facing his limit, becomes subject to the misfortune of failure; he plays with death. This frenzy, this dizziness attained during dangerous situations, transforms itself in bliss, in pleasure, soon after the “scare”. The borderline between risk and death is not attempted suicide for these sportsmen. Upon feeling the

sensation of the encounter with the threshold of life and death, they find themselves face-to-face with the reality of their own existence. The pleasure encountered by the feeling of "transcendence" makes them recapitulate all of the years they lived in a few seconds, and they perceive that, despite everything, life is worth living, challenges are worth continuing and the silence and fascinating beauty of the blue immensity are worth reencountering. Upon overcoming the adversity, one feels himself to be stronger, more capable, more human.

Dizziness is another element present in a large part of sports considered to be radical and linked to nature. We are dealing with an equilibrium disturbance, in which the organism loses its parameters of stability, which provide the body with a strong excitation, imparting a kind of voluptuous panic upon the lucid consciousness". (CAILLOIS, 1990, p.43)

In order to be able to participate in these activities and to attenuate the effects caused by them, enthusiasts of sports in which risks are seen as challenges must be, according to Parlebas (1992/93), well prepared to direct and administer both their physical and psychological equilibrium.

This capacity is of fundamental importance to achieving success on the part of these men of action, for dizziness can represent an impending danger. It can provoke momentary excitation, causing proprioceptive sensations that can unchain a state of perturbation that, depending upon the moment, can attain the most varied degrees.

In various sports practices, as Costa (2000) points out:

...with emphasis on sliding (skating, streeters, motocross, skiing, skateboarding, sky surfing, sailing, canoeing, windsurfing), on diving (base jumping, freestyle diving, scuba diving, snorkeling, underwater fishing), on flight (ballooning, hang gliding, parachuting), on ascension (rock climbing), on descent (speleology, alpinism) and on exploration (cycling, trekking, canyoning), they enjoy dizziness to a greater or lesser degree. (p. 101)

Le Breton (1991) states that in those sports where excesses are sought through adversities, and where the subjects constantly find themselves "on the blade's edge", they show signs of near dizziness, always trusting in the physical and mental preparation that allows them to get in balance and avoid this misfortune at just the right moment. The experience of danger, of the unexpected, many times caused by imprudence, will allow the adventurer to attain a certain degree of consciousness.

According to this author, upon being recognized by the body, the state of dizziness creates a barrier in individuals, that will symbolically determine the limit to be reached by them. Upon reaching the domain between the threshold of risk and the personal limit, enthusiasts of adventure in natural surroundings enjoy the sensation of being prepared to face extremes and go in search of more dangerous situations where their courage can defeat their fears and dreads. Fascination for dizziness in high risk activities is like playing a game with our existence. "It is the privation of the body that assures access to meaning" (LE BRETON, 1991, p. 70).

The place of practicing underwater fishing is the sea, which will always be subject to the most varied situations of instability and which will require those who involve themselves in such adventures to be prepared to face the most varied forms of adversity.

While fishing, it is important that the underwater fisherman finds himself apt to interact with the marine environment; in this way, he will have better conditions to face himself with some types of emergencies that might come up by chance, and thus avoid going into panic.

Panic is an emotional disturbance in which loss of control occurs, preventing the fisherman from maintaining his logical reasoning. Some of the factors that most provoke this symptom in underwater fisherman are: physical fatigue (which can cause cramps and distensions), visual alterations, the possibility of getting caught in lost fishing nets, strong tidal variations while submerged and, inside of underwater caves, dizziness.

Dizziness can occur while experiencing the emotion of catching a good fish; on this occasion, the diver involves himself in the playfulness of the moment in such a way that he neglects his body's alarm signals regarding diving time; the only thing that matters is to struggle to immobilize and catch the fish. This is where the danger lies; this struggle causes an enormous physical wearing out of the diver and, finding himself under the safety limit, this problem becomes worrisome. For, upon trying to swim to the surface with the fish, and finding himself to be in the last stages of his oxygen supply, the fisherman will go into panic, which will increase his weariness even more. Looking up, he will perceive that he still has many meters to go. Then, desperate and unable to reach the surface, if he is under the safety limit he will faint and drop to the bottom. If he is above the safety limit, he will still have a chance to save himself, mainly if found by a nearby companion.

The only remedy against this type of imprudence is conscientiousness and being prepared to give up to give up trying to go any deeper, to give up on catching the fish in situations of danger to the diver.

In the words of João Borges, the Brazilian underwater fishing champion and holder of various titles outside of Brazil, member of the first team to represent Brazil in world championships of this sport, we find arguments that reinforce what was said above.

In underwater fishing you are completely self-dependent; you're the one who's going to dive. You're the one who chooses the fish. For example, it's so dangerous that, if two friends are fishing, one separate from the other obviously, one is looking for fish in one cave, the other in another and if one dives deeper and gets out of breath, he loses the possibility of going back, faints and remains at the bottom. You can't go and save him, you can't. Actually you can, but won't, because you don't know where he is; he's nearby, but it just happens too fast, that is, in three minutes he's dead, you know. So, it's dangerous, too; it's dangerous fishing; the guy's got to know what he can do, what he can personally endure. So, that's what makes you fish tranquilly, without exaggerating, without running risks.

Freixanete, apud Costa (2000) observed that people that involve themselves in activities of risk in natural surroundings tend to control their emotions while practicing the activities. He believes this is possible because of the situations they are constantly facing, in this way making development of the capacity for self-control possible. This makes them see life with other eyes, giving them an inner peace that they did not have before, and making more balanced attitudes toward themselves possible.

The underwater fisherman must keep in mind that dizziness serves as a warning for him to not lose sight of his objectives by worrying only about exalting that which he conquered; he must always guide his thoughts toward that which he is yet to achieve and which is yet to come. He then turns himself inward and discovers that his feats are tiny before the power of nature simply reaching the consciousness about the being, human, that he is, and for this reason he still has a lot to learn and develop with the elements that constitute the universe. Only under this condition can he prepare himself against dizziness and the risks that by chance he comes to encounter while practicing.

At this point, we would like to take a look at another type of dizziness; to this end, we support ourselves on the book "The Clear Chamber" by the French sociologist and philosopher Roland Barthes (1984). He observed that for a photo to be good, it should cause dizziness in the spectator. In this case, it would be that aspect of the photo that Barthes considered naming obtuse, something which offers itself to attachment, such as a detail that invades the individuals' existence, wounding them, moving them and providing them with motivation. According to this author, the important thing in photography is to find oneself involved in the symbolic splendour which is transmitted.

We said earlier that the underwater fisherman does not live on fishing alone. Upon submerging, this man of action enters in contact with a fascinating world of varying colors, distinct forms and a silence which is disturbing and, at the same time, seductive and enchanting, causing him a non-physical dizziness; it causes neither giddiness nor vomitting; rather, it

provokes a state of astonishing admiration. Perhaps this is the motive for which, in mythology, there exist mermaids that enchanted and attracted fisherman who, seduced by their enchantment and beauty, were unable to leave the sea.

The diver and underwater fisherman Cícero Foraim, upon giving an interview while fishing at Ilha Grande, relates that:

The sea is very beautiful; it would be enough to say that today I'm fishing here with you; the mere pleasures of entering the water, of going out on a boat, of enjoying the seaview and of going for a little dive. The fact of catching a fish or not is a mere consequence, because what the sea gives you in return is much greater, the pleasure and the satisfaction.

It is no accident that in the various accounts of these sportsman we see their profound love of the sea. This sentiment can be accorded to the fact that, while submerged and feeling himself at one with the marine environment, the diver captures, in his mind, diverse forms of seductive, inebriating images, which will be shared with others later on, and which will certainly be perpetuated in their memory, available in their remembrances at any moment.

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RISK AND DIZZINESS IN THE IMAGINARY WORLD OF UNDERWATER FISHING ENTHUSIASTS

Summary

The objective of this article is to discuss manifestations of risk and dizziness experienced during underwater fishing, using accounts presented by enthusiasts. Risk and dizziness cause sensations of pleasure in underwater fisherman during and after conducting their activities. These men of action seek to prepare themselves beforehand in order to minimize the risks and to control their state of mind, with the intent of being able to transit on the threshold of safety, in this way seeking, through underwater fishing, pleasure which allows them to live intensely.

Key words: risk, dizziness, underwater fishing.

LE RISQUE ET LE VERTIGE DANS L'IMAGINAIRE DES PRATICANTS DE PÊCHE SOUS-MARINE

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article a le but de discuter les manifestations de risque et vertige pendant la pêche sous-marine, selon les récits faits par ses pratiquants. Le risque et le vertige provoquent dans les pêcheurs sous-marins des sensations de plaisir pendant et après l'exécution de luers activités. Ces acteurs cherchent à se préparer d'avance pour minimiser les risques de l'activité et contrôler leur état psychique pour pouvoir circuler à la limite de sécurité, ils cherchent ainsi dans l'activité de pêche sous-marine un palisir qui leur donne la possibilité de vivre avec intensité.

Mots-clés: risque, vertige, pêche sous-marine

EL RIESGO Y EL VÉRTIGO EN EL IMAGINARIO DE LOS PRACTICANTES DE PESCA SUBMARINA

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene el objetivo de discutir las manifestaciones de riesgo y vértigo durante la pesca submarina, segundo relatos presentados por sus practicantes. El riesgo y el vértigo producen en los pescadores submarinos sensaciones de gozo durante y después de la realización de sus actividades. Eses actores buscan prepararse anticipadamente para disminuir los riesgos y controlar su estado psíquico con la intención de poder transitar en el límite de seguridad, buscando así en la actividad de pesca submarina un placer que les permita vivir con intensidad.

Palabras-llave: riesgo, vértigo, pesca submarina

O RISCO E A VERTIGEM NO IMAGINÁRIO DOS PRATICANTES DE PESCA SUBMARINA

Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo discutir as manifestações de risco e vertigem provocada durante a pesca submarina, mediante relatos apresentados por seus praticantes. O risco e a vertigem provocam nos pescadores submarinos sensações de prazer durante e após a realização das suas atividades. Estes atores procuram preparar-se com antecedência para minimizar os riscos e controlar o seu estado psíquico com o intuito de poder transitar no limiar da segurança, desta forma, procuram na atividade pesca submarina um gozo que lhes permita viver com intensidade.

Palavras-chave: risco, vertigem, pesca submarina.