We have looked at the psychologist's broad canvas of human satisfactions, and though we have made next to no mention so far of economic activity, it should be clear that it is only one of many sources of satisfaction, perhaps not a very important one. Why is it that some satisfactions depend on economic activity while others do not and are kept out of the market altogether?

The economy's contribution to human welfare—its magnitude, nature, and components—is well known, well measured, and much discussed. What we lack, however, is an understanding of the economy's place in the total scheme of human satisfactions. Only by comparing the economy's contribution with that of all other sources can we attain a balanced perspective, and to do that we must understand better what all the other contributions are. We also need to reclassify satisfactions according to some principle which will separate the economic from the non-economic and help us identify the factors that distinguish them.

Economics is a social science, and it deals only with services rendered and products sold by one person to another. Some human satisfactions, however, are obtained or best obtained without help from others, while some services we customarily render to ourselves, and none of these figures in economic accounting. Most people feel the need, occasionally, to be left alone with nature or their thoughts; a fair part of bodily and mental exercise is performed alone; and, while we devote some economic resources to facilitating all these when we provide privacy and maintain parks and playgrounds, such satisfactions are mostly outside the realm of economics. So are the services we perform for ourselves. We wash, dress, and do quite a few household chores ourselves, and all of those activities are beyond the range of the economic accounts, although economics has much to do with where the dividing line lies between services we perform for ourselves and those we have performed for us by others.¹

Most satisfactions, however, stem from personal contact with others and from the use, consumption, or contemplation of goods and services to whose production others have contributed. These, again, may or may not be economic satisfactions, depending on whether or not they go through the market and acquire a market value in the process. Passage through the market is the criterion: whatever passes through the market belongs in the realm of economics. For the need to pay a market price makes the recipient of a satisfaction perform a service in exchange or otherwise contribute to the satisfactions of others, and assuring and regulating reciprocity in the rendering and receiving of satisfactions is the main function of the economic system.

It is apparent that self-sufficient satisfactions and services rendered to ourselves have always been outside of economics. Satisfactions that depend upon a division of labor or upon different people's interaction are also often outside of economics,
because they may, for a variety of reasons, not be subject to market exchange. Sometimes reciprocity cannot be enforced or is not worth enforcing. Sometimes it is automatic and instantaneous, and there is no need to enforce it. Sometimes it is easily assured by tradition and informal social pressure, which renders unnecessary the formality of market contracts. Also, to complicate matters, the same activity, even the same product, can yield an economic and a non-economic satisfaction at the same time. A worker may get satisfaction out of making the goods he sells in the market; a garden may give pleasure to passers-by as well as to its owner, who pays for its upkeep. We must appreciate these distinctions and categories in order to get a feel of the relative importance of economic and non-economic satisfactions, considering that the measurement of that importance is not possible.

Quantifiability is another of the distinguishing characteristics of economic satisfactions. The market prices which emerge from market transactions are our only index of the value people place on the satisfactions they receive and the services they render. With their aid we construct national product and income estimates, and those estimates capture the value of satisfactions that go through the market, but only of those satisfactions. To ascertain the relative importance of economic and non-economic satisfactions, therefore, is to ascertain the relative importance of measurable and non-measurable ones, and this, clearly, cannot be quantified in any rigorous way.

**MUTUAL STIMULATION**

One of the main forms of human satisfaction is stimulus enjoyment, most of which comes from mutual stimulation and as such is usually outside the realm of economics. The reasons for this are simple enough. Stimulation comes from change, variety, surprise, novelty—and most of these originate in human action and imagination. Moreover, we are most stimulating to others when we are stimulated by them. Think of the innumerable direct personal contacts we have with others, whether they come naturally, through our work and various other activities, or are actively sought for the stimulation they yield: discussion, argument, conversation, and gossip; making love and playing tennis; cooperation in any work or joint venture; social games and activities. The stimulation comes from the infinite variety, unpredictability, and challenge of human contact, especially when we take the trouble to provoke and stimulate the other person. After all, the matching of wits and skills is our main challenge, and other people's information, knowledge, experience, behavior, accomplishment, response to situations, solving of problems, and speculation about unresolved problems are our main sources of novelty.

We can, if we want to, think of each person's contribution to the others' satisfactions as payment for the satisfaction he receives. It is obvious that no economic exchange, no formal guarantee of reciprocity, is needed to assure participation in such contact.

Also, the satisfactions of all are likely to be the greater the more evenly the participants are matched. Stimulation is the most pleasant when it calls for the fullest use of our skills and mental powers, and this is most likely to happen when we are facing an equal adversary. Games, conversation, and argument become dull and unchallenging when we have a weaker partner; they may overtax our capacity and become too tiring when we have a much stronger one. Too unequal matching may eliminate altogether the satisfaction of one or more of the participants and so remove their incentive for such contact. In such cases, however, participants with nothing to offer and something to gain may provide a monetary inducement, which, if sufficient, will turn the activity into an economic one. Hence such professions as tennis pro, master of ceremonies, prostitute, gigolo. Society tends to look down upon those and similar professions, perhaps because the commercializing of a normally non-economic activity is taken as a sign of mismatched partners and consequent loss of satisfaction, or perhaps because people
disapprove of the performance as a chore of what for most others is a source of satisfaction. Whatever the reason, when money is paid for what normally would be mutual stimulation and so brings the transaction into the national product, that is often a sign of inferior or diminished satisfaction. Luckily, those activities are relatively unimportant, both as sources of mutual stimulation and as forms of economic activity.

While mutual stimulation is outside the realm of economics as a rule, economic resources are often required to provide opportunity, the necessary tools, the premises, and the environment. One function of the market is that of transmitting information and helping the partners to any transaction—economic or non-economic—to sort themselves out and find each other. Since mutual stimulation is greatest when the partners are well matched, matchmaking is a valuable service, often sold for money. That is what marriage counselors and computer dating companies do. Tennis and bridge clubs perform similar services in their respective areas, and they also provide the tools. It is hard to play tennis without a court, or bridge without a card table, and even conversation is more enjoyable over a drink. The value of those activities and amenities enters, of course, into economic accountancy, but their contribution to satisfaction is negligible compared with the mutual stimulation the participants provide for each other.

MARKET GOODS AND SERVICES

The other large category of human interaction besides mutual stimulation is the provision of services and the making of products. Each person could perform at least part of such work for himself, but the economies of scale and of the division of labor render it more efficient and mutually beneficial for people to specialize and to produce goods and services mainly for the benefit of others. Hence the reciprocal nature of such activity. Here, however, the reciprocity of services and satisfactions is neither automatic nor simultaneous; for that reason it must be guaranteed by some form of compulsion if the benefits are to be truly mutual. The exchange relations of market transactions are the usual form such compulsion takes; the size of the national product gives an idea of their importance, since it measures the value of the goods and services that go through the market. Both the production and the distribution of private goods and services is organized through the market; in the case of public goods, only production is organized by the market, while distribution is usually free, paid for through taxation. Consumer expenditure reflects the valuation of the satisfaction consumers get from private goods and services bought; government expenditure on public goods and services reflects only cost, but that cost is used, for want of anything better, as a crude index of their value to those benefited.

When the market value of goods and services is used as an estimate of the value people put on the satisfaction they get from consuming them, it must be recognized as being always an underestimate. The consumer gets more satisfaction out of anything he buys than out of the money he pays for it, otherwise he would not buy it. That additional satisfaction is his consumer's surplus, whose value cannot be estimated, although it can be gauged by finding out what he would pay, if necessary, for continued access to a particular good at its present price rather than go altogether without it.2

EXTERNAL BENEFITS AND EXTERNAL NUISANCES

While the national product provides an estimate of the worth of market goods and services to those who buy them, those goods and services often yield satisfaction or give pain to third parties as well. The sight of my house may please every neighbor and passer-by who sees it; on the other hand, the noise, dirt, and dust its construction generated may have pained many people. Those so-called external economies and diseconomies are not considered part of the economic product because the people affected neither pay nor are compensated for them, but they
clearly add to and detract from human satisfaction. Since external economies and diseconomies are an important by-product of economic activity, they ought to be taken into account when economic activities are decided upon. How to do the accounting is one of the unsolved problems of economics.

Most externalities, good and bad ones alike, are sensory stimulants, and the good ones are almost always the by-products of those goods and services, or of those features of goods and services, which aim at providing entertainment, amusement, aesthetic pleasure, and other forms of stimulation. The reason is obvious. Sounds and sights, the main sources of sensory stimulation, are not easy to confine, and what is pleasing to one person's ears and eyes is often also pleasing to other people's. The enjoyment of the person who pays for the stimulation need not be abridged and may even be enhanced by other people's sharing it. In short, stimulation is, typically, a non-exclusive or shared source of satisfaction. By contrast, comforts and wants satisfaction usually lack these spill-over effects. Since many comforts come from the substitution of mechanical power for man's muscular power, they often have unpleasant side effects, such as noise and air pollution.

**NON-MARKET GOODS AND SERVICES**

In addition to market goods and services, there are many others that do not go through the market, but are rendered free, their reciprocity and equitable distribution being assured by custom, tradition, social pressure, family discipline, or law. Some of the public services so rendered are compulsory military service and such compulsory citizens' services as fire fighting in emergencies and jury duty. Private non-market goods and services range all the way from the food produced and consumed on the spot by farm households to that advice which parents and in-laws used to give and which in today's world more often goes through the market, being dispensed by social workers and psychoanalysts. Increased specialization, increased mobility, and the change from the extended to the nuclear family have greatly diminished the importance of such non-market goods and services, but they are far from negligible, and one form of them, household chores and personal services performed and rendered within the family and among friends, may even be on the increase.

Household chores and personal services are not easy to define. They certainly include housekeeping proper—cooking, cleaning, bed-making, tidying up, mending, and looking after the children. They include minor, and sometimes major, repair and maintenance of household appliances and other consumers' durables, as well as what goes under the name of do-it-yourself activities. And they also include personal services, help, and advice which otherwise would have to be bought and paid for.

Compared with many other non-market and non-economic satisfactions of man, those derived from the housekeeping and similar services family members perform for each other are probably minor. But since these are similar to corresponding market services, their worth to recipients can be estimated and compared to the value of the economic product, and even partial comparisons between the worth of market and non-market satisfactions are helpful for assessing the contribution of the economic product to all satisfactions.

Time budgets showing average weekly hours of regular housework, volunteer work, and free help rendered to and received from others are available; the time so spent can be valued either at the wage rate of the person performing such unpaid work or at the going market wage for such activity. The estimates show that the non-market activities people perform within and for their families add almost one-half to the family's money income (48 per cent on the one, 42 per cent on the other method of reckoning), or about two-thirds to their expenditure on market goods and services. The estimates in Table 4 (p. 102), which show national totals, are even higher, presumably because they include the non-market work of the retired and the unemployed. If the value of non-market family tasks is in-
The Psychology and Economics of Motivation

deed minor compared with other non-economic satisfactions, yet not much smaller than the value attached to the economic satisfactions derived from market goods and services, then the value of the economic product must be minor compared with man's non-economic satisfactions taken as a whole.

If so much that contributes to man's satisfaction is left out of the national product, why do we attach so much importance to its size? One reason is that the GNP seems more easily influenced by policy; another is the belief, or hope, that changes in the national product are positively correlated with changes in man's general welfare, because they leave unaffected man's non-economic satisfactions or at least cause no offsetting changes in them. We cannot here deal properly and exhaustively with that issue, but a counterexample, where a change in the national product leaves total welfare unchanged, is worth discussing.

That change occurs when the dividing line between market and non-market goods moves so that the measured change in the national product is exactly offset by the unmeasured contrary change in the volume of non-market goods and services. I have already mentioned the change from the extended to the nuclear family and the increased scope for specialization and economies of scale as two factors which brought to the market much that existed previously but was outside it. Since those changes typically go hand in hand with development, measures of the marketed product and the income derived from it are bound to overstate the pace of development, since they measure not true development, but the sum of that development and the bringing into the market what before was outside it.

At the same time, the two factors just mentioned have not much to do with where the dividing line lies between householding activities that go and do not go through the market. Most domestic chores and personal services are simple enough for everybody to learn, sufficiently so for differences in innate ability to count for little. Moreover, since they usually have to be performed on the person or in the home, they also offer little scope for exploiting the economies of scale and specialization. If the wealthy of one hundred years ago had domestic servants to perform chores that today's wealthy perform for themselves, the reason is not that they were less good than their servants at performing those chores, but that the disparity between the incomes of the wealthy and those of the servants was great enough that the former would pay for having such services performed and the latter would perform them for that pay. Specialization depends not only on differences in ability and economies of scale, but also on differences in income, and differences of income are the main cause as far as the division of labor of domestic chores and personal services is concerned.

Differences in income may be due to the unequal distribution of power, wealth, job opportunities, educational opportunities; they may also be due to differences in ability. Only in this indirect way, by creating income inequalities, do differences in ability reduce the self-sufficiency of the individual person and household as far as household work is concerned. The wealthy find it economical to have the poor do for them chores they could just as competently do for themselves, because this frees their time for more pleasant or more lucrative pursuits. The proportional difference between the time the wealthy spend at household work versus the time the poor do is almost as great as the proportional difference in their income. The implication for society as a whole is that the greater the inequalities of income, the larger the number of domestic servants and the less the amount of household work performed by family members for themselves and each other. The many domestic servants in the well-to-do households of a poor country are a sign not of the country's poverty, but of its great inequalities.

WORK AS SELF-STIMULATION

Up to now we have discussed goods and services as they relate to the satisfaction of the recipients. Yet the welfare of the producers of goods and services is also affected—and not only by
the pay they receive in exchange. Work can be pleasant or unpleasant, and its pleasures, comforts, and discomforts play an important role in our lives. Those effects of work are completely missing from the economist's numerical index of economic welfare: the net national income or net national product is not net of the disutility of the labor that went into producing it, nor does it include the satisfactions of labor, if this is what work gives rise to. The reason is simple. Work which produces market goods may be an economic activity, but the satisfaction the worker himself gets out of his work is not an economic good because it does not go through the market and its value is not measurable. It may be very important, nevertheless.

The Protestant, or Puritan, ethic considered work the main source of worldly satisfaction and the only one to receive its blessing. Karl Marx shared that view. "Only in being productively active can man make sense of his life." Work is the "act of man's self creation," "not only a means to an end— the product—but an end in itself, the meaningful expression of human energy." Marx not only believed that work should be enjoyable; he was convinced that it was the most important source of human enjoyment. He criticized other economists for "commodity fetishism," their habit of focusing their attention on the product to the neglect of the activity creating it. He criticized even more the factory system and capitalist organization for changing the nature, conditions, and organization of work in a way that takes the satisfaction out of it and renders it unpleasant instead. He blamed specialization and the subjection of workers to discipline imposed by others for this change, which he called alienation, and he believed that capitalists as well as workers would suffer from it. Work could be either a pleasure or a burden, depending on economic institutions and property relations. One of the main aims of communism, in Marx's view, was to render work enjoyable by eliminating the compulsion of economic necessity, so that "each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes . . . , [making] it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind."

Modern economists have nothing to say on whether work is pleasant or unpleasant. They believe that its burden increases (or pleasantness diminishes) with the quantity of work performed and that work on the margin—that is, the last increment of work performed—is unpleasant and only performed for the sake of the income it yields. In this marginal sense therefore, they seem to accept Marx's sweeping generalization and pessimism. Yet, the economists' conclusion can be derived neither from economic data nor from economic theorizing, and even less can it be established through the psychologists' approach.

To the psychologists, work is a source of stimulation, and so it is potentially pleasant. Physical work is not very different from physical exercise; it is or ought to be pleasantly stimulating if taken in the right dose with the proper intensity, duration, and timing. Mental work can also be pleasantly stimulating, as long as it provides novelty and the challenge of learning; and variety or increasing difficulty can maintain its challenge and stimulation for a long time. Exploration, research, and artistic and scientific creation probably provide the most satisfying stimulation known to man, and many other forms of mental work are stimulating and enjoyable, too. The most striking experimental evidence to prove that work can be enjoyable is probably that produced in a celebrated Canadian experiment. The 600-odd pupils of a Montreal primary school were suddenly told that they no longer had to attend classes unless they wanted to, and that punishment for misbehavior would henceforth consist in being sent to the playground to play. All of the children dashed out of the school, but within two days they were all back in class, on a somewhat less regular schedule than before, but doing no less, and sometimes better, work.

Of course, there is some work which is unpleasant because it is too stimulating and therefore tiring, even exhausting, and other work which is insufficiently stimulating and therefore
dull, monotonous, fatiguing. Throughout most of history, the biblical image of man's having to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow remained appropriate. The unpleasantness of work consisted in its requiring greater or more prolonged exertion of a man's physical powers than he would exert just for the fun of it, and to induce people to make greater or additional exertion necessitated reward, compulsion, or both. The Industrial Revolution added monotony, mechanical discipline, and the speed of factory routine, and while it lessened the physical exertion required, it more than made up for it by the greatly lengthened working week. That is the picture Marx painted. Since his day, mechanization, automation, and the division of labor have been pushed to new heights, and the working week has been shortened, all of which has relieved man of his backbreaking physical exertion without, however, taking the unpleasantness out of work. Only the nature and causes of the unpleasantness have changed.

Few people in the advanced industrial countries still perform work that is too taxing, yet workers still find their work unpleasant. A number of questionnaire studies have been made of working conditions in the United States and in other industrial countries. They fully confirm the modern objection to work. Most work today is too easy—it is dull, monotonous, mechanical, undemanding, demeaning in its lack of challenge, and unpleasant mainly because it fails to stimulate the worker yet prevents him from seeking stimulation elsewhere. That information is of great practical importance, because the unpleasantness of work is much easier and less costly to remedy when it stems from insufficient challenge and stimulation than when it is caused by exhaustion due to excessive stimulation.

However, my concern here is with the difference between pleasant work and unpleasant work, whatever the cause. Marx was unduly pessimistic when he said that the capitalist system was taking the fun out of work for workers and capitalists alike. There seem to be plenty of pleasant and enjoyable jobs around. The assumption that all work is unpleasant is disproved by the number of people who engage in unpaid volunteer work, by the many retired workers who continue doing some work even without pay, and by the professionals of all sorts who readily admit to liking their work.

The same work can, of course, be pleasant to one person and unpleasant to another; it can be pleasant at times and unpleasant at others even to the same person. There is a daily variation in our attitudes to work as fatigue builds up; there may also be long-run change, when work which is at first too difficult becomes interesting and challenging as we master the difficulties and ultimately becomes humdrum and boring as repetition exhausts its challenge and novelty.

The stimulus satisfaction of work is no different from the satisfaction we get from any other source of stimulation. When work is challenging, the reinforcing effect of rising arousal usually carries one beyond the point of optimum comfort, often creating tension and an inner compulsion to continue until the challenge is met. Then one experiences that final release of tension which is perhaps the main component of stimulus satisfaction. The sequence—pleasant stimulation, followed by an obsessive drive to continue, despite fatigue and tension, to a satisfactory completion, leading to the triumph of a problem solved or a task accomplished—is the familiar accompaniment of all strong stimulation (specific exploration), be it work or play. It does not fit the economist's simple notion of the monotonically diminishing pleasantness or increasing unpleasantness of work, although that may still be a realistic picture of the effects of monotonous, mechanical work which is devoid of challenge. The question is, how can we tell the two kinds of work apart?

Empirical evidence reveals great differences in different people's evaluation of their work. Independent people work much longer hours than employees whose tasks and work routine are prescribed by employers and whose hours, once negotiated and agreed upon, are also prescribed. The United States Census distinguishes very few occupational groups, but it does show, for
The Psychology and Economics of Motivation

1960, the actual weekly hours worked to be 58.4 for farm managers, 53.5 for self-employed managers and proprietors other than farmers, and 57.3 for physicians and surgeons, as contrasted to 43.2 for all male employees. West German data contrast all independents against all employees, and the 1970 Austrian Microcensus shows the difference between independents and employees separately for each occupational group that contains both. In Austria, over-all, there was a 50 per cent longer workweek for those able to set their own pace.

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Employees (office workers)</th>
<th>Employees (production workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


We cannot interpret these great disparities to mean that employers keep their employees from working (and earning) as much as they would like to: hours worked are among the main issues in every union contract, and the shortening of the working week is one of the proudest achievements of the labor movement. The simplest explanation to account for differences so great and so universal, and found in so many occupations and countries, seems to be the one here stressed. People who do not have to work according to rules and discipline imposed by others and who are free to vary their tasks and routine sufficiently to avoid boredom and keep up their interest seem to get more personally involved in their work and to find it more challenging and enjoyable. They are as likely to experience periods of tension and strain as anyone else, but their way of relieving such strain is not to stop working, but, on the contrary, to keep at it until their sense of accomplishment brings relief. Differences in working hours therefore testify to differences in people's personal involvement in their work. Those who are most involved almost certainly also get the most satisfaction out of work, but the data do not and cannot prove this.

TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Groups</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Water Supply</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Beverages, and Tobacco</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles (excluding clothes and bed linen)</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing, Bed Linen and Shoes</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather, Leather products (Shoes excepted)</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys and Wooden Musical Instruments</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and Cardboard</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Duplicating</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals, Rubber, Oil</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone and Glassware</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal, Metalwork</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Trades and Storage</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging, Hotels, Restaurants</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Communication</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Private Insurance</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Legal and Financial Services</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene, Cleaning, Undertaking</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, Entertainment, Sports</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Research</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Administration, Social Insurance</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Work</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of All Industries</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Psychology and Economics of Motivation

Questionnaire studies of cross sections of the working population show that the higher the hourly earnings, the longer the hours worked. Considering that people in the higher income groups are usually those who have more discretion and freedom of action in their work, this finding does little more than duplicate and confirm those cited above.

Yet another confirmation comes from urban transportation studies, which occasionally yield estimates of the value people implicitly attach to the time they spend commuting. A 1963 study of London civil servants commuting by car or underground and separated into three income groups has shown that the higher civil servants value the time they spend in commuting at a very much higher proportion of their salaries than lower civil servants do. Such conclusions are drawn by regarding the additional cost of the faster transportation as the price of the time it saves and inferring people's valuation of their time according to their willingness or unwillingness to pay that price for time so saved. Differences between the various groups' choice of a mode of transportation are then explained by their different valuations of the time commuting encroaches upon. Similar studies made in the United States have occasionally shown the same result.

The evidence so far cited merely indicates a greater involvement, and possibly greater liking or lesser dislike for their work, of those who have more control over what they do and over when and how they do it, either because they are their own masters or because, being higher up in an organizational hierarchy, they are allowed more discretion. Nothing so far has shown whether the value or marginal value attached to work by a particular group of people is positive or negative, and empirical data seldom throw light on that issue.

The existence of unpaid volunteer work is one of the few pieces of evidence we have of people's attaching a positive value to work. Most such work is done by housewives and by retired people who enjoy going back to their old routine at their previous place of work, but it is also done by people who are in the labor force. It is worth noting that most such volunteer work is performed by people in the higher income groups, who spend more time also at their paid work.

Another piece of evidence which shows that many people enjoy their work is the great importance of philanthropy. In the United States, philanthropic donations made by individuals during their lifetime (as distinguished from philanthropic bequests) average slightly below 30 per cent of total net personal savings. Subtracting the estimated value of what is given under the social pressure of United Fund drives, church collections, and so on still leaves truly voluntary donations equal to about one-quarter of net personal savings. They represent a very large sum of money, and people's willingness to give that sum away while they are still alive shows that such funds are in excess of what their owners need and can use for their own purposes and wish to leave to their families and beloved. Most philanthropists are active people, who have themselves earned what they give away, but it is hard to imagine their making an extra effort, working longer hours or for more years, for the sole purpose of accumulating more money to give away. It is much more likely that they enjoy their work for itself, as well as the act of making money or the exercise of their skill at making it, and that it is the satisfaction of their work which keeps them at it long after all their needs for money and for all the things that money will buy are fully satisfied. Most philanthropists are active people, who have themselves earned what they give away, but it is hard to imagine their making an extra effort, working longer hours or for more years, for the sole purpose of accumulating more money to give away. It is much more likely that they enjoy their work for itself, as well as the act of making money or the exercise of their skill at making it, and that it is the satisfaction of their work which keeps them at it long after all their needs for money and for all the things that money will buy are fully satisfied. It is worth adding that this argument and the previous one establish the positive satisfaction a man gets out of his work, not only in total, but also on the margin, where he makes his decisions between longer and shorter hours and between a longer and a shorter working life.

Further evidence which suggests that even on the margin some people like and others dislike the work they do is provided by the divergent trends in the length of the working week. Much has been made of the secular shortening of the working week in industry. United States data show a fall from about seventy hours in 1850 to around forty hours today; the
trend was much the same also in most other developed countries. An ever shorter working week seems a natural accompaniment to the rise in the standard of living and a sign of the worker's desire to enjoy his rising income partly in the form of more leisure. In terms of the economist's formal model, the rise in wages raises the price of leisure (that is, the earnings lost by taking leisure), so pushing people into buying less leisure and more goods; at the same time, the wage increase also raises real income, making people better off, more able to afford all of the good things of life, including leisure. The rise in the price of leisure and the rise in real income are just two aspects of the same wage increase, known in the economist's language as its substitution and income effects, respectively. They push the person who got the wage increase in opposite directions. The economist visualizes the actual change in the worker's demand for leisure as the net balance of the two opposing influences. Since a change in the relative prices of leisure and goods seems to have little impact on people's expenditure pattern, the income effect prevails, causing the demand for leisure to increase and the length of the work week to diminish as wages rise.

The model explains pretty well the observed shortening of the work week in manufacturing, if we assume that leisure is pleasant and work unpleasant. How would the same model perform if leisure and work were both assumed to be pleasant? Unchanged would be the substitution effect of a rise in earnings, but very different or absent would be the income effect. When work and leisure are considered the only uses of time, and both are assumed to be pleasant, there can be no income effect, because money cannot buy more time. The substitution effect, therefore, would be the only effect of the rise in earnings, which would then necessarily lead to a lengthening of the work week.

That result, which is the opposite of what the assumption that work is unpleasant leads to, is also obtained in a more realistic model, which, in addition to pleasant leisure and pleasant work, also distinguishes an unpleasant third use of time, that required for the daily chores of ordinary living. A rise in income in such a model does have an income effect: it frees time for both leisure and work by causing people to save time on housekeeping through additional expenditure on household services, household appliances, and labor-saving goods. Here, therefore, substitution and income effects both pull in the direction of lengthening the work week as incomes rise.

The above is a typical example of the economist's customary reasoning. If work were pleasant, a rise in wages would make one work longer. Then, if statistics showed that some people's working week did get longer as their rates of earnings rose, that would not prove that such people's work was pleasant, but it would certainly make such a conclusion plausible.

There are few statistics which show such a relation between wage or salary rates and hours worked, but those few do pertain to people who are likely to enjoy their work. Most discussions of the declining work week of wage- and salary-earners stress the absence of a corresponding trend in the professions and among independent businessmen. Data on the latter's present-day working hours show these to be so long that it is hard to imagine them to have been longer in the past. In fact, they seem to have been shorter, to judge by the few scattered data we have. In the United States, the only data on professionals' working hours that go back in time relate to university professors and instructors. These have been assembled in Table 3. While they are not strictly comparable since they refer to different schools at different dates, they nevertheless show an unmistakable upward trend. It is significant that the time spent on instruction and instruction-connected activities and on administration and student affairs remained virtually unchanged between 1917 and 1968; whereas time spent on research, which is what academic people enjoy the most, more than quadrupled.

The same upward trend is also evident in the working hours of higher civil servants in England. One hundred years ago, higher civil servants in Great Britain had office hours from ten a.m. until four p.m., six days a week, "with but an hour or two
to spend at luncheon with a City friend”—a net total of 30 hours or less a week and considerably shorter than the office hours of lower civil servants and clerks in the same offices. Annual vacations ranged from 32 to 52 working days. Today, the annual vacations of the same higher civil servants range from 18 to 30 working days and their workweek net of lunch periods is 36 hours in London, 37 hours elsewhere—the same as the lower ranks. It hardly needs adding that these hours are more likely to be minima than averages, but that does not change the argument.

Another set of data comes from a detailed study of changes in the work and leisure time of workers and independent businessmen in the City of Hamburg between 1750 and the present. This shows, first of all, that the merchant’s workday in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was hours shorter than the worker’s, while the disparity is the other way around today. As to trends, while the worker’s workweek reached its greatest length, 72 hours, in the mid-nineteenth century, at the height of the Industrial Revolution, and has since shrunken to almost 40 hours, the merchant’s has been steadily getting longer, having risen from between 39 and 51 hours a week in 1750 to an average of 50 hours or more in 1850; whereas an official 1972 questionnaire survey of West Germany puts the length of the average workweek of top executives in large corporations at almost 60 (59.4) hours.

One more piece of evidence, though indirect, is worth mentioning; it comes from studies of the effect of progressive taxation and consequent high marginal tax rates on the incentive to work. These studies naturally concentrate on the free professions, where people are free to vary the amount of work they do, and almost all of them show no or negligible impairment of the incentive to work. This result seems surprising or inconclusive, given the assumption that work is a chore or a bore; it is the natural result to expect if we take the opposite assumption.
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ECONOMIC PRODUCT

Now we have distinguished six categories of sources of satisfaction, of which only one is economic and measurable. The value of one other category, that of non-market goods and services, can at least be estimated. Not even that is possible for the remaining four: self-sufficient satisfactions, mutual stimulation, externalities, and work satisfaction. Some economists have tried to estimate the value of leisure time, and since we enjoy all but one of the non-economic satisfactions during our leisure time (the exception, of course, is work), such estimates ought to give at least a rough index of the value people attach to these other satisfactions. One such set of estimates is shown in Table 4. Unfortunately, the leisure estimates are not only crude, they are conceptually dubious as well; 24 even so, they might be good enough to indicate rough orders of magnitude. They show the value of leisure time to be a multiple, usually a twofold to three-fold multiple, of the national income. When we bear it in mind that the satisfaction of work is additional to this, then we find that the contribution of the economic product to human welfare turns out to be small indeed.

Why, then, do most of us attach so much importance to money income and the things money will buy? Of course, the fact that the size and distribution of the national income or national product can be influenced by public policy is important from society's point of view. But why is the individual so greatly concerned with his personal income? The question has many answers. The simplest and most obvious, of course, is that survival in our economy depends on things we need money to buy. The average person, however, devotes a rather small part of his income to mere survival, which suggests that this is a relatively small part of the answer. Another and probably more important part of the answer is that economic satisfactions are usually accompanied by many other, non-economic satisfactions. My income, besides giving access to economic satisfactions, also serves as an index of some of my other satisfactions, and this second function of income may be no less important than the first.

We know that people in the higher income groups typically have more pleasant work and enjoy that work more than those who are low on the income scale, and some evidence suggests that the high-income people enjoy even the last hour of the day’s work, while low-income people consider it a drag. In a society which attaches great importance to work and its satisfactions—such as ours—the difference between liking and disliking one’s work may well be more important than the differences in economic satisfaction that the disparities in our income lead to. Moreover, people with some control over how they divide their time between work and leisure will carry over differences in their work satisfactions into their leisure satisfactions as well. For they will try to allocate their time so that, on the margin, the satisfaction of leisure equals the satisfaction (positive or negative) they get from an hour’s work together with the satisfaction
they get from the earnings of an hour's work. This means that the value also of leisure will be greater to those who enjoy their work than to those who do not.

To say that people allocate their time that way may look like a theoretical deduction from the assumption of rational behavior, but it need not be unrealistic. Those who work with gusto tend to bring the same spirit also to their leisure; those who are disgruntled in their work are usually not much less disgruntled after work. If such differences in attitude are due to the nature of the work and correlated with income, then inequalities of income clearly mean much more and go much deeper than the mere differences in money expenditure they lead to. This is especially worth stressing in affluent economies, where almost no one stays cold or hungry any more and where much of the difference in expenditures goes into buying the same collection of goods at different prices and in only slightly different qualities.

External economies are also non-economic satisfactions that go hand in hand with economic ones and add to their worth. The satisfactions the public gets from the beauty of Europe's Gothic churches and Romanesque palaces or from the excitement of New York's skyline and cosmopolitan atmosphere are the external benefits of whatever uses their builders originally built them for. Because of the commercial exploitation of the tourists they attract, we can even form an idea of what these externalities are worth in terms of money and how their capitalized value might compare to the original cost of the buildings that give them off. Externalities are important, and people's vague awareness of this fact might well explain their attaching more weight to measures of economic satisfactions than such satisfactions by themselves would justify.

On the other hand, not all economic satisfactions give off external benefits; some, as we have seen, even inflict external nuisances. It does not go without saying, therefore, that economic satisfactions go hand in hand with non-economic ones and that changes in the one are accompanied by changes in the other. Whether and to what extent they do depends on many factors, and these factors, therefore, are important determinants of welfare. That is why the performance of the economy cannot be judged by the size, growth, and distribution of the national product alone. As important, or perhaps more important, is the economy's ability to produce the economic product with a maximum of beneficial and minimum of harmful accompanying side effects.
Is It Too Dull?

The convention that Europeans are pleasure-loving, frivolous and sophisticated and that Americans are sober, hard-working, and frugal is well known and well established on the anecdotal level. Does that convention stand up today, in the light of hard facts and statistics? We have plenty of data to check on the consumption habits of the United States and Europe. Food is a natural starting point, because most of us spend a large part of our budgets on it.

Food

People get both comfort and pleasure from food, but societies differ greatly in the degree of pleasure they derive from it and in the amount of effort they put into getting that pleasure.

The French appear to enjoy their food much more than the British enjoy theirs, and the difference is well reflected in their expenditures. In the mid-1960's, the average standard of living and real income was just about the same in the two countries, but where the Frenchman spent 28 per cent of his income on food, the Englishman spent only 22 per cent.

Is It Too Dull?

No such simple test can be used for comparing the pleasures we Americans take in food with those of people in other countries. Although we devote an even smaller part of our expenditure to food than do the British—or the people of any other nation—that means nothing, because we also have one of the highest standards of living. And one of the best established regularities in economic behavior is Engel's Law, which says that the higher a person's income, the smaller the proportion of it will he spend on food. We are compelled, therefore, to look elsewhere for evidence.

We are known for our interest in nutrition and our lack of interest in the pleasures of food. Our food is notoriously plain, designed to provide not pleasure, but health and sustenance. To quote the opening sentence of a scientific text on food selection and preparation, "In this country of lavish, almost shameful abundance, the great majority of Americans go through life without experiencing a single, technically evaluated, good, representative dinner." That is a statement about supply, not demand, but when it comes to the stimulating, pleasurable qualities of food, supply is determined by demand.

The nutritive values of food are given by nature, but the pleasure and the interest are added by the cook, who provides variety, novelty, and subtlety by the way he selects and prepares the ingredients, blends the flavors, harmonizes the dishes, and controls their consistency, temperature, color schemes, and so on. Cooking, however, is a skill that requires no special talent beyond a genuine interest in the pleasures of food. In countries where almost everybody is a connoisseur of good food, almost everybody is also a good cook; and the enjoyment of cooking very often goes with the enjoyment of eating. According to the official French survey of leisure activities, 22.1 per cent of Frenchmen and 57.6 per cent of Frenchwomen enjoy cooking; 4.2 per cent of the men and 6.6 per cent of the women consider it one of their favorite activities. The making of pastry as an enjoyable activity seems more exclusively feminine: 8.5 per cent of the men and 67.0 per cent of the women...
enjoy it and 1.8 per cent of the men and 5.4 per cent of the women look upon it as a favorite pastime. All this is well in keeping with the almost proverbial fact that food is a great and serious source of pleasure for the French.

We have no corresponding statistics in this country, so the reader must make his own guess of how very much lower our percentages would be if the data were collected. It is a pity they have not been, because they are probably the best evidence of people's enjoyment, not only of cooking, but also of eating. Few people will admit to themselves, or even be conscious of, their lack of skill in savoring food; we are more reliable and honest with ourselves when we judge our skill and pleasure in cooking.

Most people are also better at seeing the other person's shortcomings than their own; which explains one of the basic agreements between British and Americans, both of whom consider deplorable the other's food. To repeat, the primary skill which is wanting is that of exercising one's sense of taste; the skill of cooking is derivative and easily acquired by anyone who enjoys eating. Little is known about the distribution of the innate ability to exercise one's sense of taste, but it is very likely that, just as in the case of a musical ear, few people are born without the potential, though many fail ever to develop it.

American travelers to mainland China, Poland, and Hungary often express surprise at the excellence of the food, yet the ingredients are nothing extraordinary. The explanation can be found in the minimal adequacy of supplies combined with the population's great interest in the pleasures of eating. Conversely, if no foreign visitor to the United States ever comments on the excellence of our cooking, their lack of praise does not reflect on the quality of the foodstuffs we grow, but merely on our utter lack of interest in the pleasures of food.

All classes, rich and poor alike, can practice good cooking and enjoy good food. The tremendous range of materials used in European, Chinese, and Mexican cooking has much to do with poor people's having to eat everything edible; they use their ingenuity to make it enjoyable. Many of the best Italian and Hungarian dishes are based on pasta and are poor man's food. Some of the most exquisite achievements of French cuisine have brains, sweetbreads, or tripe as their main ingredient and were probably developed by the gourmet poor, who could not afford the better parts of the animal. The glory of bouillabaisse probably had its origin in the poverty of fishermen, which forced them to cook their entire catch indiscriminately; the rich had sense enough to benefit by the culinary skills born of poverty.

Our American diet is the poorer for our turning up our noses at the innards considered delicacies elsewhere, for our passing up the delights of all but one of the many varieties of mushrooms, and for our many other dietary self-restraints. The resulting monotony of our diet constitutes the freely chosen poverty of the rich.

One could argue, of course, that a nation on a reducing diet can hardly be expected to have an interest in the pleasures of food, but that is not a sufficient explanation, because our dieting is of recent origin, while our lack of interest in food and the plainness of our cooking go back to the Puritan ethic of the founding fathers of the Republic.

As a distinguished Mexican poet-diplomat put it recently, Pleasure is a concept (a sensation) absent from traditional Yankee cooking. . . . It is a cuisine with no mysteries: simple, spiceless, nutritious food. No tricks: the carrot is the honest carrot, the potato is not ashamed of being a potato, and the steak is a bloody giant. It amounts to a transubstantiation of the democratic virtues of the founding fathers: honest cooking, one dish after another, like the sensible and plain-spoken sentences of a virtuous speech. Like the manners of those at the dinner table, the relations among the different substances and flavors are direct . . . Interdiction of concealing sauces and garnishes that exalt the eye and confound the taste. The separation among the different ingredients is analogous to the reserve prescribed for sexual, age, and class behavior. In other countries a meal is a communion and not only among the people at the table but among the ingredients themselves; a Yankee meal is saturated with Puritanism, is made up of exclusions.
It is hard to document such an eloquent statement statistically. Quality is notorious for defying quantitative measurement, and just as difficult is the separation of the stimulus or pleasure component from the nutritive value of food. Sauces are the one food aimed exclusively at adding interest, variety, and enjoyment to the nutritive value of whatever they are poured over. Their almost complete absence from American cooking is highly significant, the more so because sauces also hide the inferior quality or lack of freshness of what they are added to, and we do skimp on quality and freshness. Indeed, indices of the quality and freshness of the raw materials of cooking are our best available statistical index of the weight consumers attach to the pleasure component in food. Vegetables, for example, taste much better fresh or frozen than canned or dried. The proportion, therefore, of fresh and frozen vegetables in the total of all vegetables consumed is a good indication of the consumer's concern with their enjoyment and of his or her willingness to pay more money for it, or spend more time and effort on its preparation. The data show that the U.S. consumer buys two-thirds of his vegetables, measured in terms of net weight, as against the western European's three-quarters. With fruits, which are best eaten raw, the dividing line is more appropriately drawn between fresh fruit on the one hand and all processed fruit (canned, frozen, and smoked) on the other. Again, we buy 62 per cent of our fruit fresh, as against the western European's 87 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fresh fruit in all fruit consumed</th>
<th>Fresh and frozen vegetables in all vegetables consumed</th>
<th>Butter as a proportion of butter and margarine consumed</th>
<th>Fresh, frozen and smoked meat in all meat consumed a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden b</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Fed. Rep.</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>(90.4) c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average for above countries</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excluded are ground meat, fresh sausage, and sausage meat.

b Swedish percentages are in value terms.

c Probably an overestimate: does not exclude ground meat, for which data are unavailable.

SOURCES:
Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands: Budgets Familiaux 1963/64, Office Statistique des Communautés Européennes, Bruxelles, 1966, Série Spéciale 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
partly explained by our willingness to consume unimproved, in the shape of hamburgers, all the inferior cuts of meat, which others dress up with sauces and garnishes to offset or hide their inferiority.

A similar quality difference also exists between butter and margarine; here again, our butter consumption is 34 per cent of the consumption of all table spreads, as against western Europe's 68 per cent. The full details of these data, together with their sources, are shown in Table 10.

For coffee, the corresponding data (sales of coffee beans as a proportion of total sales) are not available, but since pre-ground coffee loses so much of its aroma that no one can tell the quality of the bean that went into it, the processors of vacuum-packed ground coffee use inferior mixtures; and we seem to be rather special in drinking these. That shows up clearly in the statistics. Valued wholesale at world-market prices, the mixture we drink is 6 per cent cheaper than the average coffee of both eastern and western Europeans; it is 20 per cent cheaper than what the Swedes and the West Germans drink. Only Italian espresso is poor man's coffee, better roasted and freshly made, but from a mixture cheaper than ours.

Surprising as they might seem at first, these data merely confirm the common knowledge and anecdotal evidence that we Americans are less interested in the pleasures of food than are western Europeans. We probably do not spend less on food (in absolute terms) than they do, nor need our diet be inferior to theirs in any sense other than that of taste. After all, we pay a lot of attention to nutritional values and to having a balanced diet; and our meat consumption is significantly higher than Europe's. At the same time, it would be false to attribute the lesser freshness of our food to urbanization and the greater difficulties of food distribution in urban centers. For one thing, the United States is no more highly urbanized than the more industrialized European countries are; for another, informal comparisons by housewives indicate that fresh vegetables and fruit are tastier and foodstuffs are of better quality in large European (and Canadian) cities than they are in American cities of comparable size. The tastiness of fruit depends largely on its ripeness when it is picked, and this is inversely related to in-transit spoilage rates and distribution costs. Our less tasty fruit, therefore, is often also cheaper, and if our producers and distributors sacrifice quality for cheapness, they are bound to do so in response to consumers' preferences and willingness to trade quality for a saving in price.

The consumer's lack of interest in the pleasures of food can undoubtedly save him money, and it very often can save him time and effort as well. His willingness to accept canned and juiced fruits and vegetables when fresh ones are available saves him all three; and his predilection for pre-sliced bread, pre-ground coffee and spices, vanilla extract, garlic salt, dehydrated onions and potatoes, pre-cooked rice, pre-mixed powders for gravies and dressings, and pre-cooked, packaged meals is presumably motivated by a desire to save time and effort.

Indeed, the food-processing industry lives by the consumer's desire to save labor, though usually it also profits by using artificial flavors, inferior raw materials, and cheap fillers. To avoid them is only a matter of cost; the fact that the cheaper and inferior variants survive best in this highly competitive market is again proof of the consumer's willingness to sacrifice flavor in order to save expense. For the better tasting, more expensive, processed foods (cheeses, jams, canned meats, beers) we rely largely on imports—presumably because our demand for these "fancy foods" is not large enough or not discriminating enough to warrant their domestic production. Given the excellence of our raw materials and the superior efficiency and knowhow of our food-processing industries, it is hard to imagine any other reason.

Most of our labor-saving preparations and processed foods contribute to taking the interest, variety, subtlety, and enjoyment out of our diet, and their effects, of course, are cumula-
The American Way of Life

One should expect them to have corresponding and similarly cumulative effects also in saving time, but the data, surprisingly enough, do not quite bear that out.

The internationally comparable time budgets of 1966 show that the average American spends 69.8 minutes a day at meals, almost a half-hour less than the 96.1 minute average of the western European. That difference is perhaps the most tangible and quantitative evidence of our lesser interest in food and lesser enjoyment of it. A historian of technology explained it by the preponderance in the American diet of foods processed to eliminate the effort of chewing, such as hamburgers (30 per cent of all meat consumed), juiced and diced fruit (31 per cent of all fruit), milkshakes, cole slaw, chopped sandwich spreads, and bread with “the resiliency of a rubber sponge, [which] is half masticated before reaching the mouth” (55 per cent of all bread), but his theory does not contradict my interpretation.

Processed foods, however, are supposed to save not eating time, but preparation time, and such savings hardly show up at all in the time budgets. Americans spend 44.1 minutes a day on average in preparing meals; that is a mere 1.4 minutes less than is needed by the gourmet French, who would not touch a pre-mixed, bottled salad dressing with a ten-foot pole, and only 5.8 minutes less than the western European average of 49.9 minutes daily. If one corrected for the greater frequency with which Americans eat out at restaurants, there would be no difference at all in time spent preparing meals. In view of our great reliance on ready-to-eat and almost ready-to-eat foods, this is very puzzling. Could the explanation be that here again the consumer saves more time than he or she can put to good use, and that time saved in the kitchen is mostly also wasted there?

VACATIONS

After food, recreation is the main item of expenditure and area of human activity to look at in search of data which reflect consumers' preferences between stimulus and comfort. Much recreational expenditure buys comfort rather than stimulus; also, almost two-thirds of the expenditure so classified is spent not on recreation, but on durable goods used in recreation. For both these reasons, the statistics of total expenditure on recreation and entertainment, as defined and reported by the United Nations Statistical Office, are not very useful for our purposes, although they do show that we devote a smaller proportion of our total consumption expenditure to it than do western Europeans (see Table 11). For meaningful data, one must look at the detail.

Vacationing is probably the most clearly stimulating form of recreation. Whether used as an occasion for sightseeing, active sports, getting an extra dose of nature, catching up with our reading, exposing ourselves to some unusual entertainment, or simply getting out of our accustomed routines and doing some-

### TABLE 11
Expenditure on Recreation and Entertainment, 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total consumers' expenditure a (IN BILLIONS OF NATIONAL CURRENCY)</th>
<th>Recreation and entertainment expenditure (AS % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>73.100</td>
<td>6.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>380.400</td>
<td>32.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>657.700</td>
<td>54.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>29,740.000</td>
<td>2,404.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>34.727</td>
<td>2.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Germany</td>
<td>297.300</td>
<td>23.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>27.020</td>
<td>2.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>51.240</td>
<td>3.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>538.900</td>
<td>30.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>40.987</td>
<td>1.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>23.446</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Consumption of households and private non-profit institutions.

thing different, vacations are clearly a source of stimulation in the truest and best sense of the term. Fortunately, there are many good and nearly comparable statistics on the subject.

Large-scale, official sample surveys of vacation travel are available in France for 1969, in the United States for 1972. They show that the number of “person trips” described as vacations was, expressed as a proportion of the population, 67.8 per cent in France and 54.0 per cent in the United States for vacations of at least three nights’ or four days’ duration. For vacations of at least six nights’ or seven days’ duration, the figures are 60.8 per cent for France, 30.25 per cent for the United States. The average duration of vacations was 20.24 days in France, 8.95 nights in the United States.10

The difference between the two countries is very great, and we find a similar difference when we extend the comparison to all of western Europe. Small, private sample surveys conducted in 1967 in all the western European countries show the proportion of the adult population taking vacations of six days or more away from home. Those figures differ from the United States data, available for the same year, in that they relate to adult instead of total population, count the number of persons taking trips instead of the number of person trips, and use six days instead of the longer six nights as the cut-off point, so they are not strictly comparable. However, by interpolating and using the very detailed 1969 French data for estimating correction factors, we can adjust the U.S. Census data for these definitional differences to obtain an estimate of the percentage of the U.S. adult population in America taking vacations of six days and longer, and that estimate is fully comparable with the western European data. All these are shown in Table 12.

It is evident from the United States National Travel Survey that vacation travel is a function of income: the higher the income group, the greater the proportion of people who go vacationing. The European data imply the same thing; they show a higher percentage of people vacationing in the rich than in the poor countries. It is the more striking, therefore, that the United

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage of adult population taking vacations of six days or more</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weighted average of above countries</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>27.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* My estimate, based on Census data.

Sources:
European data from Survey of Europe Today, Table 42, p. 139.

States, perhaps the richest country of them all, should have a very much lower percentage of vacationers than western Europe as a whole does, and that it should rank with the poorest of the western European countries.

The explanation we first think of, the fact that we have much shorter paid vacations in America than people in Europe do, is no explanation at all. Paid vacations are one of many fringe benefits negotiated between employers and unions; if ours are less generous than those given in other countries, the reason is not the American employers’ lesser generosity, but the Ameri-
can employees' lesser interest in this particular fringe benefit. Also, the median length of adult Americans' vacations away from home is less than four nights—far shorter than the shortest of paid vacations.

Indeed, it is often said that Americans, rather than wanting to take proper vacations, prefer to go away for several extended long weekends instead. But even if we assume that two extended weekends of three to five nights are the equivalent of one vacation of six nights or more, we can only add 11 percentage points to the U.S. figure, which is not enough to bring it up to par with the European average, and quite inadmissible, of course, because it leaves out of account the Europeans' extended weekends, of which we have no documentation. It seems, therefore, that we must accept the difference between our and other countries' vacation habits as the reflection of a true difference in preferences.

Vacations involve costs in the sense of discomforts, which may weigh more heavily with us than they do with other people. The austerity of summer housing, the noise of hotel rooms, the discomfort of unfamiliar beds and baths, the hazards of restaurant food, the crowding of resorts and beaches, the greater exposure to the vagaries of the weather, and the danger of mail going astray or a reservation not being honored are all discomforts which some people are less willing to undergo than others are. Our favorite form of vacation is camping, but our habit of roughing it in air-conditioned trailers, surrounded by all the gadgetry of modern comfort from electric toilets to portable refrigerators, shows our unwillingness to pay anything but money for the exhilaration of the great outdoors.

The evidence of the vacation statistics is confirmed and reinforced by data on other forms of recreation. The 7.9 minutes a day we spend on average in walking, hiking, playing outdoors, and engaging in active sports is less than a third of the 28.5 minutes a day western Europeans devote to those activities, and the disparity is even greater in the time we (3.3 minutes) and they (16.8 minutes) devote to gardening and pets. Visits to cafes and pubs take up 2.7 minutes of our day, 7 minutes of theirs; we spend 0.6 minutes a day in theaters and museums, less than a half of the 1.4 minutes they spend. All these are instances of the individual's taking the initiative to expose himself to physical or mental stimulation, and in all these cases we take such initiative much less often or for much shorter periods than do western Europeans.

Much of man's mental stimulation comes from contact with others, and it is here that the time-budget data show the most striking differences. The average time Americans spend alone while awake (6.6 hours a day) exceeds by 2.5 hours, or more than 50 per cent, the western Europeans' time (4.1 hours a day) so spent, and our tendency to keep to ourselves seems to cut across most of our activities. In the United States, employed married people with children are alone 44 per cent of the time they watch the mass media, compared to 21 per cent of the time in Western Europe, and the ratio of their total free time spent alone to the time spent with their families is 34 per cent in the United States as against 18 per cent in Western Europe.

Of the 2.5 extra hours a day we spend alone, fully half is due to the much longer worktime we spend alone (2.4 hours a day) than do western Europeans (1.1 hours a day). This result seems to have upset the authors of the international time-budget comparisons, who went out of their way to make sure that every question they asked was understood and interpreted in the same way in the different countries and languages. For this very great disparity in the time spent alone while at work is virtually certain to reflect, at least in part, a difference between the Americans' and the Europeans' way of looking at essentially similar work situations. "The American office worker in an area with one or two other desks, for example, might describe himself as being "alone" during extended periods when the occupants of the room were all privately engrossed in their sep
arate endeavors, . . . whereas workers [in other countries] tended more often to note the physical presence of co-workers."

That is probably a correct explanation, but the difference between the American and European interpretations of the same objective situation is itself significant. Many office and factory workers who held, or were able to observe, similar jobs in Europe and America have commented on the Americans' greater concentration on their work and the Europeans' more easy-going, socializing attitude. Where French office workers go around to shake hands and exchange greetings with all their colleagues on arrival and departure every day, in addition to having many chats and friendly exchanges in between, their American counterparts do not even say good morning to a colleague already engaged in work for fear of disturbing him. The difference, probably, lies more in the workers' attitude than in the discipline imposed from above; it is proverbial, and great enough fully to exonerate the authors of the time-budget comparisons of negligence in the phrasing and translating of their questions.

A striking confirmation of our great tendency to keep to ourselves is the migration of the aged. Most people in most countries stay put on retirement because they want to be near their friends, relatives, acquaintances and former colleagues, whose company they want and cherish all the more when the routine of human contacts of their profession and workplace are disrupted. We do the very opposite. Many retired Americans move to a milder climate in California, Florida, or Mexico, others buy a camper or trailer and spend months, even years, moving from one trailer camp to another, and still others buy themselves into retirement homes, apparently willing to relinquish the company of all those they spent their active life with, whether as daily gossips or nodding acquaintances. The implication of that choice is that their human contacts were either not too numerous, or not very strong, or not very precious. We are much more mobile, of course, socially and geographically, than most societies (see p. 202, below); and our great mobility during our active life keeps us from forming the strong friendships which bind others to their home towns. Whatever the reason, the footlooseness of the American aged confirms the statistics on our lack of company.

A very different source of stimulation is the physical environment of one's home and its furnishings. Its importance for man's well-being is well attested, but its great dependence on durable goods makes any appraisal of the attention and expenditures we devote to it difficult. The only non-durable things we put into creating an attractive home environment are flowers, which are especially important because they are an unskilled input, require continuous attention, and provide continuous change and novelty. Data on consumers' expenditure on fresh flowers are available in many countries, but we cannot make them fully comparable. For one thing, we lack comparative price data; for another, one-quarter of all United States purchases at the florist's are destined for the garden, while in Europe the overlap between nursery and florist seems smaller and one-family gardens (like one-family houses) are rarer. Also, 10 per cent of the flowers we buy we give to someone in a hospital, and a correction should perhaps also be made for the higher incidence of our hospital stay occasioned by our much higher demand for surgery. None of these corrections is possible, but all of them seem to call for a downward revision of the United States figure. The reader should bear this in mind when he looks at the uncorrected figures of Table 13. They show that we spend on flowers a much smaller proportion of our income than all others do and a smaller sum of money than most others do. Correcting the data would, presumably, make the disparity greater.

A CONFLICT

The data just cited were small in number but fairly varied and representative; they clearly showed the average American's
Lesser indulgence in stimulus enjoyment than the average Western European's. What is the significance of that difference?

Individual differences in tastes exist and are often great; it is only natural to expect there to be national differences in tastes as well. Why do I claim that America's life-style and consumption pattern are biased and in need of special explanation? In Chapter Two we came across differences in behavior that could be explained by differences in personality; and I noted that personalities can be, perhaps not yet measured, but certainly ordered according to average arousal levels. Every country has many different personalities among its inhabitants, but the frequencies with which different personalities occur differ from country to country and cause the average personality to differ also. Such national differences in average personality and in the average personality's average arousal level are the basis for our attempt, made by Professor R. Lynn, to explain national differences in behavior by national differences in personality.

From various indices of personality, Lynn pieced together a ranking of eighteen countries and correlated it with the same eighteen countries' ranking on a variety of measures of behavior and of outcomes of behavior. The most obvious measure is per capita consumption of stimulants and depressants, since one would expect low-arousal people to be heavy consumers of stimulants and light consumers of depressants and high-arousal people to have the opposite consumption pattern. That expectation was fully borne out. The rank correlation coefficient, $r$, measures the similarity of two rankings and ranges from +1 for perfect inverse ranking to -1 for perfect ranking. Its value for the correlation of national personality with the consumption of tobacco was +0.83, with the consumption of coffee and tea +0.81, and with alcoholism -0.59. The correlation of national personality with the consumption of caffeine (coffee and tea) was +0.83, and with alcoholism -0.59. The correlation of national personality with the consumption of stimulants and depressants was +0.83, and with alcoholism -0.59.

Lynn also correlated with the country rankings such other indices of behavior as hospitalized mental illness ($r = -0.30$), motor vehicle accident deaths, and personal injury. From Chapter Two we know that differences in tastes exist and are often great. Is It Too Dull?
The American Way of Life

$(\rho = +0.62)$, deaths from coronary heart disease $(\rho = -0.63)$, economic growth rates $(\rho = +0.67)$, suicide rates $(\rho = +0.41)$, calorie intake $(\rho = -0.30)$, and so on, and he cited the other evidence that made him expect these correlations. His results strengthen our belief that there are meaningful national differences in personality, differences great enough that we can predict behavior on their basis. His attempt to trace back the origin of such differences in personality to climate and racial composition has been less successful, but the concept is useful even if not fully explained. In view, then, of the existence and quantifiability of national differences in personality, why do we need to explain divergent tastes between Americans and western Europeans as far as diet, vacations, physical and mental stimulation are concerned? The answer is simple. Our national character may differ from those of other nations, and we may be expected, therefore, to behave differently from others in accordance with our different national character; but all our national peculiarities discussed in previous sections of this chapter happen, with one partial exception, to be out of character.

It is true that measurements of personality are far from accurate, and Lynn's ranking of countries by arousal or anxiety levels is not even unique. But the differences between his and other authors' measurements and rankings are slight. Great Britain, America, Norway, and New Zealand are always at the low arousal end of the scale, and Japan, West Germany, Austria, France, and Italy are always at the opposite end. We Americans, as a non-anxious, hard-to-arouse, extrovert people, live up fully to the psychologists' expectations with our high consumption of stimulants, low consumption of depressants, low incidence of suicides—which are mostly committed by the anxious—and equally low incidence of automobile accidents, which are also blamed on anxious people because of their greater aggressiveness and poorer muscular control. All the data referred to are, of course, relative to corresponding data in other countries.

Since both psychotic depression and chronic schizophrenia are forms of pathologically low arousal, their incidence is likely to be high in populations whose average arousal is low, and the high United States rate of hospitalized mental illness bears out that expectation. Similarly, high arousal inhibits the appetite while low arousal enhances it, and we rank high among nations in our calorie intake.

Sexual activity is another form of behavior inhibited by high and enhanced by low arousal, but the only statistic available for all of Lynn's eighteen countries, the percentage of single men and women in the population, is a poor index of sexual activity—no wonder the correlation coefficient he obtained, though different from zero and of the correct sign, is statistically insignificant ($+0.30$ for men and $+0.28$ for women). Detailed sample surveys of sexual behavior seem to be available only for the United States and for unmarried university students in Great Britain and Western Germany. Data for the latter two countries include a rating of the subjects on an extroversion-introversion scale, and so provide a statistical verification of differences in behavior motivated by differences in personality. If one then compares the average behavior of all the German males with that of all the U.S. males in the corresponding educational, marital-status, and age group of the Kinsey Report, one finds that differences between Americans and Germans are very similar to those between extrovert Germans and introvert Germans. For example, our first coital experience is earlier, frequency of coitus higher, and frequency of masturbation lower than is the Germans'.

It seems, therefore, that national differences in personality have good predictive power for behavior that is governed by strong physiological and psychological drives. But how about all the many other aspects of behavior which are less visceral? Personality probably has some influence on everything, and predictions based on it are not wanting. To quote a well-known writer on the subject, "Extraverts move their homes more frequently, they change their jobs more frequently, . . . We can now understand the very obvious pressure of extraverts for
novelty, for change, for alternation; . . . the regular, the usual, the ordinary becomes anathema, and the search is out for new stimuli as well as for strong stimuli." 22 Here again, statistics clearly confirm that "labour turnover in North American manufacturing is significantly higher than in the European countries studied" (France, Germany, and the U.K.), 23 and a 1960 international comparison shows that in that year 20.5 per cent of the U.S. population moved to another community, as against 11.6 per cent in the U.K., 7.8 per cent in Japan, and 6.1 per cent in Western Germany. 24

So far so good. But "the very obvious pressure of extraverts for novelty, for change, for alternation" is hardly manifest in our acceptance of dull food and drab surroundings, and our tendency to sit at home. Those aspects of behavior are subject, of course, to many influences, and, presumably, cultural, social, and economic influences go counter to the psychological ones and prevail over them. Therein lies the interest of my findings and the need and justification for discussing them further. For the conflict between our predisposition to do one thing and the outside pressures that make us do the opposite thing may well create a feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction with our own behavior.

Let me just add that I am not the first to discover and be puzzled by our incongruous behavior. When the multinational comparative time budget surveys became available, the door was thrown wide open for international comparisons, and the first ones made were published along with the surveys themselves. The authors of two of those comparisons were clearly disturbed by the way in which the U.S. data failed to fit into what seemed, to them, a normal pattern. The author of one comparison, which deals with loneliness, was so greatly puzzled by the evidence of our much greater loneliness that he questioned the reliability of the data (see pp. 195-96).

The other comparison is an econometric study of people's desire for variety in leisure pursuits and its dependence on their social and economic status. On the basis of a pilot study, its author expected the higher strata among white-collar workers (professionals, for instance) to seek more variety than do lower white-collar and manual workers, and Americans, because of their higher economic development, to seek more variety than do Europeans. Table 14 reproduces some of the results and shows the average number of leisure pursuits of different groups of men on weekdays. In Europe, social status seems to have the influence it was supposed to have, and the better-off western Europeans clearly make better use of their higher standard of living than the poorer eastern Europeans did, but the U.S. data are "badly behaved" in every way. We seem to go in for less variety than western Europeans, and our professionals and other high ranking white-collar people are no more enterprising in their leisure hours than our unskilled workers are. The author is baffled and does not hide her bafflement. I am baffled too, by her data as well as by mine, which confirm hers. The following chapters constitute my attempt to resolve the puzzle.

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* The number of cases is less than 20.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Our Disdain for Culture

Another important cultural force influencing our way of life is a bias in our education, which is likely to sway our consumption pattern in favor of comfort and against stimulus enjoyment. Measured by number of man-years of schooling per head of population, we are the world's most educated people. Are we also the best educated? The question I want to raise has to do not with the quality of our schools and colleges, but with what they prepare us for. Learning can have many aims; what do we try to achieve by staying in school so long? We are occasionally accused of lagging behind in culture; if we do, what does that mean in terms of our educational philosophy and the nature of our school curricula? To deal with those and related matters, we must first get a clear notion of what culture is. In Chapter Three I dealt at length with novelty as a source of stimulus and an intermediate degree of novelty as the condition that makes stimulus enjoyable. There we looked upon redundancy as something the stimulus source must provide in order to make the stimulus pleasant. But redundancy can just as well be looked upon as something the recipient's mind must contain if he is to enjoy the stimulus. We shall see that redundancy as a requirement in the recipient suggests a definition of culture.

For an art object or piece of music to be appreciated, it needs to be in or near a style or tradition we are familiar with; news and gossip to be interesting must be about people or places we know, or know about; a novel, to be enjoyable, has to deal with characters and situations that are credible and resemble those we have already encountered; a joke is funny to us only if the surprise and unexpected twist of its ending follows a familiar and unsurprising beginning. The supplier of the stimulus must see to it that he combines the new with the familiar in the right proportions, but the consumer of the stimulus cannot be completely passive either—after all, it is his education and previous knowledge that determine what is familiar to him.

Depending on their previous knowledge, different consumers are pleasantly stimulated by very different things; also, the difficulty of acquiring the skills of consumption varies greatly with the nature of the source of stimulation. The ability to enjoy a game of tennis, chess, or bridge is best acquired by training; the same is probably also true of the appreciation of literature and the arts. In addition, all these require a lot of practice and its careful sequencing from the easy toward the more difficult. At the other end of the range, enjoying a drive through the country requires familiarity only with other landscapes—knowledge available to everybody who can see. Similarly, the pleasant stimulus of window shopping is also within the reach of everybody who has any familiarity with the uses of the merchandise displayed.

In short, all stimulus enjoyment is skilled consumption, but the time and effort required to learn its skills vary greatly from one stimulus to another and some of the consumption skills are so universal that they do not seem to be skills at all, because everybody acquires them as part of growing up and daily living. By "everybody," of course, we do not always mean literally everybody. The skill needed to enjoy music, for example, seems common to all or almost all in gypsy communities, among Welsh miners, and the people of Catholic central Europe; but it is very much the privilege of the elite in most other countries.
THE MEANING OF CULTURE

I shall define culture as knowledge; it is that part of knowledge which provides the redundancy needed to render stimulation enjoyable. Culture is the preliminary information we must have to enjoy the processing of further information. Consumption skills, therefore, are part of culture, while production skills are not. (Some production skills, however, are closely related to, and so impart, certain consumption skills.) Also, since only the enjoyment of stimulation is skilled consumption, while the enjoyment of comfort requires no skill, only stimulus enjoyment is a cultural activity.

All stimulus enjoyment other than simple physical exercise requires a certain degree of skill, but all of us acquire some of it so easily that we do not think of it as learning. It is useful, therefore, to define culture a little more narrowly, as the training and skill necessary to enjoy those stimulus satisfactions whose enjoyment requires skill and training. That excludes knowledge everybody picks up unwittingly in the course of everyday living.

Since the borderline between knowledge learned and knowledge casually picked up is often hard to draw, this is not a rigorous definition of culture; but its very vagueness makes it conform all the better to the common use of the term. To enjoy music, for example, one must know something about it, but what little it takes to enjoy a popular tune we learn automatically, just by being exposed to similar tunes and rhythms on TV, radio, and elsewhere. Accordingly, we do not consider a person musically cultured just because he enjoys popular music, although it clearly takes skill which someone from a totally different part of the globe would probably lack. Customarily, only the ability to enjoy serious music or true jazz is regarded as a sign of culture, presumably because to learn its skill requires effort. Indeed, the harder it is to learn a skill, the more it is respected, and that may be why some forms of culture are more highly regarded than others. The word “culture” usually makes people think of the ability to enjoy literature, music, painting, and other fine arts whose enjoyment takes effort and time to learn, although the appreciation and enjoyment of food, sports, games of skill and card games, political, economic and scientific news, and so on are also learned skills and must therefore be included in the definition of culture. The fact that a favorable family background enables some people to acquire certain consumption skills effortlessly does not make those people less cultured. The children of bookish parents often acquire a literary taste with no visible effort, just as the children of professional musicians and many American blacks pick up a musical culture at their parents’ knee without even noticing. We should regard them as cultured because the majority considers their skill a cultural one.

Another basis for valuing some forms of culture more highly than others is the greater quantity of enjoyment they make possible. So far we have taken as given the objective information flow available and looked upon consumption skills as something that makes that flow accessible as a source of stimulus enjoyment, as if culture or consumption skills were windows through which to watch and enjoy a colorful procession that would pass whether or not it was viewed and enjoyed by anybody.

Luckily for mankind, much of the current flow of novelty can be preserved and stored up for the enjoyment of future generations and others who for some reason missed it when it was new, and canned novelty can be every bit as enjoyable as fresh novelty, though it usually requires more skill to enjoy. Literature, music, and the fine arts which create durable artifacts are the obvious examples. They represent vast storehouses of past novelty accumulated over the centuries, their contents’ ability to give pleasure undiminished by the fact that they have already given pleasure to past generations. Since much canned novelty belongs to the distant past and has lost actuality, we need a little extra knowledge and skill to retrieve and enjoy it, but the return on that extra effort and extra culture can be very great.
In short, consumption skills differ not only in the difficulty of acquiring them, but also in the amount of enjoyment their acquisition makes available, and both render some forms of culture more valuable than others. In addition, a person can be more cultured than another in the sense of having acquired a larger number of consumption skills. And, finally, there is such a thing as being too cultured. After all, culture is the preliminary knowledge necessary to provide enough redundancy for the enjoyment of new knowledge, and there can be too much redundancy, leaving too little new knowledge. Not only can a picture or a piece of music become too familiar for further enjoyment, a person may become too familiar with an entire field to derive much additional enjoyment from it. His tastes in that field have become jaded.

THE PURITAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CULTURE

My definition of culture helps to explain our ambivalent attitude toward it. To begin with, culture is the learning of the leisure class, which they developed, and needed, to enhance their efficiency in enjoying leisure. No wonder it is suspect in the eyes of productive, working members of society! Also, to our Puritan forefathers, skills and learning aimed solely at enhancing one's ability to obtain enjoyment looked like instruments of the devil. Fortunately, some consumption skills had other uses as well and so escaped censure, but most of them did not and were frowned upon. Today, puritanism is dead, but its ghost still haunts us. We have come to accept, even to admire Culture; but often only as something serious, noble, and elevating—like religion, good for the soul and perhaps also for prestige. The idea that culture should be there for pleasure, or even that its sole aim should be to give pleasure, seems frivolous or shocking to many people. The Oxford Companion to Music, in its good, if snobbish article on jazz, refers to that form of music as the music of pleasure. The implication that serious music is not for pleasure is unmistakable, yet what other purpose can it possibly serve? If it elevates the soul, by what means other than the feeling of pleasure is that achieved?

PRODUCTION SKILLS VERSUS CONSUMPTION SKILLS

Until the end of the eighteenth century, education was a privilege of the leisure class and consisted, appropriately enough, of training in consumption skills. Being educated and being cultured meant the same thing in those days. At the time, the skills of production seemed less important, less difficult, and more often acquired through apprenticeship than through formal training. Also, education was not very important as a source of income. Molière's bourgeois gentilhomme became rich first and only afterwards took lessons in music, dancing, deportment, and philosophy to learn the skills of enjoying his riches.

Since much stimulation is best enjoyed through mutual interaction, many members of the cultured leisure class became adept also as producers of stimulus enjoyment. One need only recall France's aristocratic men and women of letters, the gentlemen-architects of eighteenth-century England, and the many titled and wealthy composers and performers of music of all nationalities, from Henry VIII to Albinoni, from Frederick the Great to Mendelssohn.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, education in the United States became universal, but it also became more and more a training in production skills and less and less a preparation for the enjoyment of life. Our Puritan attitude and the requirements of our capitalist economy are equally to blame, or credit. After all, the worker's production skills increase productivity and profit, and there is plenty of evidence that the profound changes in the curriculum of our schools and colleges in the 1910's and 1920's were greatly influenced by the needs of industry and business.1

Even since then, economic forces have continued to press for the progressive crowding out of a liberal, humanistic education by the requirements of science and technology. Economic and
technical progress are forever increasing the skill requirements of the productive system; moreover, the demand for production skills of the people wishing to acquire them is increasing even faster. Competition for leadership positions and for the more challenging and prestigious jobs is creating an excess supply of skilled personnel, which not only depresses the extra earnings to be had for extra skills, but also leads to unnecessary upgrading of skill requirements. As a result, many people find themselves overtrained for the job they get and the work they do.

There would be nothing wrong with salesgirls and gas-station attendants having, or even being required to have, B.A. degrees if those degrees enabled them the better to enjoy the books they read or music they listen to while they are waiting for their customers. Mostly, however, their diplomas give them production skills which lie fallow and whose acquisition crowded out the education that would have prepared them for the better enjoyment of their increased leisure.

THE RATIONAL BIAS AGAINST CULTURE

While professional and vocational training increasingly crowd consumption skills out of the curriculum, the need for such skills is growing with the rise in our standard of living. Greater affluence means more forms of consumption, and to enjoy them requires more consumption skills. We have access to more sports, more games, more pastimes than others, and to many more places to see and visit, but we lack the skills and knowledge needed fully to enjoy them and we even seem to lack the inclination to acquire such competence. It is as though we preferred unskilled consumption, trying everything once or twice, or in three easy lessons if necessary, but often remaining dilettantes and seldom aspiring to the more enjoyable higher reaches of consumption expertise. Unlike the English, French, and German Who's Who, all of which meticulously list people's favorite sports and hobbies, the American Who's Who does not list any consumption skills or preferences. Are we too puritani-cal to mention such mundane matters? Or is it that too few of us can boast of true expertise in enjoyment?

Why are we so uninterested in the skills of consumption? The majority of our population has ever-increasing access to leisure, and our schools and colleges increasingly offer adult education courses in which we can catch up on what we have missed in our youth, but almost three-quarters of the courses we sign up for are those which provide additional training in production skills. One reason may be our puritanical hierarchy of values. If we are embarrassed to waste time on activities specifically aimed at providing enjoyment, how much more embarrassing must it be to devote time and effort to just learning how better to enjoy such activities?

But another, perhaps more potent reason is our rationality. Going to school to acquire a skill, whether the process itself is pleasant or unpleasant, is an investment which yields a return—additional income in the case of production skills, the better enjoyment of life in the case of consumption skills. Estimates of the rate of return on investment in professional and vocational training can be made and are available; nothing even remotely comparable is possible with respect to consumption skills. One cannot attach a dollar value to the skill of enjoying a concert or a ballet, even less can one estimate the time needed for or the chance of ever turning a neophyte into an enthusiastic melomane or balletomane through training and practice. With so many unknowns so utterly impossible to estimate, it seems rational, at least on a narrow interpretation of the term, to discount the benefits heavily and to opt instead for adding to our production skills and their easily quantifiable benefits. That seems especially true in our modern, calculating, quantifying society.

Here, then is another explanation of the oft-lamented American lack of interest in culture. Perhaps we have not quite shaken off the early Puritan prejudice against pleasure or recreation for its own sake; we also have a seemingly rational reason for not seeking more culture than we do and for not acquiring
more of the training and skill needed to enjoy the skill-intensive satisfactions of life.

SKILLED VERSUS UNSKILLED STIMULUS ENJOYMENT

Whatever its reason or reasons, our lack of interest in culture does express our bias in favor of comfort and against stimulation. The way that bias works is, of course, neither direct nor simple. Man's desire for stimulation is far too deep-seated for him to abandon it just for a lack of skill at making the most of it. We saw that some forms of stimulation require less skill to enjoy than others, and some require virtually no skill at all. It is natural that lack of training in the skills of consumption should make us shift our interest in favor of those that require few or no skills. Insufficient novelty renders the stimulation so obtained unsatisfying or only moderately satisfying, which then biases us against all stimulation and in favor of comfort.

I have already mentioned a few forms of stimulation whose enjoyment requires virtually no skill and no effort on the recipient's part; there are many more. The entertainment industry provides much of it; for the rest, an open-eyed person can get a lot of stimulation out of just watching the world go by and following the change in political events and economic fashions. Time-budget surveys and various sociological studies tell us that the main sources of stimulation in the United States are watching television, driving for pleasure, and shopping—all of which are sources of stimulation requiring no skill.

Why do we find them less stimulating and satisfying than listening to music or reading literature? They are not less so, nor as long as they provide a flow of information commensurate with our requirements for pleasant stimulation. Television, driving around, and shopping can all be very stimulating, up to a point. Many television programs are enjoyable and interesting; going to a colorful market or shopping center, browsing in a good bookshop, reading a Sears catalog, looking at the latest fashions in elegant department stores or inspecting next year's models of automobiles can all be fun. The same is true of driving. The constantly changing scene before our eyes provides pleasant stimulation; and when this is insufficient, the exhilaration of speed and the challenge of exercising our skill and trying our luck in weaving through traffic, gambling on what seems the fastest lane, beating the other guy to it and getting away with minor traffic violations in the process provide additional stimulation, adjustable almost at will to suit one's personal preference and the mood of the moment.

Yet the flow of novelty and stimulation available from those three sources is limited. What we get out of TV, shopping, and driving is fully adequate for pleasant, sometimes even maximally pleasant stimulation when the time devoted to their enjoyment is suitably limited, spaced, and selected, but it quickly becomes redundant, unsurprising, and monotonous as we devote more and more time to them in the vain hope that our intake of novelty will keep step with the increased time we spend on them.

Consider the survey of television which concluded that one-eighth of the viewers are almost always bored by what they watch. The flow of subjective novelty in the shows those viewers see must be way below their information-processing capacity. If the majority of them do not mind, and give evidence of not minding, the many commercial interruptions, the reason must be that the information content of the programs is no higher or not much higher than that of the interruptions. In general, all the evidence cited to show the very low value we attach to residual time was proof that our unskilled pastimes on which we spend our residual time are unable to provide enough novelty to keep our minds busy and unbored.

Technical progress, by freeing more and more time from work, increases man's demand for stimulation. The economy has responded by increasing our means of access to sources of stimulation, but it has failed to increase their stimulus content. Having a car makes it easier to enjoy the countryside; but the same neighborhood or countryside becomes less stimulating as
one drives through it more often. Similarly, more retail outlets add but little to the variety and interest of the merchandise, whose attraction dulls on repeated viewing; and neither does the multiplication of TV channels, stations, and receivers increase, by itself, the flow of information transmitted. The novelty content in them depends mainly on the amount and quality of human imagination devoted to its production, and both are lagging far behind the great increase in our means of access. We will look into the reasons for that lag later. In the meantime, I ask the reader to accept, provisionally, as a fact of life our economy's inability to provide maximally pleasing stimulation to the unskilled consumer through TV, radio, window shopping, and similar pastimes for as many hours a day and as many days in a lifetime as he would wish to be stimulated.

The objection, therefore, to unskilled and effortless pastimes such as television, driving, and shopping is not that the stimulus they provide is inherently inferior, which it is not, but that it is limited in quantity and so provides only a limited quantity of enjoyment. That quantity can be adequate and satisfying when our demand for stimulus enjoyment is equally limited; but it ceases to be adequate when increased leisure increases our demand for stimulation and makes us spend more time watching TV, shopping, and so on in an unsuccessful effort to get out of them a larger quantity of stimulation than they can supply. For the source of stimulation and satisfaction is not the TV screen, the automobile, or the store, but the novelty to which they give access. It is helpful to think of television, driving, shopping, and other such pastimes as channels through which novelty is transmitted from the producers of novelty to its consumers. The channels are needed, and they must have adequate capacity for transmitting the novelty, but they cannot transmit more novelty than is there to be transmitted. Beyond a certain point, the amount of stimulus such pastimes provide increases not with the amount of time the consumer devotes to them, but only with the amount of novelty producers see fit to put into them. Without an increase in novelty content, more time spent watching television, driving around, or shopping merely spreads the novelty thinner, increases redundancy, and reduces the intensity of enjoyment. What would be pleasant stimulation on a moderate scale becomes, when pushed further, first, mere defense against boredom, and, ultimately, just boredom. That is how technical and economic progress and the ensuing increase in leisure often misfire.

Another important—and tragic—example of our economy's failure to provide adequate stimulation to the unskilled consumer is the problem of the aged. When people retire they are suddenly deprived of the stimulus satisfaction their work has given them, and, naturally, they try to fall back on the other sources of stimulation accessible to them. If they are unskilled consumers, they soon find their sources of stimulation inadequate; the result is the heartrending spectacle of elderly people trying desperately to keep themselves busy and amused but not knowing how to do so. Boredom seems inescapable, and boredom is a great killer. That may well be part of the explanation of the American male's relatively low life expectancy. American women are better off in this regard, for they have housework and cooking to keep them occupied and alive.

The remedy is culture. We must acquire the consumption skills that will give us access to society's accumulated stock of past novelty and so enable us to supplement at will and almost without limit the currently available flow of novelty as a source of stimulation. Different skills of consumption open up different stores of sources of stimulation, and each gives us greatly enhanced freedom to choose what we personally find the most enjoyable and stimulating, holding out the prospect of a large reservoir of novelty and years of enjoyment. Music, painting, literature, and history are the obvious examples.

Fifty or more years ago, those who correctly foresaw our phenomenal technical progress and increase in leisure also predicted a utopia of increased and increasingly universal culture.
Why did this part of their prediction fail to come true, and why does our greater need for culture fail to increase our demand for it?

The anti-cultural bias of our Puritan tradition, may well be the most important reason. The second reason, our narrowly rational bias against investing in consumption skills, looks less convincing now than when I first stated it. After all, our appetite for stimulation, the degree of stimulation and amount of novelty needed for maximum enjoyment, and the amount of leisure time our work leaves available for stimulus enjoyment over a lifetime are relatively easy to take into account. Moreover, weighing the costs of the time and effort we must invest in becoming cultured is of dubious rationality when having more time and energy than we know what to do with is the main reason for our becoming cultured.

And yet the desire to save time and effort seems so deeply ingrained in the American character that we just cannot help regarding their expenditure as a cost, to be weighed against the benefits of a cultural education. This may well be an example of the higher irrationality of behavior governed by narrowly rational calculation. That brings me to a third, if lesser, reason for our bias against culture, which also exemplifies the higher irrationality of narrowly rational calculation.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Conversation is an exchange of information and ideas; it is talk which is mutually stimulating. We enjoy pleasant conversation not only for the stimulus it provides, but also for the satisfaction we get out of knowing that our own contribution stimulates others. No wonder it is a major source of human satisfaction.

Since the pleasantness of conversation depends on the novelty and redundancy it contains, one may well ask how are they obtained. The novelty comes partly from the other person's information I do not share, partly from his different way of thinking, his different responses to shared information and shared experiences, which to be new to me must be not only different from mine but also unpredictable and surprising. For conversation to be mutually pleasant, it must provide the participants with novelty; this means that the thinking and responses of each must have an element of unpredictability for the other. In short, conversation is mutually pleasant when the partners are well matched and do not yet know each other so intimately as to rule out all surprises. The first part of this statement seems self-evident; the truth of the second part is easier to see by looking at its opposite. Many couples become bored with each other with the passing of years, because their long and close intimacy leads to a complete sharing of their memories and even enables each of them accurately to predict the other's response to every new situation and stimulus.

But if novelty is important for stimulation to be pleasant, familiarity or redundancy is no less so. The source of this is information shared by the participants. Shared knowledge of a common language is a necessary condition for a conversation even to take place; very much more knowledge must be shared for the conversation to be pleasant. The larger the common fund of information shared by a group of people, the more easily they can talk to each other, and the greater the scope for enjoyable conversation among them.

Contemporaries and people coming from the same country, the same town, the same school often find each other's company enjoyable. Having lived through similar experiences and witnessed the same events, their fund of memories has a large overlap; and it makes their conversation effortless. They do not have to search for suitable topics of conversation, because almost any random thought is suitable—that is, likely to conjure up similar enough memories in the other person to provide the necessary degree of redundancy. That explains why we feel so much at ease with people close to us, or with similar backgrounds. Needless to add, the optimum combination of novelty and redundancy, which provides the pleasantest conversation,
is bound to be very different for different people. Presumably, extroverts want more novelty, introverts more redundancy, and advancing age probably shifts people's preference in favor of the latter. Thus extroverts seek many acquaintances, introverts close friends, and the old increasingly live on memories and enjoy exchanging reminiscences.

A major source of information, and so of the shared redundancy necessary for pleasant conversation, is education. Education, therefore, whatever its other benefits, increases our ability to engage in, and our chances of having, pleasant conversations; and for this purpose, education in the skills of consumption is especially effective. All of the knowledge we acquire by education we share with others, but because consumption skills are much less specialized than production skills, we share them with many more people. I can engage in shop talk only with those in my own field, and increasing specialization is forever diminishing their number. By contrast, a general liberal arts education, which is designed to provide the usual consumption skills necessary to enjoy society's accumulated stock of literature, arts, artifacts, ideas, and knowledge of man, society, and nature, makes me share a large fund of knowledge with all others who also learned the skills of consumption, and the broader this education, the larger the number of people with whom I will share it. In short, consumption skills open up much broader and greater possibilities of pleasant conversation than production skills do.

What is the significance of that rather obvious fact? Since conversation is a major source of human satisfaction, its facilitation is an important additional benefit of consumption skills. This is well known to people who appreciate the art of conversation and even to those whose desire for culture is snobbish, since such a desire usually stems from their wanting to impress others with their conversation. Why, then, are courses on literature, art, music, history, and other consumption skills not more popular than they are? The main reason, probably, is that conversation is very much a skilled consumption, and one must have acquired the skill before one learns to appreciate its benefits. Another reason, however, is that people who decide whether or not to invest in acquiring these consumption skills for themselves or their children on grounds of individual rationality are certain to demand less of them than would most benefit society.

The argument hinges on the fact that it takes at least two to share knowledge and make conversation, and that each person's conversation benefits at least two people: himself and his conversational partner or partners. When I acquire information and so improve my chance of having a pleasant chat, I also improve the similar chance of everybody else who shares the information I just learned. However, when I decide whether to learn or not to learn, I weigh only my own benefit and neglect other people's, with the inevitable result that I decide to learn less than would maximize the sum of society's total satisfaction derived from conversation.

We have here another example of an external economy whose neglect in the name of individual rationality leads to social loss. When each person makes an individually rational choice between consumption and production skills, the result of everybody's actions departs from the social optimum in the direction of too few consumption skills, and the magnitude of society's loss depends on the importance of conversation as a source of human satisfaction.

Here, then, is yet another reason, quite different from and additional to the others, why we are likely to opt for less culture than is good for us—good in the sense of providing the maximum enjoyment of life.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

The abstract theorizing of the last section was prompted by one of the most surprising facts we have considered (Chapter 9): the statistical evidence of our loneliness. According to psychologists, we are an extrovert, outgoing, enterprising people,
hungry for stimulus, anxious to make friends, and uninhibited about talking to strangers; yet we spend 6.6 waking hours a day alone, 2.5 hours a day more than the average western European. About 10 to 12 per cent of this difference is probably explained by our commuting alone, in the isolation of our cars; Europeans, who commute just as much, do so in crowded trains and buses. But the remaining difference is still very great. Indeed, such a great difference would be statistically suspect if it were not confirmed by casual observation.

Talk is most certainly the Europeans' main source of stimulus, and conversational skill the accomplishment they most appreciate; it is what they mostly practice when they are together. One-half of the western Europeans' 2.5 extra hours of togetherness is at their workplace, and most immigrants from Europe who had similar jobs there and here will confirm that here workers are silent, while in Europe they talk.

More striking, or perhaps just more easily noticed, is the corresponding difference between the activities of Americans and Europeans during leisure hours. American tourists abroad are usually struck and often morally shocked by the much more leisurely and frivolous attitude toward life of just about all foreigners, manifested by the tremendous amount of idle talk they engage in, on promenades and park benches, in cafés, sandwich shops, lobbies, doorways, and wherever people congregate. On a small part of such socializing we even have statistical evidence.

The English, who resemble us the most in temperament, spend much of their free time talking with friends and strangers in the lively, social atmosphere of pubs. Visiting pubs is the second most popular non-home-based leisure activity in England, next and close to driving for pleasure, which holds the first place there, as it does here. The statistics are not very informative; they merely show that slightly more than half of the working male population visits a pub at least once a month, without specifying how often (see Table 16). You can get a good idea, however, of what this means even from a casual sampling of the innumerable pubs thickly strewn all over London and dotting the English countryside. Every noon and evening you will find all of them full of people and animated talk. Socializing rather than drinking is clearly most people's main occupation there, although a half-pint of beer is to talk as a bed is to making love—one can do without but does better with.

| Percentage of Employed Englishmen Engaging in Various Activities at Least Once a Month |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Professional and Managerial       | Clerical        | Skilled        | Unskilled | All     |
| Watching Television               | 95              | 99             | 98        | 95      | 97      |
| Gardening                         | 70              | 62             | 66        | 50      | 64      |
| Listening to Music                | 65              | 70             | 52        | 44      | 57      |
| Going for a Pleasure Drive        | 62              | 51             | 62        | 49      | 58      |
| Going to a Pub                    | 51              | 42             | 54        | 58      | 52      |
| Going for a walk of a mile or more| 56              | 63             | 41        | 36      | 47      |


Much the same thing happens also on the Continent, although France alone collects statistics. The French do much of their talking in cafés, and the proportion of Frenchmen who visit cafés at least once a month happens to be almost exactly the same as the proportion of Englishmen who visit pubs (see Table 17). That near identity of the British and French figures is the more remarkable because, as far as their alcohol consumption is concerned, the French and the English could hardly be more different. French per capita consumption is four and a half times that of the English. If, despite this very great difference in their taste for drink, the frequency of their visits to café or
### TABLE 17

**Percentage of Frenchmen Visiting Cafés by Age, Income, Residence, Social Group, and Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>More than once/day</th>
<th>AT LEAST</th>
<th>Rarely or Never</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All men, 14 yrs. and older</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 to 24 years</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 39 years</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 59 years</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and older</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomes below Frs. 6000</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frs. 6,000 to Frs. 10,000</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frs. 10,000 to Frs. 15,000</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frs. 15,000 to Frs. 20,000</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomes above Frs. 20,000</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income not declared</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural communities</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities with less than 20,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities with 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These are the closest American equivalents of the very different French categories.

The American Way of Life

pub is still so similar, that renders all the more plausible my contention that they go there mainly for the talk.

The very detailed French data also give much more insight into exactly who goes to a café, and how often. The habit seems not only universal but surprisingly uniform, cutting across all ages, income groups, and social classes of French society, with relatively small differences in frequency, and with skilled and semiskilled workers occupying a middle position between independent businessmen on the one hand and the free professions and top management on the other. One in six Frenchmen visits a café at least once a day—a high proportion, considering that this includes everybody, from fourteen-year-old youngsters to octogenarians. The corresponding English figures, when collected, may well turn out to be quite similar. Table 17 shows how deceptive and how empty a single figure that uses once a month as its cutoff point can be.

In other countries, such detailed statistics seem unavailable; but the 1966 time-budget studies show that the percentage of men and women who visit a pub or café at least once a day is almost as high in Western Germany (8.1) as it is in France (8.6) but not even half as high in the United States (4.0). In our bars and cafés, we look in vain for visible or audible evidence of conversation as an important source of satisfaction. They are usually much less crowded, and most customers come to have a drink or quick snack, while few come to talk. The very arrangement of the typical American bar symbolizes its different purpose: the customers sit along a straight counter, facing the bartender, not each other, which is conducive to the ordering and silent consumption of one’s drink, not to conversation. One of America’s few sidewalk cafés, just off Waikiki Beach, displays the notice:

NO LOITERING
We certainly don’t want to rush you but due to our lack of tables, please cooperate in making these tables available to the next customer.

Our Disdain for Culture

The wording may be unusual, but the spirit is not. Much has been written also about subtler means of speeding the customer, making his seat uncomfortable so that he will yield it up soon to the next one. The practice reflects not so much on the café owner as on his customers, who good-naturedly accept it as a legitimate profit-maximizing weapon because they concur in the underlying assumption that people go to cafés to consume, not to loiter.

Yet, in most, perhaps all, other countries and civilizations, people go to cafés for the very purpose of loitering, and they consume merely in order to pay for the privilege and for the space the owner provides to facilitate meeting and talking to friends or just for the enjoyment of the sense of belonging to a group, whether for talking or merely listening.

Needless to say, foreign café owners are no less interested in maximizing profits than are Americans, but, being aware of the very different nature of what they sell, they act very differently. The last thing they want to do is speed the customer on his way. After all, those who come by themselves come for the crowd and the liveliness it imparts to the place, while those who come to talk need time to get into the swing of it and to find it worthwhile staying longer and consuming more. Instead of making the chairs uncomfortably small, the owner is more likely to reduce the size of glasses and coffee cups. That stratagem enables customers to stay indefinitely by consuming an unlimited number of portions, and probably comes closest to charging by time spent, short of metering the chairs. Nor can customers object if they come for the talk, not for the drink; it then seems perfectly proper to be charged by the quantity and liveliness of the talk.

If our visits to cafés and pubs are short and rare in America, do we make up for it by visiting more in each other’s houses? Apparently not. One of our characteristics foreigners often comment on is the impossibility of dropping in unannounced on friends. Perhaps we want the advance notice merely to provide better hospitality or to make it into an event, but the number of
visits is bound to be reduced as a result. Then too, our social events are not conducive to conversation, being too crowded and alcoholic as a rule. The common custom of providing background music also shows that the hosts do not expect conversation by itself to be stimulating enough to ward off boredom.

Largely missing in our country is the tradition of regular and frequent get-togethers of friends to argue, gossip, and exchange news. Most countries whose inhabitants have a strongly felt demand for such contact manage to develop facilities for practicing it. Our failure to develop them is a sign of not much demand. "What's new" is in many languages both a customary greeting and an invitation for a friendly chat; its American form, "What d'you know," is only a greeting and impossible to take literally for a question that calls for an answer. It is as though we lacked or begrudged the time for an idle chat, which may be idle but is also one of man's main sources of stimulation and satisfaction.

What I said earlier about education helps to explain why our gambit for a chat is so halfhearted and why we have failed to develop the locale and the facilities for idle talk. We lack the stuff conversations are made of. That could well explain the data here discussed. We engage in plenty of shop talk, as if to prove that we enjoy talking as much as anybody, but that is a narrow subject which allows few partners and keeps few people going for long. To go beyond it, we must also have—and share with others!—other interests in life: politics, sports, people, society, fashions, art, science, and so on, as well as the background knowledge and memory of similar and related things which enable us to discuss them. People must share a background to have a pleasant conversation, and since that background also constitutes the skills of consumption, those who lack these also lack conversation.

I cannot prove, of course, that we lack such a background; the reader must weigh the evidence presented here and elsewhere and judge for himself. That we are presumed to lack such background, however, is evident: witness the uniquely American journalistic tradition that requires every item to be written in a way that a newcomer from outer space could understand it. That is why the title or position of every public figure, however well known, the definition of every concept, however familiar, must be restated every day in every article. The practice is a cumbersome nuisance for the informed reader, but it is of real help to the uninformed. And the latter must be very numerous if for their sake it is worth inflicting all that boring repetition on the informed. The justification usually cited, that our newspaper-reading public embraces a broader segment of the population than it does in other countries, can hardly be valid: according to the United States Statistical Abstract, thirteen foreign countries have a larger per capita circulation of daily papers than we do, despite the fact that we receive more and longer schooling.

It is largely our narrow, individual rationality that makes us miss part of the fun others get out of life. My rationality is shortsighted if I choose not to acquire consumption skills that afterwards, with the benefit of hindsight, would have seemed worth having; it is selfish if I ignore the benefit from my becoming more cultured to all those destined to share my company. I have argued that the remedy is to move to a higher or social rationality, which takes a longer view and considers other people's welfare beside our own.

A higher social rationality and a willingness to act in society's interest are probably the best remedies, but in the case of culture there are others, too. Since consumption skills are typically acquired by the young while they are in school, more mandatory liberal arts courses in the school curriculum are one alternative, and since much of the training in consumption skills is learning by doing, subsidies to the arts are another. All such measures, to be effective, must be based on a proper understanding of the meaning and purpose of culture. It is hard to ram things down people's throats for the good of their souls.
CHAPTER TWELVE

What's Wrong with Mass Production?

Specialization, division of labor, mass production, economies of scale—all are names and aspects of the one principle, recognized and first stated by Adam Smith: that the division of labor increases its product. That principle is the foundation of our high standard of living, the guiding light of all economic progress, and it continues to shower benefits upon us. Yet it has drawbacks as well. Since the drawbacks affect us as universally as the blessings, it is essential that we have a balanced view of them together. The drawbacks, however, are as commonly ignored as the advantages are recognized; that is why I set out to redress the balance.

Mass production is a phase of the division of labor which originated in nineteenth-century America in response to a shortage of skilled labor. It consists in the partitioning of the skilled worker's complex sequence of operations into simple components, each to be performed by a separate unskilled worker. The resulting increase in speed and productivity is the basis of the modern economy's superior performance, but an inevitable accompaniment was the transformation of much interesting, demanding, challenging work into effortless but dull monotony for all but a small proportion of the labor force.

There is no way of telling at this late stage to what extent monotony was consciously accepted, the costs being judged worth paying for the sake of the benefits, and to what extent we merely drifted into it all. Let me, for argument's sake, assume that the transformation of the nature and conditions of work was fully conscious, freely accepted, and entered into with open eyes by all concerned. After all, the less interesting work, thanks to its much higher productivity, was also much better paid; it was rational for workers to accept its greater monotony for the sake of the higher pay in the belief that they could buy ample compensating stimulation out of their additional pay and enjoy it during their additional leisure time. What was wrong with this way of thinking was that it failed to take into account the concomitant change in the nature of products which has gradually changed our whole environment.

THE MONOTONY OF PRODUCTS

The monotony of mass-production work is fully matched by the monotony of its product. Stimulation depends on variety and novelty, some of which is provided by nature but most of which originates with man—after all, even the inanimate objects around us are mostly man-made. Man-made variety and novelty in turn depend partly on human imagination and partly on a human limitation: man is unable or unwilling to reproduce exactly anything that he or another has made before. Specialization inhibits imagination, while mass production eliminates the inability and unwillingness to replicate. The first I will deal with later; the second I can illustrate here with a simple example.

The dishes we eat from are among the many objects that surround us. When they are mass-produced, we look at them occasionally, observing their shape and design perhaps when we buy them and a few times afterward, but we soon take them for granted and use them forever after without seeing or caring what they look like.
Handmade or hand-painted dishes hold our attention much longer. Slight differences in shape or design and minor irregularities in execution give each piece an individual identity we cannot help noticing. Each piece has an interest that attracts and holds the attention, greatly postponing the day when complete familiarity makes us see it no more. Such characteristics do not necessarily have anything to do with artistic excellence. Many a mass-produced dinner service is better designed and more beautifully made than the average handmade set. An object does not become beautiful just because it is handmade. But it does become different from all others, and it is the novelty and variety due to this difference that makes it interesting and stimulating. A modicum of artistic quality will then render it more pleasantly stimulating.

This example of dishes also brings home the fact that any single item or set of items makes a small contribution to our total visual stimulation. But the arousing effects of stimuli are additive, and it is the cumulative effect of all objects being handmade and having individuality in the primitive economy, as against all being mass produced and lacking individuality in the advanced economy, that makes a great deal of difference to the total environment and its total stimulus impact.

Every primitive society develops a characteristic style in its clothing, pottery, furniture, architecture, and so on. The variety of primitive articles stems from people's inability and unwillingness to imitate exactly, and their attractive design is assured by a kind of natural selection: people have a natural tendency to select the best specimens as models to imitate and improve upon. The result is much redundancy, but also much variety, a combination which is usually pleasing. Man seems to have an innate aesthetic sense which is developed whenever and wherever a large part of the population is called upon to fashion objects.

That the ordinary objects made for everyday use in primitive societies provide plenty of visual stimulation is best shown by the fact that members of such societies are seldom aware of their need for stimulation. The need is discovered and the objects catering to it appreciated only when mass production puts an end to their manufacture or when foreigners, whose own economic development has deprived their own environment of visual stimulation, draw attention to the individuality of primitive manufacture. It is a well-known peculiarity of folk art that it is always unconscious and goes unrecognized as long as it flourishes.

At the same time, one must guard against attributing more artistic sense to the appreciators of folk art than to its creators. We in this country are probably ahead of most others in appreciating and collecting contemporary primitive art, thanks partly to the magnificent pioneering collection of Mr. Nelson Rockefeller. But it would be wrong to conclude that we and Mr. Rockefeller have more understanding of this art than do the Melanesian, Polynesian, and African natives, who, after all, make the objects we collect and admire. We appreciate native handiwork more than they themselves do, because our environment lacks the stimulating objects they produce and have around in profusion. We attach a scarcity value to them, call them art, and pay high prices to possess them, just as we attach a high scarcity value to clean air and unpolluted bodies of water, which they likewise take for granted.

An example nearer to home is the patchwork quilt bedspread which the American housewife made even as late as the beginning of this century. Today such spreads are recognized as folk art. Their excellent design and color combinations are much appreciated, and they fetch prices ten to thirty times that of mass-produced equivalents. Yet the women who made them probably had no more artistic sense and skill than what normally comes from practice to everybody who can learn by doing (provided they do it not for quick sale, but in the expectation that they will live with what they make for the rest of their lives).

One may wonder why a handicraft, one seemingly so profitable, should have been allowed to die out. The answer is sim-
Mass-produced objects are not inherently inferior to hand-made ones as sources of visual stimulation; they accumulate the inferiority of boring sameness only gradually, as more and more people acquire the same or similar items and so increase the frequency with which an individual possessor of an item encounters its identical twins. The final victory of boredom may take decades—as long as it takes for mass-produced goods completely to displace homemade or handcrafted objects. That is also the stage at which the mysterious transformation of old junk into valuable antiques takes place.

Indeed, when mass-produced furnishings and household objects first reached the market in the mid-nineteenth century, the age of Victorian gingerbread, the various national styles they imitated must have provided a welcome change from the lesser variety of locally handcrafted products, and it was probably a combination of such newness with cheapness that proved irresistible. Only very slowly did monotony get the upper hand, as thousands of homes filled up with identical products, their sameness unrelieved even by irregularities of manufacture.

The principal man-made source of visual stimulation is architecture. The architecture of pre-industrial societies provides plenty of interesting and enjoyable variety, whether it is the creation of professional architects or is, in the nature of folk art, an architecture without architects. For sheer volume of information designed to arouse and to provide interest and emotional impact, the Gothic cathedrals of France and England may well be unsurpassed, but many hill towns, fishing villages, and other agglomerations of buildings, through the clever choice of location and use of the natural features of the environment, have comparable visual interest and variety. *Architecture without Architects,* the beautiful catalog published by the New York Museum of Modern Art, illustrates how simple means can achieve great impact; it also brings home the universality of this kind of stimulus, which seems to be produced by all ages, races, and civilizations, though rarely by the mass-production economy.

An indication that we are relatively deprived of visual stimulation is the fact that we seek it abroad much more often than others seek it in this country. American tourists go abroad in much greater numbers than foreign tourists visit the United States. (Data on Canadian visitors to this country are lacking, so, to compensate, I am excluding U.S. tourists to Canada.) In one year, 3.3 million non-Canadian foreign tourists come here, while 7.6 million U.S. tourists go overseas and to Mexico.

Our greater affluence will not explain the difference, because we take altogether much fewer and shorter vacations than many foreigners who are less affluent than we are. It used to be that vacations cost more in the United States than they did abroad, and, indeed, the disparity in numbers between American tourists abroad and foreign sightseers here was very much greater a few years ago than it is now. Today, however, cost can no longer be a factor, for repeated devaluations of the dollar and our slower rate of inflation have brought the cost of living and sightseeing in the United States down below that of many western European countries. That leaves as the remaining explanation the lesser interest and variety our cities offer the sightseer. We have our fair share of the beauties and wonders of nature, and the skylines and spectacular buildings of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco are pleasing and interesting to look at. But most of the man-made features of our environment were built in the age of mass production, and they look it, for little thought was given to and no money spent on making them beautiful as well as functional. They offer the tourist meager fare for his money compared to what he gets in poorer countries, with their picturesque towns and villages.

To go abroad for visual stimulation is not the only way, of course, to enliven an insufficiently stimulating environment. Another way is to import stimulation by embellishing our homes with decorative objects: curios, souvenirs, conversation pieces, antiques, works of art, reproductions of antiques and works of art, and flowers. Very often, the decorative centerpieces of coffee tables are the simple vessels and ordinary uten-
sils of an earlier generation or a poorer society—a reminder that our decorative objects merely replace the sensual interest which mass production takes out of articles of use, in much the same way in which our vitamin pills replace the nutrients refined out of our processed foods. Grandmother’s chamberpot used as a planter in modern living rooms symbolizes the poverty of the deprived, not the frivolity of the rich.

It is worth having an estimate of the money we spend on such decoration. From the Census of Business, our 1972 purchases of antiques can be estimated at $270 to $300 million. But since our imports of antiques and works of art by dealers and individuals amounted to $200 million, our total purchases of antiques and imported works of art may be put at $400 million. The sales of gift, novelty, and souvenir shops may be estimated at $900 million, but this comprises many non-decorative items and excludes the gift-shop sections of department stores and mail-order houses. One gets closer to pure decoration with an estimate of the combined national sales of stores such as Akron, Pier I Imports, San Francisco’s Cost-Plus Imports, Seattle’s Pirate’s Plunder, etc., which specialize on quaint, colorful, unusual, ostensibly handmade imports. A private estimate is that their total sales are $350 million, again excluding similar items sold by department stores. Adding a rough estimate of the value of both department store and auction sales as well as sales of art, paintings, prints, reproductions, framing, and so on—items too small to merit separate Census listings—we may estimate our total expenditure on antiques, works of art, and all other decorative objectives to be around $1.25 billion, certainly no higher than $1.5 billion.

Of our 1972 purchases of flowers and potted plants, estimated at $2.1 billion, 47 per cent is believed to have gone to hospital rooms, funeral parlors, and graves. The remaining $1.1 billion worth of flowers, added to my above figure, yields $2.5 billion as a rough estimate of our total 1972 expenditure on adding interest, variety, and visual stimulation to our homes. That is one-third of 1 per cent of our total expenditure on consumption.

What's Wrong with Mass Production?

Objects designed or used purely for decoration, however, are not the only relief from the monotony of a mass-produced environment. Another and much more costly one is that quick succession of fashions which compensates for lack of contemporary variety. American women are supposed to be unique in refusing to wear the same outfit to the office on consecutive days; and fashions are said to be sooner accepted, more closely followed, and faster changing in the United States than anywhere else. Witness the ease with which we discard still usable clothing and furnishings just because we are tired of them. In New York City, many immigrants furnished their homes (as did a friend of mine who is a millionaire) with discarded furniture picked off the street on days the Sanitation Department designates for carting off bulky objects. I have already remarked on our habit of changing homes two to three times as often as the people of other nations do; we are also said to replace our cars sooner than others do. Fashion mongering may seem wasteful, but the human need for variety and novelty is as legitimate as the desire to survive. People can be accused of frivolity, and producers blamed for pushing them into frivolity, only if cheaper or better sources of stimulus satisfaction are available as alternatives.

Careful and reliable estimates of the cost of annual model changes in the American automobile industry show this to be a quarter of total costs. In other words, we pay 25 per cent of the price of our new cars not for transportation, but for the novelty and variety which the annually changing appearance, features, and accessories of our cars provide. If we apply that percentage to our 1972 purchases of new cars, we find that our expenditure on novelty in automobile design can be estimated at $10 billion.

Since comparable estimates of the cost of novelty from changing fashions in clothes are not readily available, I propose to take automotive novelty as the symbol of frivolity-mixed-with-utility, and flowers, along with decorative objects, as the symbol of pure frivolity. Our four-times greater expenditure on the first than on the second is probably quite representative of the
much greater importance of utilitarian frivolity in the consumer's budget.

Does the greater expenditure mean a correspondingly greater preference for that kind of frivolity? Not quite. For one thing, the novelty and the consumer's enjoyment of the novelty of his new car wears off, partly with his increasing familiarity with his new possession, partly with that gradual accumulation of sameness which results from his encountering increasing numbers of the identical model on the road. He is more likely to expect and discount the first process than the second, which latter is a kind of external diseconomy thrust upon him after he has made his purchase. To the extent that the consumer is robbed of his car's novelty after he has bought it, his expenditure on it overstates its worth.

For another thing, the consumer cannot usually choose between a new car with novel features and a new car without them. Apart from the few weeks at the end of the year when next year's models are already available but dealers also sell out their remaining stock of the old year's models, the consumer must buy his new car with its new design and new features whether he wants them or not. The cost of model changes therefore is partly borne by those who do not want them, which implies that society gets—and pays for—more model-changing than the totality of its members want. Such imposition on the whole society of the tastes, and the cost of the tastes, of part of its members is one of the drawbacks of the economies of scale—which are especially great in the automobile industry, where scale economies are important, but are present wherever the new fashions displace the old on the shopkeeper's shelves sooner than they do in the most conservative buyer's affection.

At the same time, the combination of novelty with utility also imposes an additional cost, one due to its being a package and not illustrated in the automobile example. All package deals are suspect, because if two separate things wanted by the buyer come in a fixed package, he is likely to get an excess supply of one of them, with society paying the extra cost. The automobile

is an example of a package of practical use and frivolous novelty combined in fixed proportions, and so are virtually all consumers' durable and semi-durable goods. We get much of our stimulation in packages of that type from goods whose primary purpose is to provide some form of comfort, and the reason is simple: we have a strong preference for such combinations.

Our preference may have had its origin in our puritanical reluctance to take our pleasures straight, undiluted by practical utility, but in the course of time it became an aesthetic preference for simplicity and functionalism, for a simple environment uncluttered by useless objects, and for functional design in useful objects which declares their function rather than hiding it. We like our aesthetic stimulus to be built into useful objects by their good design and handsome appearance; most of us prefer the built-in elegance of sleek lines in a Cadillac to the added-on elegance of fringe curtains and flower vases in the Moskva. Our tastes as consumers are well reflected in our manufacturers' products: our industrial design is excellent and considered among the best in the world.

In the mass-production economy, such preference is satisfied at a cost. Stimulus satisfaction depends on novelty, which, in goods mass-produced in the thousands and millions, is used up much sooner than the comfort they yield. Clothing and furnishings become boring and unfashionable long before they are worn out; most of us get tired of our cars, appliances, gadgets while they still have plenty of life left in them; even toys often lose their attraction before they fall apart. In the modern economy, therefore, those of us who try to get our stimulation largely from such sources tend to replace durable goods sooner or accumulate a larger stock of them than purely utilitarian considerations would call for.

The faster-than-necessary replacement or accumulation of useful objects seems wasteful on the surface, because, with the additional stimulation one needs, one also gets additional use one does not need but has to pay for. Sometimes, however, the waste is more apparent than real. The automobile is a case in
point, because cars are too expensive to be thrown away when replaced. Instead, people sell them to someone less affluent or less in need of automotive stimulation than they, and the effect on society's welfare is not bad. The total stock of cars we own is probably no greater than what we want for comfort. Annual model changes assure a reasonably stimulating variety of shapes and sizes on our highways, and if our cars are younger on average than other people's, the main reason, probably, is our large export of ageing vehicles.

Usually, our desire for change and novelty does lead to waste, but this must be looked upon as a cost, one to be weighed against the benefit like any other cost. Man needs stimulation and comfort, and most goods provide both, but, when they are mass-produced, they provide them in proportions very different from those in which people want them. Hence the dilemma. To get the right amount of stimulation, one must accept a little extra comfort into the bargain; to get the right amount of comfort, one must put up with insufficient stimulation. The first involves a cost, the second a loss of benefit; the individual ought to be left to make his choice by his own lights.

There is a way out of the dilemma, and I have discussed it already. Insufficient stimulation from an insufficiently stimulating environment can be supplemented by seeking extra stimulation from decorative and art objects and, more generally, from art, handicrafts, hobbies, and many other sources. If such resolutions of the dilemma are not more popular, it may be due to a distaste for pure decoration and stimulation, or to their requiring skills of consumption. The interest of our counterculture in handicrafts may look like a turning back of the clock, but it is a perfect resolution of the dilemma and the only one fully in the American tradition of simplicity and functionalism.

THE BANALIZATION OF ART
Having discussed modern industry and its mechanical perfection as a source of monotony, let me proceed to deal with its other source, scarcity of imagination. Technical progress and the rise in labor productivity are lopsided in our economy. They mainly add to the provision of comfort and increase the earnings of those who provide comfort. Thanks to competition in the labor market, such increases in the ordinary worker's wages enable also those who provide us with novelty and stimulus to demand higher earnings, which in turn raises the cost of stimulation in relation to that of comfort. For that reason, concerts, opera, ballet, and the legitimate theater, as well as most other artistic products and artistic aspects of products, are forever becoming more expensive. Hence the choking off of consumers' demand, though the process is slowed in the performing arts by their increasing subsidization by government and by philanthropic donations.  

The reason for such lopsided growth is simple enough. Thanks to our technical inventiveness, we have greatly increased the effectiveness of labor power in producing comfort; but novelty and its stimulus spring largely from imagination, and we have not managed to increase the effectiveness of human imagination in producing novelty. Thus the rising cost of imagination raises the price of novelty, while the rising cost of ordinary labor is offset by its increasing productivity and so does not raise the price of comfort. The rise in the relative price of novelty puts the squeeze on its supply and confronts its suppliers—artists, entertainers, and other such—with the uncomfortable choice between a reduction in their incomes and a decimation of their numbers. They can hardly be blamed for preferring the latter, but society suffers from the consequent reduction in the supply of novelty and stimulation. Matters are made worse by the rival claims of science and technology on the limited supply of imagination.

Such a bias in favor of comfort and against stimulation is not inherent in our technology and may merely result from the way in which we have chosen to use it. The new must be mixed with the familiar to be pleasantly stimulating; in some of the arts, such as music or abstract painting, a pleasing degree of
redundancy is achieved by new variations, combinations, and permutations of familiar elements of a familiar style. Computer technology is well suited to producing limited novelty along these lines faster and in larger volume than can the human brain; it is possible that it could become an effective tool of the artist for increasing his productivity. The computer has already produced some tolerably good music, even if it has not produced great art, but such use of it is still in an experimental stage.

Although technology to produce enjoyable novelty still lies ahead, the technology to make existing novelty more accessible is already here. The communications industry is its main manifestation, but no less important are the mechanical reproduction of paintings, the recording and transmission of music, and the dissemination through film and TV of all the other performing arts. Even if the rising relative cost of originality has reduced the production of original sources of stimulation, what is produced is made available in so much greater volume and to so many more people that the total supply of stimulation available per head of population may well have risen. Democracy has been served, because many forms of stimulus enjoyment have been made available to a larger segment of the population. The question remains whether the individual has gained or lost as a result of his having less access to original and more to mechanically reproduced sources of stimulation.

The question is too large to be answered here, though I have already touched on one aspect of it. Another aspect can be dealt with by asking a related question: can mechanical reproduction in the arts ever be as good as the real thing? To take the example of music, musicians usually say no, audio engineers say yes or almost, and, apart from the purely technical side, whose further perfecting is just a matter of time, there seem to be two resolutions of their conflicting views. One has to do with the additional satisfaction most people get out of the human component, the physical presence of players and audience, and the tense, expectant, festive atmosphere their presence creates. I have discussed that element already. It is probably more important for many people than they care to admit.

The other resolution of the conflict of views on mechanical reproduction has to do with variety and uncertainty. Any given piece of live music can be listened to with pleasure much more often than any canned version of it. The reason is that successive live performances vary in tempo, interpretation, balance, perfection of execution, and they always involve some uncertainty as to how successful that particular performance will be. Live jazz is even more unpredictable, for improvisation is expected of the performers. The listener gains variety, novelty, suspense, even when the piece itself is already quite familiar to him. Indeed, some listeners brought up on canned music find the suspense so unsettling that they have to learn to accept it before they can fully enjoy live performances. None of that suspense and variety can be found, of course, in repeated hearings of the same record or tape.

Subjective novelty and stimulus enjoyment therefore diminish much faster with each playing of the same record than with each live performance of the same piece. People's tendency to listen to recorded music while reading or doing something else at the same time is perhaps also a sign that the record contains too much redundancy to provide a full measure of enjoyment or even to relieve boredom fully without additional stimulus from another source. The obvious remedy would be to own several recordings of each piece—which is not unfeasible economically, for recordings of a full-length concert cost no more than two good tickets to the concert. However, most people, once they own a good recording of a piece of music, will rather buy a recording of a new piece than a new recording of one they already own, thus to get more subjective information for their money. Similarly, many people will not go to a live performance of a program they own on records if they expect it to be less perfect than the recorded one they own. As a result, the modern music-lover goes through the repertory much faster than his predecessors did, because he gets less novelty and variety out of
each composition and so needs more of them to obtain a given stimulus.

A closely related development with similar results is the increasing frequency with which, as a captive audience, we are made to listen to music in waiting rooms, offices, stores, public transport vehicles, and elsewhere. Such listening is usually a secondary activity, with our attention divided and the quality of reproduction inferior, but it does provide stimulation and also contributes to wearing out the novelty and increasing the redundancy of the piece, so affecting our ability to enjoy it during subsequent listenings.

Such banalization of art has occurred in other art forms. Seeing the same film repeatedly is much less interesting than seeing the same live play several times. Similarly, the wide currency of reproductions of some paintings greatly diminishes the interest and enjoyment they hold, especially when one encounters not only an occasional good reproduction on a friend's living-room wall, but many not-so-good reproductions in magazines, book covers, and posters. One more example, which I have already mentioned, is women's fashions. The quick and wide dissemination of fashions wears out the stimulus of their novelty very fast and explains the speed with which they change.

People's desire for the uniqueness of a painting, an art object, a dress, or any other possession therefore, however snobbish it may seem, is soundly based on a desire for maximum novelty and stimulus enjoyment. The owner himself, of course, quickly uses up the novelty content of his own possessions, but uniqueness enhances the enjoyment of others as well as the satisfaction the owner gets from other people's enjoyment.

Is the banalization of art good or bad from the individual's point of view? The great frequency with which we are exposed to poor reproductions of music or pictures clearly makes us use up their novelty faster than we otherwise would, though it does not yield correspondingly more enjoyment in the process. Professor Abraham Moles, who first raised this question, believed that the need for artistic imagination is likely to exceed the supply in the modern economy, and he called for computer technology with which to enhance the artist's productivity in creating novelty.¹⁰

The issue is unresolved, and it may look different to people who are willing and able to enjoy not only new but past novelty. To wring every ounce of novelty, variety, and stimulus out of an object, a play, or a piece of music before proceeding to enjoy the next one is desirable only if not enough of them of comparable quality are available to last for one's lifetime. When and where this is so depends on the art form and on one's breadth of interests, consumption skills, and appetite for stimulation. Music could well be, for some people, a source of stimulus whose stock, accumulated over centuries, is large enough to allow its wasteful use with impunity. Today's record buff probably knows and has enjoyed more pieces of music than many a nineteenth-century amateur musician ever did; who is to tell whether his superficial enjoyment of more music is worth more or less than the deeper enjoyment his predecessors got out of their more intimate and knowledgeable appreciation of a smaller repertory?

Here we must leave the question. The banalization of art is undoubtedly an important consequence of mass production; how it, in turn, affects the consumer's tastes, behavior, and enjoyment of art is hard to tell. This short discussion should introduce the reader to the nature of the problem, but it cannot resolve it.