

Technological Trends and Work—A Mixed Vision

I. Prophetic Statements

A substantial literature, both fictional and non-fictional, has accumulated on the projected impact of technological innovation for Western societies. Utopians describe the advent of an earthly paradise mediated through technological miracle makers; anti-utopians depict a new imagery of slavery, disguised as technical efficiency, in which technology becomes an end unto itself.¹ For example, one visionary of a century ago, overwhelmed by the potential impact of electricity and machinery for his day, predicted that by 1900 we "would have no harassing cares, or laborious duties to fulfill. Machinery will perform all work—automata will direct them. The only task of the human race will be to make love, study, and be happy."

In commenting on this and similar visions, one speaker observed: "these predictions of future worlds have typically been overfulfilled in the realm of physical science, and underfulfilled in the realm of political, social, and economic organization."²

A noticeable gap appears between what is technically feasible and what is practical and/or probable, given the nature of man and his institutions. Expectation and performance are not reconciled; vast know-how does not automatically resolve problems of what-for. Western man realizes that technology has wrought vast changes in our environment and wields massive power over our lives and our landscape; yet man remains ambivalent about change and the outcome of it all. The purpose of this paper is descriptive rather than polemical, to bring together a corpus of materials indicating trends and ideas thought to have relevance for any assessment of the impact of technology upon work and related non-work institutions and their associated ideologies.³

¹ A recent addition to the list of anti-utopias is Michael Young's *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, joining such classics as Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*. A recent penetrating critique is Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society* (1964), originally published as *La Technique ou l'enjeu du siècle* (1954).

² Arthur Larson, "Can Man's Brain Mold His International Environment?" Mayo Centennial Symposium, *Mirror to Man: Man's Adaptation to His Expanding Environment*, *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, Vol. 40, January 1965, p. 58.

³ The writer will admit the biased impression that it seems to him that many leaders and theologians in churches professing justification by faith alone are, in their own occupational identities and commitments, living examples of a work ethic comparable to secular counterparts. Lest it be thought by some that the writer has placed science on a pedestal, he would hasten to relieve them. The statement of Peter Berger that the physicists are engineering our destruction, whereas the social scientists have the lesser task of engineering our consent, contains a terrifying truth.

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II. Technological Change and the World of Work

Although technology,⁴ in elemental forms, has been part of human cultures for countless centuries, it is generally believed that the impact of technology is accelerating and that some of these fruits, both sweet and bitter, are to be found in their most developed and/or decadent state in the United States. For this and other reasons, the literature cited and examples utilized are rather exclusively focused on the United States. The first industrial revolution made dramatic changes in the processing of raw materials through use of inanimate power sources, thus leading to concentrated factory production. The second industrial revolution of this century finds substantial technological innovation in primary industries (agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining) and in the handling of materials and their control by automatic processes.

An unresolved debate continues as to the short-range and ultimate consequences of automation-cybernation on the society and the worker. In making industrial processes more efficient, does it enhance our standard of living or does it have the net effect of limiting labor force participation and derivative work identities? Some see full employment as a relatively independent problem, irrespective of rates of automation. Some generalizations about the relationship of technology to work, however, seem justified by the evidence:

1. Worker productivity, measured by output per man hour, increased about two percent per year during this century, with a further one percent increase in the decade or so following World War II. Rates of growth have been subsiding.
2. The length of the work week has been reduced from 70 hours in 1850 to 40 hours in 1960, with greater declines in non-agricultural industries. Data by de Crazia⁵ revealed that full-time workers in 1960 worked as many hours as they did in 1948, 46-47 hours per week. Overtime work, second jobs and weekend work augment the scheduled work week for innumerable workers.
3. Work is becoming increasingly bureaucratized. Firms employing fifty or more workers employ nearly sixty percent of all workers, with one-seventh of all workers employed by some governmental agency. Largest increases have been at state and local levels.
4. Manpower requirements in primary industries have declined, with corresponding growth of manpower demands in distributive and service industries. With some exceptions, the growth industries involve manipulation of people or symbols rather than physical objects. Service industries are themselves feeling the impact of technology.

⁴ By technology is meant the utilization of techniques by which available economic resources are transformed into goods and services needed to fulfill human wants. For this and other related definitions see *The Manpower Revolution*, Garth L. Mangum, editor, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1965), pp. 237-238.

⁵ Sebastian de Crazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1964; Twentieth Century Fund, Inc., 1962).

5. With growing awareness of the finite nature of some resources erroneously thought to be unlimited (such as water, fresh air, space, and privacy), more manpower will be required both to secure and protect the basic elements of subsistence and survival.

6. The process of technological change itself is increasingly coming within the purview and potential control of leaders in government and industry. For better or for worse, our future destiny is in our hands.

III. Labor Force Trends in the U.S.

The following table shows the rapidity of change in the labor force in this century. Farm occupations have declined drastically. Of blue-collar occupations, only the number of service workers experienced substantial recent growth. The occupations of the future appear to be the professions, managerial and related white collar tasks, generally requiring specialized abilities and training. Among the factors influencing employment opportunities in the future, the following basic demographic variables are noted.

1. *Age.* Present employment policies make it more difficult to enter the job market at young ages and to maintain employment upon advancing age, particularly after age 65. Thus unemployment, marginal or part-time employment is the fate of more and more youthful workers, particularly those deficient in desired work skills. Nearly a fourth of non-school youth 18-19 years of age are not employed, with higher rates among distressed minorities.

2. *Sex.* Approximately one-third of workers are women, one-third of whom are in clerical occupations. Although job and pay discrimination exists for women, professional, semi-professional, and service occupations will continue to be available. Future work opportunities are less apt to emphasize sex differences, further complicating the complementary nature of sex roles.

3. *Education.* Persons with limited education—caused by physical or mental handicap, limited opportunity, or inadequate motivation—will experience greater difficulty securing a foothold in the occupational structure. They will have no marketable skill; if they are to have meaningful identities and self-respect, it will have to come from outside the area of remunerative employment.

4. *Race.* Negroes comprise a growing percentage of the population, experience problems in securing rewarding educational experiences, and thus have a precarious foothold in the world of work, all of which is compounded by a legacy of discrimination.

U.S. Labor Force Trends, 1900, 1950, 1960

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	1900 %	1950 %	1960 %
Professional & technical workers	4.2	8.6	10.8
	10.0		21.0
Managers, officials, proprietors	5.8	8.8	10.2
Sales workers	4.5	7.0	6.5
	7.7		21.0
Clerical workers	3.2	12.3	14.5
Total—White Collar Workers	17.7	36.7	42.0
Craftsmen and foremen	10.5	14.1	12.9
	23.3		31.5
Operatives (semi-skilled)	12.8	20.4	18.6
Service workers (except household)	3.6	7.9	9.3
	9.0		12.6
Private household workers	5.4	2.6	3.3
Farmers and farm operators	19.9	7.4	4.0
	37.5		7.9*
Farm laborers and foremen	17.6	4.3	3.9
Laborers, except farm and mine	12.5	6.6	6.0
Total—Blue Collar Workers	82.3	63.3	58.0

*Of persons with previous work experience, only 5.8% were in agriculture in 1960.

SOURCE: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1962*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1962.

IV. The Meaning of Work

1. Historical Reflections

The impact of the early factory system on man was felt to be brutish by many observers. Marx saw the factory as an evil for the worker, restricting his freedom, straining the nervous system, and making the worker "a mere living appendage" to the machine.⁶ The attack by Marx and other 19th century critics of factory life went deeper than just bemoaning the discomfort of routinized, boring work. Rather they argued that modern enterprises *alienate* man from his work so there is little meaning in his life. Socialism would solve the problem. Workers now freed from the shackles of capitalist exploitation and avarice would voluntarily throw themselves into joyous work and thus transform the world into a happy

⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Modern Library, p. 462.

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beehive. Work in Marxist utopia is free, like leisure. Of course, the present status of work in avowedly Marxist countries still awaits fulfillment of this dream. Another fundamental starting point for the analysis of work has been the thesis of Max Weber, the initial fragment of which was contained in his well-known but frequently misinterpreted essay, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism".¹ In this essay Weber launched a series of lifetime analytic studies testing and challenging the Marxist thesis that ideas were simply dependent variables. For his comparative studies he carefully constructed various typologies, several of which are pertinent to work and technology. Of the systematic efforts to provide meaning for life, Weber found religious systems to gravitate toward "other worldly mysticism", such as contained in classic Hinduism and Buddhism, or in the direction of "inner worldly asceticism", of which Calvinism was closest to the ideal type labeled "the Protestant Ethic".

Because this phrase has been so abused and misunderstood, a brief comment may be helpful. To the Calvinist, God was inscrutable, man was predestined to salvation or damnation, man was placed on earth to glorify God and nothing else, no magic or sacramental system could relieve him of a rational control of his entire life, man could not indulge himself. The emerged ethic from this theology emphasized rationality, thrift, self-denial, work in the world, the fruits of which could not be used for pleasure or self aggrandizement. As Weber noted, the *logical* consequences of this theology would lead to despair; however, the *psychological* consequences led the Calvinist to infer that signs of worldly mastery or control could be related to predestination. Good works were enjoined, in any event.

Weber had observed that a relatively new form of capitalism was emerging and uniquely flowered in the West; this was the "rational bourgeoisie capitalism" of bureaucratic industrial enterprises, rather than simply trade or banking, which so many of his critics assumed. The "spirit" of this new capitalism fostered rational planning, cost accounting, punctuality, division of labor, thrift, efficiency. Thus by a fortuitous set of circumstances, the *spirit* required by the new capitalism was parallel to the work *ethic* derived from Calvinism. Of course, as Weber noted, it did not take long before wealth-seeking justified itself, so that both wealth and work were self-justified.

In commenting on Weber's description of this work ethic, Bendix has difficulty in capturing his meaning in translation. He quotes Weber that work "is an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his occupational activity, no matter in what it consists". His footnote comment states the difficulty: "I substitute the word 'occupational' for 'professional' in this quotation, but, as Parsons observes, there is no satisfactory English equiv-

¹ Translated by Talcott Parsons, Scribner's, 1930 (New Edition: Scribner Library, 1958). Originally published in 1904-05, later included in the 3-volume work, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1920/21), Vol. 1, pp. 1-206.

alent for the German term *Beruf*. 'Profession' is too narrow, since the word refers to all occupational activities; 'vocation' lacks the ethical connotation that is intended; and 'calling' which retains the connotation, is only applied to the ministry in its modern usage. Yet the whole point of the earliest usage of 'calling' or *Beruf* was the sense of a higher obligation applied to every occupational activity."²

Hence when many contemporary writers use the phrase "Protestant Ethic", there is little resemblance to Weber's association with Calvinism. For some the phrase is simply a euphemism for unbridled acquisitiveness and occupational status striving. For others it means high achievement drive and/or high satisfaction associated with occupational activity with or without any deferred gratification component. Wilensky describes the situation most adequately. "Whatever the attitude of the common man, philosophies of work have through the ages become more favorable to labor and its fruits. Popular sociology has labeled this tendency the rise of the Protestant Ethic. The generalization relating ideal and economic action that can withstand a cross-cultural test, however, may be this: wherever economic growth is sustained, societal values which acquire a sacred cast and are favorable to economic growth will appear, furthering and reflecting that growth. Thus the well-known puritanical drive of the Soviet managerial elite, the entrepreneurial spirit of skilled immigrants in developing countries (Nisei in America, Huguenots in Amsterdam, Jews everywhere) reflect not a Protestant Ethic but a doctrine of work, tied to Communist ideology and an expansionist totalitarian state in the one case, to ethnic-religious tradition and marginal status in the other."³

2. The Centrality of Work Status

Whatever the ideological roots, labor forces in modern industrial and urban societies are drawn into larger scale work settings necessitating absence from traditional community settings. "Race, sex, marital status, and other characteristics formerly determined civil estate quite directly; now it is work that counts (although it has always been a great determiner of status), and other characteristics take their importance by virtue of their influence on one's place in the labor force."⁴

In a classic essay, Daniel Bell has gone into considerable detail describing the compulsive quality in modern societies, particularly in the pressures associated with manufacturing. He concludes his essay by noting that work, in Western civilization, has been at the center of moral consciousness, whether seen as curse or blessing. "In the Protestant conception, all work was endowed with virtue. 'A

² Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 51.

³ Harold L. Wilensky, "Work as a Social Problem", in Howard S. Becker, Editor, *Social Problems: A Modern Approach*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), p. 164. This chapter is based on his forthcoming book, *Work, Leisure, and Freedom*, (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press).

⁴ Everett C. Hughes, "The Study of Occupations", Ch. 20 in *Sociology Today*, edited by Robert Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard Cottrell, Jr., (New York: Basic Books, 1959), pp. 442-443.

housemaid who does her work is no farther away from God than the priest in the pulpit', said Luther. Every man is 'called', not just a few, and every place, not just a church, is invested with godliness. With Zwingli, even with dour Calvin, work was connected with the joy of creating and with exploring even the wonders of creation. In Western history, however, work has had a deeper 'moral unconscious'. It was a way, along with religion, of confronting the absurdity of existence and the beyond." Bell noted that religion addressed death and meaning, but that with decline of religion new meaning was sought in work. "Many of these fears were staved off by work. . . One could eliminate death from consciousness by minimizing it through work. As *homo faber*, man could seek to master nature and to discipline himself. Work, said Freud, was the chief means of binding an individual to reality. What will happen, then, when not only the worker but work itself is displaced by the machine?"¹¹

The long-standing professions and well-entrenched occupations have been in better positions to resist efforts to change their work content or rules, but continuous pressures are operating to increase efficiency, resulting in further job specialization, obsolescence of job skills and knowledge, and breakdown of fellow feelings with past workers in similar fields. Because of this dynamic changing quality of many occupations, it becomes more difficult to chart one's career and prepare for it with assurance. Discussing these problems, Hughes states that young people "must choose their occupations, as they do their lives, largely on faith."¹²

3. The Self-Engineering of Work Identities

To be successful in charting a career in large-scale organization, there are pressures to adjust and adapt oneself to the demands of the system. Karl Mannheim describes the process vividly. "By self-rationalization we understand the individual's systematic control of his impulses—a control which is always the first step to be taken if an individual wants to plan his life so that every action is guided by principle and is directed towards the goal he has in mind. . . Modern society attains perhaps its highest stage of functional rationalization in its administrative staff, in which the individuals who take part not only have their specific actions prescribed . . . but in addition have their life-plan to a large extent imposed in the form of a 'career', in which the individual stages are specified in advance. Concern with a career requires a maximum of self-mastery since it involves not only the actual processes of work but also the prescriptive regulation both of ideas and feelings that one is permitted to have and of one's leisure time."¹³

¹¹ Daniel Bell, "Work and Its Discontents", *The End of Ideology*, rev. ed., (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1962), pp. 227-272.

¹² Everett C. Hughes, op. cit., p. 456.

¹³ Quoted from Joseph Beasman and Bernard Rosenberg, "The Meaning of Work in Bureaucratic Society", *Identity and Anxiety*, edited by Maurice Stein, Arthur J. Vidich, and David White, (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 183. The entire essay discusses many implications of bureaucratic forces on the worker and his identifications. Other essays in this section of the collection are also relevant to work identities, especially "The Myth of the Happy Worker", by Harvey Swados.

This is closely familiar to Fromm's description of the "marketing orientation". Personalities are offered for sale like other commodities. To engineer a sale is to be as you desire me; thus identities become as shaky as self-esteem.¹⁴ One of the more famous essays developing this theme is that of Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, in which it is claimed that the basic personality type of man in modern industrialized society is changing from being "inner directed" to being "other directed".¹⁵ Another somewhat overdrawn portrayal of working man as a victim of large-scale organization is the popular and provocative *The Organization Man*, by William H. Whyte.¹⁶ He lucidly describes some of the problems of over-organization and disorganization in bureaucratic structures. He popularized the contemporary misuse of the phrase "the Protestant Ethic", which to Whyte is a grindstone philosophy with deferred earthly reward. For example, he states that "Few talents are more commercially sought today than the knack of describing departures from the Protestant Ethic as reaffirmations of it." He follows with a footnote explanation: "Helping in this task is what a good part of 'motivation research' is all about. Motivation researcher Dr. Ernest Dichter, in a bulletin to business, says, "We are now confronted with the problem of permitting the average American to feel moral even when he is taking two vacations a year and buying a second or third car. One of the basic problems of this prosperity, then, is to give people the sanction and justification to enjoy it and to demonstrate that the hedonistic approach to his life is a moral, not an immoral one."¹⁷

4. Work Alienation

A common theme running through many analyses of contemporary work in modern society is that of alienation. It is found in most of the writers quoted in this section; the evidence in support of alienation is cloudy, partly because of possible ambiguity in use of the word. Marx saw it as the loss of the ability of the worker to express himself in his work. Certainly, many workers prior to the industrial revolution had little opportunity to express themselves in compulsive peonage or slavery.

Robert Nisbet describes alienation as "the state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or even hostility."¹⁸

¹⁴ Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1947), pp. 75-80.

¹⁵ David Riesman and others, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), (abridged edition, Yale University Press, 1961). Lipset challenges Riesman's thesis that it was not until the technological changes of the 19th and 20th century that the model American character was transformed to being 'other directed'. He also questions Riesman's use of values as simply being dependent variables. See Seymour M. Lipset, "A Changing American Character", in: *Culture and Social Character*, edited by Seymour Lipset and Leo Lowenthal, (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1961).

¹⁶ W. H. Whyte, *The Organization Man*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1957).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸ *Community and Power* (formerly *Quest for Community*, Oxford University Press, 1952; New York: Galaxy Books, Oxford University Press, 1962). A fuller set of referents is provided by Melvin Seaman, "On the Meaning of Alienation", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 24, 1959, pp. 783-791. He differentiates: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, anomie, isolation, and self-estrangement.

Wilensky has empirically tested alienation in work settings. He defined "social alienation as the feeling that routine enactment of role obligations and rights is incongruent with prized self-image." He found only limited evidence of work alienation, with the most important factors being: 1. limited freedom or discretion in the work setting and a tall hierarchy above; 2. a career blocked and chaotic, and 3. life cycle squeeze on funds.¹⁹

Limited studies of the effects of automation on workers suggest: 1. With automation, work in the factory and the office are becoming more alike. 2. Workers have greater awareness of how technology affects their lives. They and their families must adapt to the machine environment (shifts, etc.). 3. Both blue and white collar workers experience extended periods of disruption in basic patterns of working. 4. Changes in work may promote challenge, excitement and growth, or changes can be dysfunctional and increase vulnerability and emotional turmoil.²⁰

5. The Lonely Crowd Revisited

Riesman concludes his discussion of obstacles to autonomy in work by saying: "Yet people's real 'work'—the field into which, on the basis of their character and their gifts, they would like to throw their emotional and creative energies—cannot now conceivably coincide, perhaps in the majority of cases, with what they get paid for doing."²¹ Riesman is never very clear where this autonomously directed energy is to go if it cannot go into their work. He tends to equate leisure with play, hardly a field for "real work".

In his new preface to the abridged edition, Riesman admits this weakness: "The one strongly utopian note that remains in the book now seems to us the least satisfactory, namely, the whole idea that autonomy in the post industrial culture was to be found in play and leisure, and not in work. We were right to conclude that the old subsistence motives of hunger and gain were evaporating. We were also right to reject the alternative of persuading workers that what they are doing is meaningful by making it chummy and by the pseudo-participation evoked in a corporate happy family. Undoubtedly for many people, perhaps particularly for women whose main concern is their families, a job does not need to be 'meaningful', provided that the hours are short and convenient, transport no problem, and the work itself neither exhausting nor demeaning. The center of gravity, of seriousness, for many can and does lie outside their occupation. Yet we failed fully to appreciate the costs of that relocation, not only for men trained in a work-driven age but for their descendants in the foreseeable future. The criticism Daniel Bell voices of us as 'prophets of play' in *Work and Its Discon-*

¹⁹ Wilensky, *op. cit.*, p. 140, 143.

²⁰ Floyd C. Mann, "Psychological and Organizational Impacts", Ch. 3 in *Automation and Technological Change*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1962), pp. 43-65.

²¹ Riesman, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

tenants seem to us just."²² Riesman seems to recognize what is missing in his prescription for alienation among privileged Americans. "They are in search of a cause, in search of commitment, and some look for this outside the United States, very rarely behind the Iron Curtain, but in India, Africa, Cuba, or Israel. It would seem that men cannot live for long in a static, sober world drained of ideology."²³ It seems clear that Riesman has little to suggest by way of cause or commitment, at least for the average man.

V. Alternatives to Work

1. Changing Definitions of Work

The tendency in modern times is to narrow the definition of "work". Typically, "work" was conceived as all toil and other labor required for survival, or in de Grazia's words: "effort or exertion done typically to make a living or keep a house."²⁴ But even de Grazia restricts work to work which falls within moral and legal limits, broadly defined. The tendency to restrict the meaning of "work" is illustrated by the definition offered by Dubin, a sociologist of work. "By work we mean continuous employment, in the production of goods and services, for remuneration."²⁵ This leads to the distinction whereby a professional golfer in a tournament is "working", whereas the amateur golfer in the same tournament is "playing", or to seeing a definitive difference between paid soloists and unpaid choir members at worship services. This distinction is further complicated by the content of the goods or services produced from the remunerated activity. Is "featherbedding" work? Is the stretching of work according to Parkinson's law an admixture of work and play elements? Adding some moral dimension or legitimacy criteria to the activity further confounds definitions of "work". Under what circumstances are the following considered to be working: gamblers, prostitutes, abortionists, bank robbers, and the like? Under what conditions are students and homemakers considered as workers?

Not only has the meaning of "work" undergone transformation in recent generations, the larger normative framework in which it is imbedded is changing. When Henry Ford adopted the 5-day week in the automobile industry in 1926, he was considered immoral by many industrial associates. One spoke to this point before a national convention of manufacturers, "I regard the five-day week as an unworthy ideal. . . More work and better is a more inspiring and worthier motto than less work and more pay. . . It is better not to trifle with God's laws."

Work also must be seen in the value framework of the society in which it takes place. An anthropological assessment of our dominant value system is summarized by Cora Du Bois. "Four major premises were assumed to underlie the

²² David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, *op. cit.*, Preface pp. xlv-xlv.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. xlvii.

²⁴ Sebastian de Grazia, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

²⁵ Robert Dubin, *The World of Work: Industrial Society and Human Relations*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1958), p. 4.

American middle-class value system: 1. a mechanistically conceived universe, 2. man's mastery over that universe, 3. the equality of men, and 4. man's perfectibility. From these four premises three focal values were suggested: 1. effort-optimism; 2. material well-being; and 3. conformity.²⁶ All of the above premises and basic values are expressed in contemporary work images, with the possible exception of the equality premise. A parallel assessment by a sociologist is the classic discussion by Robin Williams.²⁷

In discussing the "work-activity" value configuration, Williams traces the functional value placed on work in America in the first centuries both for survival and also for the rich rewards for work available. He notes also the Puritan tradition and other varieties of Protestantism "in which successful works became a sign of grace. This 'metaphysical drive to work' permeated the older agrarian culture of this country and exists even today in rural areas and among certain other sub-groups that have not yet fully assimilated the more recent cult of success and conspicuous consumption." In short, the emphasis upon work as an end in itself represented a convergence of factors all operating in one direction—a mutual reinforcement of self-interest, social recognition, and ethical and religious precepts, 'work' therefore became a value incorporated into the ego ideal of the representative personality types of the culture and often approached the intensity of a true matter of conscience. If distinctive foci of values can be found in this complicated culture, it seems that one should look into the strong positive appreciation of the support for *worldly, instrumental activism*.²⁸

It is this work ethic which is undergoing an uneven and cloudy transformation under the influence of raising affluence. Galbraith discerns the fruits of affluence as influencing work in one of three different ways. Workers will work: 1. fewer hours or days in the week; 2. less hard; or 3. fewer years. He envisages that greater emphasis could be placed upon making work more pleasant and agreeable rather than simply shortening the work-day, work-week, work-year, or work-life; although this threatens the traditional image of hard work on the job as a prime economic virtue.²⁹

A major transformation has been the shortening of work-life, the third alternative noted by Galbraith. On this matter he raises a significant issue: "With diminished marginal urgency of goods it is logical that the first to be spared should be old and young. We have yet, however, to view this tendency consistently and comprehensively . . . we have ordinarily subjected those who retire to a drastic reduction in income and living standards. Obviously, if the retire-

²⁶ Cora Du Bois, "The Dominant Value Profile of American Culture" in: *American Anthropologist*, LVII, December 1955, pp. 1232-1239.

²⁷ Robin Williams, *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation*, 2nd edition, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 415-468.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

²⁹ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, (Boston: Mentor Books, Houghton Mifflin, 1958), Ch. 24, "Labor, Leisure and the New Class", pp. 259-269.

ment can be afforded because the product is no longer urgent, a satisfactory . . . living standard can be accorded to the retired employee for the same reason. Similarly we have excluded youngsters from the labor market . . . if we are affluent enough to dispense with the product of juvenile labor, it again follows that we are affluent enough to provide the education that takes its place."³⁰

Substitute identities with meaning for the person are needed to supplant the lost work identity of the retired, the absence of an adequate identity for non-school youth, and more unified identities for the part-time worker and for the homemaker with unfilled time on her hands. As Soule stated it, with only slight exaggeration, "technology has mastered the art of saving time but not the art of spending it."³¹ Thus we have a growing interest in non-work activities.

2. Types of Non-Work Activities

A historic tendency was to equate non-work with idleness, which tended to degenerate into indolence and ultimately to sloth. Sloth was negatively valued, suggesting laziness, self-indulgence and vice—the very antithesis of work. Free time, or time not spent in working, was viewed chiefly as a restorative for work. This became a narrow definition of leisure. Leisure should be a means to other goals; man was enjoined to spend his leisure profitably.

This traditional rationale of leisure is vividly described by Margaret Mead: "Leisure is something that has to be earned and re-earned, except for the very old. Seen as play for children, recreation for adults, and retirement for the old, both child and adult have to earn their rights—the child by growing and learning, the adult by working. Unearned leisure is something which will have to be paid for later. It comes under the heading of vice—where the pleasure comes first and the pain afterward—instead of virtue, where the pain or work precedes the reward."³²

This view of leisure is perhaps more closely identified with traditional views of "re-creation", in which there is an alternation between light, pleasant activity as a restorative to refresh us for heavy, energy-consuming work. It was teleological within a narrow frame of reference.

A broader alternative to work is suggested by the influential study by the Dutch historian, John Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*.³³ He finds play to be a significant dimension in animal behavior, particularly in man. As he develops his analysis of play, it tends to become increasingly

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

³¹ George Soule, *Time for Living*, (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 100-101.

³² Margaret Mead, "The Pattern of Leisure in Contemporary American Society", *The Dilemma of Organizational Society*, edited by Heudrik Ruitenbeek, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963), p. 177.

³³ John Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Originally published in 1938, English edition, (London: Routledge and Paul, 1949).

ordered and structured and thus takes on the features of a game, which is a significant dimension in social behavioristic theories of personality development, particularly in writers such as Jean Piaget and George Mead. Thus it is clear that play is something more than a pastime for children or a rather meaningless interlude in the real life of an adult. Play, along with work and love, is an essential ingredient in a healthy emotional life, according to Freud and hosts of successors. This growing awareness of the significance of man's non-work to his total personality finds increasing expression in studies of "leisure", in which play and recreation can be viewed as specific forms.

A recent writer, who has given considerable impetus in redefining leisure as more than simply a restorative for work, but an end in itself, is Joseph Pieper, German Catholic philosopher. Pieper believes we have overvalued the sphere of work and have failed to see that leisure is one of the foundations of Western culture. The highest moral good is effortless—because it springs from love.

Pieper begins his analysis by rejecting the traditional association of leisure with idleness; in fact, idleness renders true leisure impossible. Sloth, rather than being simply idleness and laziness, is really "not caring", from *acedia*. Leisure is not being busy, but allowing things to happen while in a receptive mood, the ultimate of which is the religious celebration of divine worship.³⁴

3. The Redefinition of Leisure

The redefinition of leisure has been goaded by the changing nature of work and the emergence of new types of free time or non-work time—loosely labeled as leisure. Kaplan distinguishes five types of leisure prevalent in contemporary industrialized societies: 1. the permanent, voluntary leisure of the rich; 2. the temporary, involuntary leisure of the unemployed; 3. the regularly allocated, voluntary leisure of the employed on holidays and vacations; 4. the temporary incapacity of the employed, the permanent incapacity of the disabled, and the voluntary or "involuntary" retirement of the aged; and 5. those to whom increased automation will mean cycles of work and non-work, with no stipulation or psychology of unemployment, with continuing pay, and with a dramatic inter-weaving of free time and work time.³⁵

The increased expansion of time and persons found in each of the above categories, especially the last one, will minimize the role of work in human lives and call for re-appraisal of identities when there is not enough work for everyone who wants it. Gans, a sociologist, feels the economic consequences may be easier to meet than the social or psychological ones. The reason is "that man acquires his social worth and thus much of his self-respect and ego-strength from his job. If that job is not available, widespread anomie resulting from uselessness

³⁴ Joseph Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, (New York: Pantheon, 1952).

³⁵ Max Kaplan, *Leisure in America: A Social Inquiry*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960).

is likely to follow, and ways must therefore be found to enable people to be—and feel—socially useful, in other, non-work activities. . . . Joblessness can lead to despair, total apathy and mental illness . . . it becomes necessary to discover which institutions, old or new, can enable people to feel socially worthy when they are jobless or only employed part-time. The ideal target is a society in which non-work institutions are more important than work, and in which the departure from the labor market is anticipated rather than feared. This ideal has been proposed in many utopias, past and present, but so far it has been mainly a dream of overworked intellectuals which has not been shared by the rest of society. Now the dream may have to become a reality."³⁶

The realization of this dream may be more difficult than generally realized. Mills states the idealized image very well when he asks: "For is not any life worth living a life in which both work and leisure are but phases of one meaningful whole, a life which is largely composed of truly independent domains of experience, a life in which the mass means of distraction are not felt to be necessary? The so-called problem of leisure, in short, is the problem of how we can heighten the qualities of experience in all areas of American life to such an extent that there will be no problem of leisure."³⁷

This will not be an easy task. One problem is the limited horizon of man to use leisure "creatively". Participation in "local community institutions and voluntary associations are not likely to aid much in the solution of the problem because they beg the important questions of whether these activities actually do have moral force and whether the social structure actually does provide access to the goals which the culture recommends. Many of the recommended solutions to the problem of leisure, in short, would be viable only if there were no problem of leisure to begin with. The problem of leisure is exacerbated when men are asked to use their free time for activities beyond their means or for activities whose value they do not recognize!"³⁸

Not only is there the problem of over-intellectualizing solutions to the problems of leisure; there is also the potential value conflict between work and non-work. Assume we are successful in making non-work, free time, more meaningful than the job content. "Time is overtaking money as basic form of wealth. That's the really crucial fact about the automation revolution that no one has faced squarely yet—that payment in leisure, in hours *not* worked, may become as important as payment in goods. This doesn't mean the end of goods and material rewards; in fact, they'll be even more abundant. That's the real irony; that the free enterprise system will have triumphed so completely, have produced so

³⁶ Herbert Gans, "Some Proposals for Government Policy in an Automating Society", *The Correspondent*, Jan.-Feb., 1964. Reprinted in *Current*, April 1964, pp. 58-64.

³⁷ C. Wright Mills, "The Unity of Work and Leisure", *Power, Politics and People*, Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills, (Ballantine Books, Inc. 1963), p. 352. Originally published as "Leisure and the Whole Man", *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1953.

³⁸ Benet M. Berger, "The Sociology of Leisure: Some Suggestions", *Industrial Relations*, Vol. I, Feb. 1962, pp. 31-45.

much, that goods will no longer be an incentive. In one sense, this will be a dream world come true—but a world that threatens the very beliefs that made it all possible: hard work, thrift, business experimentation, ownership and risk. This is the change that no one bargained for; for this is where the road called automation may finally lead—turning back upon the very values that created it in the first place.³⁹

Others are more optimistic about the good life being fulfilled by technology. Silberman provides us with a glimpse of this ultimate vision. The left-over consumer income for Americans in 1959 allowed an expansion of the good life, in addition to \$24 billion in savings. After essentials were taken care of, we spent \$15 billion for recreation and foreign travel; \$10.5 billion for domestic vacations and pleasure travel; \$9.2 billion for alcohol; \$5 billion to apply against consumer installment debt; \$4 billion for religious and welfare institutions; \$3.4 billion for private education; and \$1.1 billion for pleasure dining. Silberman is pleased with these trends: "The encouraging thing about American capitalism is that the American consumer is, after all, a responsible person, despite all the gibes and criticisms leveled against him. His growing responsibility and discernment are evident from the manner in which consumers are using their disposable income on needed consumer goods, on education and health, and on savings and investment. If, as seems likely, the trends continue rising, consumer incomes will bring Americans an improvement not just in material standards, but in the whole quality of American life."⁴⁰

Others are convinced that a new dimension is being added to the world of work and non-work that calls for more imaginative programming. Ferry feels that new theories and new institutions are called for, patching and modifying old ones are inadequate. He finds socialist theory just as threadbare as classical economic theory to cope with this new abundance; they were largely directed to vanished circumstances.⁴¹

VI. Some Suggested Solutions

1. The rational path

Two rational paths to solving the problem of work and non-work in modern society are suggested, the first emphasizing humanistic considerations, the second oriented to the Christian faith. Erich Fromm, a psychoanalyst, illustrates the first solution, Harvey Cox, the second.

³⁹ *Research Institute of America*, Report, Dec. 1963.

⁴⁰ Charles Silberman, "The Money Left Over for the Good Life", Ch. 12 in *America in the Sixties: The Economy and the Society*, Editors of Fortune, (Harper Torchbooks [originally published as *Markets in the Sixties*, Harpers], New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 190-209. Silberman has also recently written *The Myths of Automation*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), in which he challenges the view that automation will have dreadful consequences upon employment and societal structure and values.

⁴¹ W. H. Ferry, Vice President, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, *Cambridge*, 38, Feb. 1963. Reprinted in *Current*, July 1963.

Fromm sees the main problem of modern man as that of alienation. "This alienation and automatization leads to an ever-increasing insanity. Life has no meaning, there is no joy, no faith, no reality. Everybody is 'happy'—except that he does not feel, does not reason, does not love."⁴² Fromm's solution for the human condition is *humanistic communitarianism*, which can combat the robotism of our lives. His vision is utopian. "Just as primitive man was helpless before natural forces, modern man is helpless before the social and economic forces created by himself. He worships the works of his own hands, bowing to the new idols, yet swearing by the name of God who commanded him to destroy all idols. Man can protect himself from the consequences of his own madness only by creating a sane society which conforms to the needs of man, needs which are rooted in the very conditions of his existence. A society in which man relates to man lovingly, in which he is rooted in bonds of brotherliness and solidarity, rather than in the ties of blood and soil; a society which gives him the possibility of transcending nature by creating rather than destroying, in which everyone gains a sense of self by experiencing himself as the subject of his powers rather than by conforming, in which a system of orientation and devotion exists without man's needing to distort reality and to worship idols."⁴³

Fromm's belief in the rational goodness of man appears to have undergone transformation. In taking a recent dissection of the human heart, he finds more evil and irrationality at the core.⁴⁴

A rational Christian approach to the problem of work and non-work is offered in attractive form by Harvey Cox, emphasizing our overdue need to secularize our lives in the city. We need to accept the separation of work from residence; the growth of bureaucratic patterns of organization and emancipate work from its traditional religious character.⁴⁵ The major obstacle is "the almost ineradicable religious coloration of work, perpetuated through a misunderstanding of the Protestant doctrine of vocation. It has been popularly believed that this doctrine means that God calls certain men to be butchers, others bakers, and still others to be candlestick makers. . . . The call which comes to man from the Bible, the *vocatio*, summons him not to a job, but to joy and gratitude in whatever he is doing. It is equally relevant at work or at play". In summing up, Cox is very optimistic "that secularization liberates man for work by emptying work of the almost neurotic compulsiveness and the religious mystery in which it has been enshrouded in Western society since the monastic period and the Reformation."⁴⁶

⁴² Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955), p. 312. Fromm earlier analyzed the problem of human freedom in *Escape From Freedom*, (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1941) and the problem of personality and value judgments in *Man for Himself*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1947).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁴⁴ Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

⁴⁵ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 167. The entire chapter is entitled "Work and Play in the Secular City" pp. 167-191.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190-191.

2. The religious path

Pieper illustrates one approach to the solution of the problem of work and leisure. In striving for wholeness, leisure can help man "overstep the boundaries of the workaday world and reach out to superhuman, life-giving existential forces that refresh and renew us before we turn back to our daily work. Only in genuine leisure does a 'gate to freedom' open."⁴⁷ Having described the ideal, Pieper then discusses how it is to be realized. Because most men are fettered to the process of work, "the central problem of liberating men from this condition lies in making a whole field of significant activity available and open to the working man—of activity which is not 'work'; in other words: in making the sphere of real leisure available to him. "This is not simply attained", Pieper shrewdly observes: "The provision of an external opportunity for leisure is not enough; it can only be fruitful if the man himself is capable of leisure and can, as we say, 'occupy his leisure' or (as the Greeks still more clearly say) *skolen again*, 'work his leisure'" (this usage brings out very clearly the by no means 'leisurely' character of leisure).⁴⁸ Pieper concludes that the fundamental justification of leisure is not found in "humanism" (which Cox's secularization seems to resemble), but in celebration, epitomized by divine worship.⁴⁹

At this point we might stop and suggest a structuring of what the previous writers have noted. First, there is work-time (*ergon*), which has been the center of man's identity over countless ages. Second, we have seen emerging the voluntaristic investment in leisure time (*schole*), cultivation of learning, arts, and play. A third dimension of life and time is intimated by Pieper: unplanned time for worship and celebration (*kairos*). All are part of man's existence and how he orders time (*chronos*).⁵⁰

Man, however, is not the rational creature portrayed in some of the above analyses. Man's capacity for evil and irrationality also demands recognition, as evidenced by contemporary existentialism. As Barrett puts it: "Nowadays there is much glib talk, particularly in this country, about the 'whole man', or the 'well-rounded individual', the terms evoking, in this context, only to the pleasant prospects of graciously enlarging the Self by taking extension courses, developing constructive hobbies, or taking an active part in social movements. But the whole man is not whole without such unpleasant things as death, anxiety, guilt, fear and trembling, and despair."⁵¹

Man's time orientation is thus influenced by his finitude. Stringfellow elaborates

⁴⁷ Joseph Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-64.

⁵⁰ I am indebted to associates on a leisure project, Roy Swanson and Gordon Dahl, for more fully developing these time dimensions.

⁵¹ William Barrett, *Irrational Man*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1958), p. 276.

this insight. Work, he notes, is the common means used by men to justify their existence. Work, however, is but a preliminary experience of death. Work represents the broken relationship between men and the rest of creation. Men, literally, work to death. Leisure, too, is as much an anticipation of death, as much an enslavement to the world, as work is.

"Neither work nor non-work justifies the worker", insists Stringfellow. "There is no sense in which a man can find moral justification in work, despite much talk in the churches to that effect. The burden of work, which is the threat of death, is neither mitigated nor overcome in the choice of work, in the product of work, in the reward for work, in non-work, in the moral vanity of work."⁵²

Stringfellow feels man must be set free from the bondage of death. "Work, for the Christian, is not what men do for God's sake, or for their own, but a witness to what God does for the sake of all men and for the sake of the whole world. . . . The Christian is a man who, by the work of Christ, has had his own life restored to him, is free from the threat of death in all things, and who lives now in reconciliation with other men and with the rest of creation. For such a man daily work, and non-work, become virtually indistinguishable from worship." He concludes by distinguishing his understanding of worship from normal usage. "It is then—when worship is the style and meaning of all that a man is and does—when everything in work or play or talk or deed or thought is included in the offertory—that a man is free from the intimidations of death. Then a man knows and confesses that it is God in whom all life is given and received and made whole."⁵³

3. A Final Comment

The above ideas provide a sample of myriad suggested solutions or guidelines for contemporary work and non-work ideologies. No consensus emerged nor are any conclusions justified, other than the widespread recognition that recent technological inputs have vast potential for altering work identities and related value orientations. One major deficiency in the materials presented is the neglect in differentiating the meaning of work and non-work in diverse life settings, particularly in relation to movement through the individual and family life cycle within various ethnic, religious and status sub-cultures.

In closing, is there a common work and non-work ethic applicable to all persons—to pious peasant and sophisticated suburbanite? Can work and non-work mean the same for the able artisan and the amateur athlete? the benign bishop and the benighted bartender? the carefree child and the crusading collegian? a devoted druggist and the dying diabetic? the electrifying editor and the unemployed electrician? The list is endless! If so, what is the commonality? Can man find a coherent ethic of work and non-work which is relevant for his life and for his world?

⁵² William Stringfellow, *Instead of Death*, (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1963), Ch. 4, "Work Witness, and Worship", p. 44.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-49.