Article

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I

In discussing leisure in Victorian England, many writers have relied heavily on categories, conventions, and attitudes commonly found in the social sciences in general, and in sociology in particular. Most notably this has taken two important, albeit unhelpful, forms. First, they have tended to sympathize with the pessimism of the mass culture critics. This has often resulted in a narrow picture of Victorian leisure in which an age-old, healthy, and robust, popular culture is seen to have given way to a new, less healthy, mass culture. Implicit in such accounts is a more general notion of the "modernization of society." As far as the social history of leisure is concerned, this has led to a second problem, namely the use of such terms as "social control" to help explain how the process of modernization was brought about with little disruption to the social fabric. An unwarranted romanticization of pre-industrial leisure on the one hand has been matched by a contrived and overly-schematic view of its transformation on the other. The result has been the imposition of a grid of meaning onto Victorian leisure patterns that has distorted them beyond all recognition. In recent years the excellent work of scholars such as Peter Bailey, Hugh Cunningham, and Bob Storch has begun to break free from these pervasive and restrictive influences. But in many respects the study of Victorian leisure still remains marginalized, often failing to address the questions of power and legitimation, social space and autonomy, production and reproduction, of social formation and cultural experience, that are central to the new social history.

As early as 1859 John Stuart Mill wrote of popular recreations in a manner suggestive of more recent attitudes:

> ...even in what people do for pleasure, conformity is the first thing thought
> of; they like in crowds; they exercise choice only among things commonly done:
> peculiarity of taste, eccentricity of conduct, are shunned ... until by dint of
> not following their own nature they have no nature to follow.[1]

Mill aside, the critique of mass culture in England began in earnest with the publication by F.R. Leavis in 1930 of his essay, "Mass Civilisation and Minority Cul-

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1. John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty", in *Three Essays* (Oxford, 1975), p. 76.

ture." According to Leavis, there was a desperate need to preserve high culture against the "cheapest emotional appeals" emanating from mass-produced leisure activities.[2] What differentiated the fears of Mill, and even of Coleridge and Arnold for that matter, from those of Leavis was precisely the extent of this desperation in the twentieth century. For Leavis, standardized cultural fare seemed to be invading all areas of life as at no time before, and with no end in sight. It was in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s that this attitude came to predominate in the debate over mass culture. As Oscar Handlin commented, referring to the products of commercialized leisure, "the audience which receives this complex variety of wares accepts them passively as an undifferentiated but recognizable series of good things among which it has little capacity for choice...."[3]

Central to this attitude has been a pessimistic view of history, a belief in the declining quality of life since the growth of mass culture began to undermine both high culture and the folk cultures associated with traditional community rituals. Given the strength of this belief, many historians and sociologists of culture have been interested in charting the development of mass culture. Twenty years ago Leo Lowenthal isolated its origins in the eighteenth century: "If one takes the term 'mass' media to mean marketable cultural goods produced for a substantial buying public, the eighteenth century in England," he claimed, "is the first period in history where it can be meaningfully applied."[4] By the middle of the century, a leisure industry existed with potential for great growth: a middle class public devoured a growing number of periodicals and novels, while resort towns, spas, assembly rooms, theatres, lending libraries, and public concerts — all commercially operated — gradually assumed a larger role in its recreational activity.[5]

But it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that modern leisure industries catered significantly to the demands of those beyond the confines of the middle class. Even here the problem of periodization has been a difficult one. Recent scholarship has located the origins of commercially-produced leisure activities on a mass scale in the middle of the century. Some have stressed the role played by the Ten Hours Act, which, in 1847, demarcated a special sphere for leisure separate from work time, a sphere that was immediately filled with

2. F.R. Leavis, "Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture", in *For Continuity* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 13-46. For Raymond Williams on the "effective origin" of the debate, see *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (New York, 1966), p. 255.

3. Oscar Handlin, "Comments on Mass and Popular Culture", in Norman Jacobs, ed., *Culture for the Millions* (Princeton, 1961), p. 69.

4. Leo Lowenthal, *Literature, Popular Culture and Society* (Palo Alto, 1961), p. 52.

5. For commercial leisure activity in the eighteenth century, see *Ibid.*, chap. 3; J.H. Plumb, *The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth Century England* (Reading, 1974); Plumb, "The Public, Literature, and the Arts in the Eighteenth Century", in Michael Marrus, ed., *The Emergence of Leisure* (New York, 1974); Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley, 1957), chap. 2; John Brewer, "Childhood Revisited: the Genesis of the Modern Toy", *History Today*, 30 (December 1980), pp. 32-9; William Weber, "Mass Culture and the Reshaping of European Musical Taste, 1770-1870", *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 8 (June 1977), pp. 5-22.

an increasing number of concert rooms and dancing saloons as well as factory-sponsored reading rooms and literary institutes.[6] Others have emphasized the importance of the railway, which, according to Geoffrey Best, "speeded up the recreational revolution," especially with the advent of the excursion train.[7] There is, however, general agreement that a fully developed mass culture came later, after the Bank Holiday Act of 1871. Lowerson, Myerscough, and Yeo opt for the 1880s as the crucial decade. While Asa Briggs sees the 1880s as pivotal, like Gareth Stedman Jones and Michael Marrus he stresses the importance of the 1890s in both consolidating earlier trends and in developing new, mechanized forms of leisure, such as the cinema.[8] Our knowledge of the specific rate of development of mass culture in these years remains sketchy at best, and its regional unevenness has yet to be explored in depth. In Bristol, for example, patterns of popular leisure activity were much the same in 1890 as they had been in 1870—theatres were still locally owned, and music hall entertainment still confined to taverns, in marked contrast to London.[9]

In charting the rise of this new, mass culture, critics and historians have often exhibited a nostalgia for the organic community of an earlier England, with its popular culture supposedly based on established frameworks of communal relations where work and leisure were not sharply demarcated. In particular, mass culture critics have contrasted the concrete and familiar of popular culture with

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6. Sebastian deGrazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* (Garden City, 1962), esp. pp. 182, 187-8; J.L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Age of the Chartists 1832-1854* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1962), pp. 331, 351; Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1980), p. 150.
7. Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75* (New York, 1972), pp. 201 ff; also James Walvin, *Leisure and Society 1830-1950* (London, 1978), chap. 2. For the general characteristics of leisure in these years, see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England* (London, 1978) and Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c. 1780 - c. 1880* (London, 1980).
8. John Myerscough, "The Recent History of the Use of Leisure Time", in Ian Appleton, ed., *Leisure Research and Policy* (Edinburgh, 1974), pp. 3-16; John Lowerson and John Myerscough, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Hassocks, Sussex, 1977); Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Associations in Crisis* (London, 1976), p. 314; Asa Briggs, *Mass Entertainment: the Origins of a Modern Industry* (Adelaide, 1960); Michael Marrus, *The Rise of Leisure in Industrial Society* (St. Louis, 1974), p. 10; Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-class Culture and Working-class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", *Journal of Social History*, 7 (Summer 1974), p. 478. For a somewhat uncritical account of parallel trends in France, see Priscilla Clark, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture in France", *Social Research*, 45 (Summer 1978), pp. 277-91.
9. Kathleen Barker, *Entertainment in the Nineties* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, local pamphlet no. 33, 1973), p. 1.

the alien and degrading of mass culture, lamenting the decline of the former.[10] Often starting from such assumptions, historians have studied this decline, and are in general agreement that the attack on popular culture was two-pronged, coming from the evangelical attempt to humanize and Christianize recreation, and from the capitalist concern with establishing new forms of work-discipline.[11]

Clearly this is a rather compressed picture of some complicated trends in the history of nineteenth century leisure. But it does indicate the extent to which our understanding of the terrain has been shaped by the ahistorical categories of "popular culture" and "mass culture," and by the values that have been attached to them. Such tendencies have been recognized by J.H. Plumb:

> The prelapsarian myth cultivated by Leavis ... has pictured the eighteenth and nineteenth century worlds, in contrast to our own, as a world in which cultural participation was the rule: in which people made their own music, made their own games, and were not in their idle moments ... passive recipients.[12]

This framework continues to inform much of the sociological writing on the subject. Herbert Gans, for example, has claimed that peasants, forced into the city and given free time and more money, "...shed the rural based folk cultures and became customers for a commercial popular culture."[13] Just like that. Chameleons, no doubt, caught in the clutches of "modernization."

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10. For the evolution and use of the terms "popular" and "mass" in this context, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York, 1976), pp. 162, 199. For "traditional popular culture": Keith Thomas, "Work and Leisure in Pre-Industrial Society", *Past and Present*, 29 (December 1964), pp. 50-62; Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1973); Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978).
11. For the religious attack on popular culture: Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London, 1969), chap. 5; Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England", *Past and Present*, 38 (December 1967), pp. 98-125; Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations*, chaps. 6 and 7. For the new work discipline and popular culture: E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38 (December 1967), pp. 56-97; Sidney Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), chap. 5; Neil McKendrick, "Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline", *The Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), pp. 30-55. For the role of the police in assisting both movements, see the following articles by Robert Storch: "The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-1857", *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), pp. 61-90; "The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880", *Journal of Social History*, 9 (Summer 1976), pp. 481-509; "The Problem of Working Class Leisure. Some Roots of Middle Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North: 1825-50", in A.P, Donajgrodzki, ed., *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977), pp. 138-62. For an extensive survey of related works, see Sidney Pollard, "Englische Arbeiterkultur im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung: Forschungsergebnisse und Forschungsprobleme. Ein bibliographischer Aufsatz", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 5 (1979), pp. 150-66.
12. Plumb, "The Public, Literature, and the Arts", p. 29.
13. Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture* (New York, 1974), p. 53.

Historians have been no less guilty of focusing on the development of a rational capitalist order out of a mythic "traditional" past which underwent a "breakdown" before gradually being reconstituted in its modern form. As early as 1930 John and Barbara Hammond wrote, "As industry turned country to town ... old playgrounds disappeared and new playgrounds were not provided."[14] And Terry Bushell's more recent claim in *Marxism Today* is a good example of the continuation of this historical amnesia generated by artificial categorization:

> The dispossessed crowded into the cities.... Harvest feasts, Plough Monday celebrations, sheep-shearing dinners, the rituals of May Day ... all were meaningless to factory workers.... The rural culture withered and died—and for two or three generations there was nothing to replace it.[15]

Problems with such approaches abound. This becomes particularly clear when studying the period that falls between the "decline" of "traditional popular culture," as it has been called, and the "rise" of "mass culture." In these years, roughly 1820 to 1870, leisure activities existed that cannot be packaged into either category without some difficulty. Consequently many of them have been ignored.

When one turns to the sources from this period, one soon encounters a nostalgia for the old pastimes as intense as that expressed by more recent writers. "We cling with peculiar fondness to the customs of days gone by," wrote Charles Dickens in the 1830s,[16] a truth deeply embedded in George Eliot's discussion of "Old Leisure" in *Adam Bede* two decades later: "Leisure is gone—gone where the spinning wheels are gone, and the pack-horses, and the slow waggons, and the peddlars, who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons."[17] For many, the "Old British Rustic Sports," as Pierce Egan called them, were sadly in decline. Egan, like the French observer Léon Faucher and the radical Samuel Bamford, lamented the loss of a popular culture that was considered to be an age-old right. Moreover, antiquarians, to whom we owe much of our knowledge of this traditional popular culture, also focused their attention narrowly on those fading pastimes of which they were so enamored.[18] Likewise, moral reformers stressed the decline of these same recreations, although, unlike antiquarians and sentimenta-

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14. J.L. and Barbara Hammond, *Age of the Chartists*, p. 106. For similar emphases on this void supposedly created by the passing of the old popular culture: Malcomson, *Popular Recreations*, pp. 170-1; Walvin, *Leisure and Society*, pp. 2-8; E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York, 1962), pp. 324-5; and esp. Marrus, *Rise of Leisure*, pp. 2-4.

15. Terry Bushell, "Thoughts on Leisure and Sport", *Marxism Today*, (December 1975), p. 370.

16. Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz* (London, 1867 edition), pp. 186, 188.

17. Cited by Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford, 1973), p. 177.

18. *Pierce Egan's Book of Sports and Mirror of Life* (London, 1832), pp. 257, 259; Léon Faucher, *Manchester in 1844: its Present Condition and Future Prospects*, translated and annotated by J.P. Culverwell (reprint edition: London, 1969), pp. 52-3, 57; Samuel Bamford, *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford*, edited with an introduction by W.H. Chaloner, volume one, *Early Days* (New York, 1967), p. 132; William B. Boulton, *The Amusements of Old London* (reprint edition: New York, 1970), esp. volume one, p. 206 and volume two, p. 69.

lists, they usually noted this change with a profound sense of relief: "Ninemen's morris and the morris-dance have become numbered with the things which were; the bear-garden and the bull-ring are nearly extinct; and assuredly no sane man will regret their decadency."[19] Small wonder, then, given the nature of both the sources and the interpretive framework imposed on them, that Hugh Cunningham set out to study this period several years ago believing that it formed a vacuum in which few recreational activities existed.[20]

But the picture is not this bleak. Writing of the amusements in Manchester for the St. Paul's Mutual Improvement Society in 1856, William Stirling, a member of the society, claimed:

> Places of amusement in this city are not by any means scarce. We have public parks, walks, and gardens. We have opera, dramatic and equestrian companies. We have horse-racing, boat-racing, foot-racing and fairs. We have dog-fighting, cock-fighting and man-fighting. We have betting-houses, free and easy houses and casinoes. We have exhibitions of paintings ... sculpture, plants, flowers and fat babies. We have singers, fiddlers, dancers and tumblers. We have cannibals, wizards and wonder full ducks. In short, we have ... all sorts, and any quantity of outlandish recreations.[21]

As Stirling's account suggests, the older popular culture enjoyed a greater resilience than many have imagined. Cock-fighting, Saint Monday celebrations, traditional festivals, all lasted well into the century. Moreover, formal police suppression of these popular recreations often failed to eradicate them, merely driving them underground. Self-directed community forms of leisure continued in larger towns, and even the rural fairs were given new life when the railways opened them to a much wider audience.[22]

Stirling also recognized that this world of popular culture was supplemented by a whole new world of commercial entertainment. He was not alone in this belief.

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19. James Norris, John Priest, and John Teare, *Artizans' Prize Essays. "On the Influence of Rational and Elevating Amusements Upon the Working Classes"* (Liverpool, 1849), p. 5. Robert Storch claims, I think correctly, that it was not so much a problem of the non-existence of popular recreations as it was of the non-existence of recreations of which the middle class approved. See Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, p. 153.
20. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 5.
21. William Stirling, "A Review of the People's Amusements in Manchester", *Odds and Ends by A's and B's, A Manuscript Magazine*, 2 (1856), p. 245.
22. For the continuation of "traditional popular culture": E.P. Thompson, "Rough Music: le Charivari anglais", *Annales ESC*, 27 (Mars-Avril 1972), pp. 285-312; Douglas Reid, "The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876", *Past and Present*, 71 (May 1976), pp. 76-101; Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp. 4-5, 87; Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 22, 24-5; Robert Malcolmson, "Popular Leisure in the Victorian Countryside", (paper presented at the fourth annual Midwestern Victorian Studies Association conference, Bloomington, Indiana, March 1980); Peter Stearns, "The Effort at Continuity in Working Class Culture", *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (December 1980), pp. 626-55; Sally Alexander, *St. Giles's Fair, 1830-1914. Popular Culture and the Industrial Revolution in Oxford* (History Workshop pamphlet no. 2, 1970).

Thomas Wright, the journeyman engineer, commented on its operation a few years later:

> In an opera-house, theatre or concert room, where all ranks of society attend, and where 'the talent' is paid for, and the amusements are a speculation upon the part of the 'enterprising lessee' who provides them, reserved seats and graduated scales of payment are imperative necessities.[23]

Even those who desired to reform the amusements of the working class began to suggest the need for "cheap rational recreation" to lure workers away from the commercial proprietors of more sordid amusements: "The morality of managers," wrote one observer discussing the rise of theatrical entrepreneurs, "is a sham. They are moral when morality pays."[24] Central to this world of commercial entertainment was the new cheap press. Beyond this, the 1840s witnessed the development of low-priced chamber concerts and inexpensive singing schools, initiating a new, commercial music culture, especially in London. Publicans, in particular, were active in developing community-based leisure activities, sponsoring outdoor sports, gambling, reading rooms, and itinerant musicians, and initiating amateur theatrical and choral productions. In fact, Cunningham suggests that this period witnessed a commercialization of leisure for the working class as extensive as that for the middle class in the eighteenth century, establishing what he terms a "vigorous popular culture of entertainment."[25]

A growing body of secondary literature is coming to recognize the complexity of popular leisure in these years. Nonetheless, much of it is not good social history, tending as it does to a new antiquarianism or a formulaic adoption of categories inherited from the mass culture critics.[26] In order to compensate for an earlier emphasis on the decline of popular culture, there has been a tendency of late to stress its continuities. But in many cases, arguing in favour of either position has led to an uncritical cataloguing of pastimes, either those that fell by the wayside or those that existed much longer than had hitherto been believed; no doubt rescuing leisure from nostalgic misconception will soon produce accounts of charivari in Bethnal Green in the 1980s. What is seldom explained in such studies

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23. Thomas Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes* (London, 1867), p. 175.
24. "Haymarket Morality", *The Sphinx, a Journal of Criticism and Humour*, 26 September 1868, p. 75; see also J. Ewing Ritchie, *The Night Side of London* (London, 1858), p. 74.
25. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 37. For the new, commercial leisure: Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago, 1957); Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-50*, second edition (Harmondsworth, 1973), esp. chap. 1; William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class* (London, 1975); Weber, "Artisans in Concert Life of Mid-nineteenth Century London and Paris", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13 (April 1978), pp. 253-67; Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London, 1971), chap. 2.
26. A similar complaint lodged by Martha Vicinus over six years ago is still valid today: "The Study of Victorian Popular Culture", *Victorian Studies*, 18 (June 1975), pp. 473-83.

are the unique pressures brought to bear on these pastimes and, more importantly, the manner by which these attempts at reform could be resisted, circumvented, diffused, or adapted to.

More promising than inventories of popular leisure habits are those attempts to focus on the convergence of specific social groups around differing patterns of leisure activity. In discussing the audience for literature in the first third of the nineteenth century, for example, Edward Thompson has differentiated between commercial publics, passive publics which improving societies sought to redeem, publics organized around churches or mechanics' institutes, and an active radical public. More recently, Cunningham has posited the existence of three leisure cultures, each rooted in popular resistance to attempted middle class reforms of recreation. These were a commercial "popular culture of entertainment," a "religious culture" constructed around Methodism, and a "secular radical culture" that hoped to remake leisure in terms of sobriety, intellectual enquiry, and mutuality. To borrow once again from Thompson, this radical culture of the self-taught was "the most distinguished popular culture England has known."[27] While such approaches as these are genuinely valuable, the social background of the membership of these various leisure cultures has not been explored in detail, and neither have the specific pressures and constraints that served to demarcate participation in them. While useful in overcoming the popular/mass culture dichotomy, they bring us no closer to an understanding of what might account for the different leisure patterns and corresponding cultural identity of, say, a mechanic in Sheffield and a power-loom operator in Manchester.

The term "social control" has often been used in studies of Victorian leisure, although it has not proven much more profitable than the prejudices inherited from the mass culture critics. To be sure, it is not difficult to discover examples of attempts to stabilize the social order through the supervision of popular recreation. Writing of Liverpool leisure in the 1850s, Hugh Shimmin, a journalist, claimed, "The desire for recreation, amusement, or excitement implanted within the human mind is, when properly used, directed, and controlled, calculated to exercise a most beneficial effect, socially and morally."[28] Others went further, and suggested practical ways to achieve these desired ends. J.P. Culverwell, a mem-

27. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966), p. 831, also pp. 711-46. For this radical culture: Trygve Tholfsen, *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England* (New York, 1977), chap. 8; Eileen Yeo, "Robert Owen and Radical Culture", in Sidney Pollard and John Salt, eds., *Robert Owen: Prophet of the Poor* (London, 1971), pp. 84-114; Martha Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse* (New York, 1974), chap. 4; Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 227-39; Richard Johnson, "'Really Useful Knowledge': Radical Education and Working Class Culture, 1790-1848", in John Clarke, *et al., Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory* (London, 1979), pp. 75-102; I.J. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London: John Gast and His Times* (Folkestone, 1979), pp. 239-64.
28. Hugh Shimmin, *Liverpool Life, its Pleasures, Practices and Pastimes*, second series (Liverpool, 1857), p. 21.

ber of the Manchester Atheneum, believed that local government should play an active role in regulating popular leisure:

> Nothing that is connected with the health and morals of a dense community like ours ... is beneath the notice of a municipal body; and it is manifestly better for the public that [their] pursuits be influenced and guided by a respectable body, like the corporation, than that they should be left ... to the management of publicans and gamblers.[29]

Just as the pessimism of the mass culture critics can be traced back to Mill, so notions of social control as one solution to the problem of leisure in society can be traced back to the thoughts of Shimmin, Culverwell, and beyond. But uses of the concept of social control have, in recent studies, raised more questions than they have answered. If municipal authorities contributed to the process, along with philanthropists, police, evangelical reformers, and even working class wives who attempted to prevent their husbands from drinking in the local pub on a Saturday night, then the concept becomes unilluminating in its inclusiveness. Moreover, by implication, the term tends to transform these individuals into rationally calculating social engineers, and by so doing both obscures the heterogeneity of their motives and confuses their intentions with the consequences of their actions.

There has also been no attempt to examine the relative success of various types of control at specific historical moments. As early as the 1830s, for example, there was a subtle shift in emphasis away from control via the suppression of pastimes to control through the provision of a healthy diet of more rational recreation. Symbolic of this trend, one observer described the effects of missionary work in Tahiti in order to warn would-be reformers against cutting off all opportunities for play in England: "...supplied with no amusements in the place of those forbidden, the Tahitians have sunk into a state of listlessness, and indulge in sensualities a hundred times more pernicious...."[30] Observations such as these suggest that the separate manifestations of the mechanisms of social stabilization need to be isolated, described, and the historical specificity of each accounted for. In the past, showing social control to be at work has been far more important than ascertaining both its specific nature and the various elements of the structural framework in which it operates that tend to circumscribe its effects. This is particularly true in the case of A.P. Donajgrodzki's collection of essays, *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*. Except for the illuminating discussion of education by Richard Johnson, the term itself merely appears as an unnecessary appendage in most of the essays. It is paid cursory lip-service, but then a process is elaborated which could stand much better on its own, and need not be collapsed into this vague and imprecise context of social control.

Finally, uses of the term often ignore the fact that suppressing riotous pastimes, or even providing "endless sources of rational amusement," as the industrialist Samuel Greg put it, was sometimes not considered to be enough to maintain effective control. Leisure had to be reconstituted in such a way as "to make

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29. Culverwell, in the introduction to Faucher, *Manchester in 1844*, p. 56.
30. *The Builder*, 5 June 1858, p. 385.

it a matter of feeling and desire among themselves," wrote Greg referring to the working class, "rather than obedience to me," that they become virtuous and good-behavioured, and that they select the most uplifting of all possible recreations in order to achieve this end.[31]

All of this is not to suggest that "social control" should be abandoned as a descriptive category. Rather, it insists on the need to develop a typology of social control mechanisms that can embrace both formal coercion and the establishment of new norms. What is crucial in Greg's statement is a middle class recognition of the important role leisure could play in the creation of social harmony in ways that differed from those suggested by Culverwell. It is much like the debate between "physical force" and "moral force" Chartists, and suggests that formal mechanisms of control tended to be much less effective (after all, they could always be resisted) than the restructuring of leisure in unique ways that most individuals would eventually accept as valid.

It is precisely these shifts in the social definitions of leisure that characterize the mid-nineteenth century. Not only were activities in transition, but so, too, were the values attached to them, and consequently the pressures on participation in them. What follows is a tentatively suggested new framework in which these changes can be discussed, a framework that, one hopes, avoids some of the less useful moralisms and categories outlined above.

II

The sociologist, Kenneth Roberts, has noted that the manner by which popular tastes are satisfied will be affected by the organizational nature of the leisure industry.[32] As any commercial leisure product presupposes a creator, an audience, and the product itself, all tied together in a circuit of interrelationship, the study of the commercial structures in which leisure was produced in the mid-nineteenth century should result in a more accurate picture of the extent of mass culture in

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31. Samuel Greg, *Two Letters to Leonard Horner Esq. on the Capabilities of the Factory System* (London, 1840), pp. 18, 25. Discussions of the term "social control" in the context of Victorian leisure are numerous. Brian Harrison has explored the socially diverse membership of associations active in reforming popular culture, complicating any straight-forward notions of class and social control: "Religion and Recreation", pp. 103-6, 121; and "Teetotal Chartism", *History*, 58 (June 1973), pp. 193-6. For other criticisms, see Gareth Stedman Jones, "Class Expression Versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of 'Leisure'", *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (Autumn 1977), pp. 163-70; and especially Martin J. Wiener, ed., "Humanitarianism or Control?", a special issue of *Rice University Studies*, 67 (Winter 1981).

32. Kenneth Roberts, *Leisure* (London, 1970), p. 72. I have borrowed heavily here from the "production of culture" approach suggested by various sociologists. See Richard A. Peterson, ed., *The Production of Culture* (Beverly Hills, 1976), especially the essays by Peterson and by DiMaggio and Hirsch; Richard Peterson and David Berger, "Cycles in Symbol Production: the Case of Popular Music", *American Sociological Review*, 40 (April 1975), pp. 158-73; Paul DiMaggio, "Market Structures, the Creative Process and Popular Culture: Toward an Organizational Reinterpretation of Mass Culture Theory", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 11 (Fall 1977), pp. 436-52.

these years. In attempting to measure "change" versus "continuity" in Victorian leisure patterns, as well as in charting the dynamics of various social control mechanisms, detailed studies of the transformation in leisure-producing systems are necessary. Indeed, by ignoring the organizational bases of leisure, emphases on the decline of traditional popular culture have often failed to acknowledge that what occurred was not so much a decline, but a commercial repackaging of more traditional content. In the 1850s and 1860s, for example, music hall songs were often borrowed from broadside and oral traditions, and not produced by hired song-writers as they would be later in the century.

This transition to a world in which leisure has become a vast commercial speculation was a slow one. In the period under study here, it was also an erratic process, occurring at different rates in different fields of leisure provision. At times, two systems of production could come into conflict with each other, as exhibited in Christopher Thomson's account of the threat posed to the casual, itinerant theatrical company he worked with by more rationally organized companies in the 1820s and 1830s. Born in Yorkshire in 1799 to a shipwright and the daughter of a bricklayer, Thomson later joined a company of travelling players, working with them for over a decade until low and irregular wages forced him and his wife to seek more stable employment elsewhere. Touring the small towns and villages of the Midlands and the North, the company was continually subject to changes in its membership, players attempting to secure more regular work in urban theatres. Decisions concerning the troupe were made democratically and the members would divide each night's takings equally amongst themselves, after providing the manager and an occasional musician with an extra portion. They would stay in one place as long as there was an audience, adjusting the nature of the entertainment both to the talent of the current members of the company and to the taste of the local populace. Wandering from town to town with no fixed itinerary, Thomson complained of other companies that were less democratically operated and that stole their potential business through advanced bookings and fixed programs.[33]

Thomson's plight was echoed by other travelling showmen who felt the keen competition of new companies with their "sensation plays" and "highly-coloured sensation bills." The stage journal, *The Era*, began to advertise jobs in London and provincial theatres, thereby creating a national market for professionals, reducing the isolation and autonomy of the strolling player. Moreover, many showmen heaped abuse upon the railway which, by transporting audiences to the city and its newer leisure activities, and by allowing professional theatrical troupes to infiltrate the countryside, posed a direct threat to older ways of organizing the provision of leisure.[34]

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33. Christopher Thomson, *The Autobiography of an Artisan* (London, 1847), pp. 194-202, 222-4, 252.
34. David Prince Miller, *The Life of a Showman* (London, 1849), pp. 24-5; [James Glass Bertram], *Behind the Scenes, or the Confessions of a Strolling Player* (Edinburgh, 1859), pp. 14, 114-5, 138-9; Bertram, *Glimpses of Real Life* (Edinburgh, 1864), pp. 2, 7-8,

But even in the city, the more formal and rigid organizational roles that commercial leisure providers exhibited were often not highly developed. In the 1830s and 1840s in the song and supper rooms, tavern concert rooms, and saloon theatres, small-scale entrepreneurs, often enjoying a close rapport with their audience, provided commercial entertainment in very different ways from those in operation later in the century. One characteristic, although neglected, form of entertainment from this period is the penny "gaff," or penny theatre, interesting to the social historian of leisure because it affords a unique opportunity to study the degree of commercialization in a characteristic form of popular urban leisure activity.

James Grant estimated in 1838 that there were some eighty to one hundred penny gaffs in London, drawing an average nightly attendance of 24,000 individuals. Shows lasted roughly forty-five minutes, usually consisting of two twenty-minute burlesques, farces, or melodramas, and a song. The auditorium, often a back room, barn, forge, or converted shop, capable of seating some two hundred "paying guests," was cleared after each performance; sometimes as many as nine shows could be staged in an evening. While treated with respect when they paid their pennies on admission to the gaff, the audience, Grant believed, was hurried out at the end of each show. He complained that "this is but a modification of the principle which is every day seen and felt in its operations in the ordinary affairs of life."[35] In one gaff, James Ritchie's penny was taken by a "businesslike young woman," while Samuel Day was given a ticket, a "dirty piece of cardboard," for his penny, which he was forced to relinquish at the entrance to the boxes, presumably so it could be used again. In itself this was somewhat revolutionary as seldom before had the working class been accustomed to actually paying for its entertainment.[36]

There was no hierarchy of function and sharp role differentiation in the production process of the gaff as there later would be in the music hall: ticket collectors were likely to be actors, while the owners might write the playbills and also act themselves. According to Mayhew, the proprietors were "venal traders," often as poor as the actors themselves, while Dickens believed them to be ex-scene painters, disappointed eighth-rate actors, low coffee house keepers, or uncertified bankrupts. Other evidence suggests that a linen-draper, a glue-maker, and

136, 146, 193, 218-9; Thomas Frost, *The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs* (London, 1881), pp. 373, 376.

35. James Grant, "Penny Theatres", from *Sketches in London* (reprint edition, Society for Theatre Research, 1952), pp. 6, 31-2.

36. James Ewing Ritchie, *Here and There in London* (London, 1859), p. 112; Samuel Phillips Day, *Juvenile Crime, its Causes, Character, and Cure* (London, 1858), p. 170. Bailey (*Leisure and Class*, p. 30) discusses the importance of the refreshment ticket in this transition to paid entertainment.

a clerk to a merchant all became penny gaff proprietors.[37] While this demarcated the gaff from later, more developed, forms of commercial entertainment, so did the role assumed by the writer of the evening's fare. According to Grant, there would be one or two writers attached to a gaff, sometimes each providing a dozen new shows per week, and always performing in them. Nonetheless, the works produced were more often than not merely guidelines for dramatic action. Like earlier minstrels and ballad-performers, penny gaff actors enjoyed a certain freedom to express themselves as they pleased, both in condensing the pieces and even in changing the lines.[38]

As a group, penny gaff actors were the least respectable stratum of an already socially outcast profession, averaging a mere five to ten shillings per week in pay. On the whole they were so wretchedly paid that they might stop in the middle of the show to squabble over the coppers showered upon the stage by the audience. Often residing in the neighbourhood of the gaff, actors would be known to the audience, arguing the points of the play with them during the performance. This would change later in the century as managers would dictate what was presented and the performer would become more distanced from the spectator, eventually becoming a member of a fully professionalized labour force.[39]

The social history of Victorian leisure requires more detailed studies of both the conditions that made favourable the gradual transition to these more highly commercialized forms of leisure activity, and of the precise timing of them. Just as Thomson's acting troupe faced competition from companies with a higher level of organizational sophistication, so the gaffs declined as highly capitalized ventures came to present more spectacular entertainment—entertainment, moreover, that was packaged in a form that gave moral reformers less cause for alarm.

III

Audiences played a significant role in shaping the content of the amusements offered in the penny gaff, often bringing with them attitudes and outlooks formed in other cultural milieux. Unfortunately, the social composition of these audiences is largely unknown. But if the influence they exerted is to be understood, one must explore, as far as possible, the relationship between their members' leisure values and other beliefs and activities. Moreover, if the work that has begun to appear on different "leisure cultures" is to bear any fruit, an analysis of the factors that

37. Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London, 1864), I, p. 44; Dickens, *Sketches*, p. 130; Frederick Burgess, *Penny Theatres* (scrapbook in the Theatre Collection, Harvard University Library).
38. Grant, "Penny Theatres", pp. 6, 19-20.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 13, 20, 33; Day, *Juvenile Crime*, p. 170; Mayhew, *London Labour*, p. 43; Max Schlesinger, *Saunterings In and About London* (London, 1853), pp. 273-6. See also Michael Baker, *The Rise of the Victorian Actor* (London, 1978), pp. 68-9, 115-7, 130; Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp. 150-1; Vicinus, *Industrial Muse*, p. 239; Laurence Senelick, "Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music Hall Songs", *Victorian Studies*, 19 (December 1975), p. 150.

shaped their membership also needs to be undertaken. Limited source materials make this a difficult task. An even greater difficulty is posed by the many assumptions that hold leisure to be a realm of autonomy. Such beliefs are pervasive, and prevent an exploration of the connections between leisure and other realms of life activity by downplaying the importance of such connections. Michael Marrus, for example, claims that "Leisure time ... is time which is not obligated," a recent phenomenon that did not exist in "traditional" society where patterns of leisure were part of the general fabric of life and not freely selected.[40] But this dichotomy between traditional leisure as obligated time and modern leisure as free time obscures the fact that influences on personal leisure choices have always existed: age, gender, family and community bonds, and the structure of the specific work situation are all important in determining how individuals spend their leisure time. Thus it becomes necessary not to chart the liberation of an autonomous sphere of leisure from traditional constraints, as Marrus and many sociologists have insisted on doing, but to explore the changing historical specificity of the constraints themselves, examining how new ones effectively displaced older ones. As Stuart Hall has suggested, social relations structure popular culture in particular ways,[41] and this is crucial to an understanding of the shifting contours of Victorian leisure.

Before the development of the tram and the bicycle, working class leisure activities were invariably rooted in the community and the neighbourhood.[42] This fact should serve as a starting point in the study of popular leisure patterns in the midnineteenth century. In these years, as has been seen, the number and type of leisure activities differed drastically from community to community. Christopher Thomson was keenly aware of this diversity in the towns he visited while an itinerant actor:

> Sometimes I have observed this marked difference in the short space of two miles; and without any outward thing whereby to indicate the cause, you might find the people at one place seeking their pleasure in the ale-house, and making bets upon the next prize-fight.... In a neighbouring village ... you may find the bulk of the inhabitants reading ... panting to gain a better acquaintance with our Shakespeare ... having their occasional music meetings, and taking pleasure in the theatre.[43]

40. Marrus, *Rise of Leisure*, p. 4; Marrus, *Emergence of Leisure*, p. 6. See also Roberts, *Leisure*, p. 89.
41. Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'", in Raphael Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London, 1981), pp. 232, 235, 239. For other suggestive comments in this direction, see Gerhart Ritter, "Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Problems and Points of Departure for Research", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13 (April 1978), p. 169; Rhona and Robert N. Rapoport, "Four Themes in the Sociology of Leisure", *British Journal of Sociology*, 25 (June 1974), p. 225; William Weber, "The Muddle of the Middle Classes", *Nineteenth Century Music*, 3 (November 1979), p. 184.
42. For the vital importance of this, see Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, pp. 118, 338; and Geoffrey Crossick, "The Labour Aristocracy and Its Values: a Study of Mid-Victorian Kentish London", *Victorian Studies*, 19 (March 1976), p. 303.
43. Thomson, *Autobiography*, pp. 227-8.

Moreover, just as success in the suppression of the older popular culture varied amongst communities, so did the provision of newer recreations. In Manchester, by the middle of the century, for example, municipal authorities and philanthropists were providing parks, playgrounds, and galleries, and in so doing were hoping to harmonize social relations by bringing classes together in their leisure time. In the same period, there was little in the way of museums or public parks in Sheffield. Rather than developing pride in municipal recreations, as was the case in Manchester, many Sheffield artisans developed more private forms of leisure activity as gardeners, walkers, and fishermen. Moreover, these activities would continue well into the second half of the century.[44]

An examination of the location of popular theatres and penny gaffs in London confirms the relationship between the community and patterns of leisure. Frederick Rogers, who grew up in Mile End in the 1850s and 1860s, later recalled that there were five cheap theatres in the East End, each catering to a local crowd.[45] Grant, Day, and Ritchie all remarked on the extent to which the audiences varied considerably amongst the penny gaffs they visited, but in all cases corresponded closely to the social composition of the neighbourhood in which they were located. The diverse nature of the audiences led them to remark that gaffs in the Blackfriars Bridge area were less agreeable than those in the New Cut, while those in Shoreditch were of a higher character than most others. This aside, Ritchie still considered the Shoreditch gaff nothing more than "a dirty little hole set apart for the entertainment of the Shoreditch youth."[46]

There has been little examination of the relationship between the social structure of specific communities and the composition of audiences for forms of proto-commercial leisure activity. Recent work by Clive Barker suggests the value of

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44. Caroline Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield: the Pursuit of Respectability", in Sidney Pollard and Collin Holmes, eds., *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1976), pp. 277, 287. See also Robert Storch, in Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, p. 146.
45. Frederick Rogers, *Labour, Life and Literature* (London, 1913), pp. 7-8.
46. Ritchie, *Here and There*, pp. 111-2, 115; Day, *Juvenile Crime*, pp. 169, 171; Grant, "Penny Theatres", pp. 5, 26. I have been able to trace the location of some forty gaffs in the 1830s, although they may not have all been in operation at the same time. Most were generally located in the East of London: three in Shoreditch, three off the Ratcliffe Highway, three in Whitechapel, two in St. Lukes, two in Shadwell, two in Hoxton. There were also a sizeable number south of the Thames: six directly off the New Cut, five generally scattered around Borough, three in Lambeth. There were also four in Marylebone and three in Westminster. Data from the occupational tables of the census (1841 and 1851) confirm, in a general way, the observations made by Grant, Day, and Ritchie. Nevertheless, while the tables uphold Ritchie's claim that Shoreditch was known for its production of shoes, clothes, and millinery, it also housed a sizeable number of clerks and printers. Without a more careful district analysis, it is hard to know exactly how much social mixing occurred amongst these occupational groups in a Shoreditch gaff. We do, however, have records of neighbourhood complaints about them, suggesting that at least a few members of the community did not take too kindly to a penny gaff in their midst.

such enquiries. His study of the Brittania theatre in Hoxton has found that the audience was primarily local and working class, and familiar with both the management and the cast. Nonetheless, it was not homogeneous, and tended to the formation of two groups: local costermongers, who, by beginning their work day early in the morning, would be able to attend the early performance; and clerical workers from the City who would arrive for the later show. Until the 1860s playbills were only posted within a one-mile radius of the theatre, and often advertised pantomimes that included scenes set in specific Hoxton locations.[47]

The uneven penetration of capitalist enterprise into the leisure domain further emphasizes just how unilluminating generalizations about the arrival of mass culture are. In 1851, for example, the *Edinburgh Review* claimed that while Preston had one principal singing room, Liverpool had more than forty of these establishments, and London over one hundred. And while musical concerts in London became increasingly professional and business-like, their semi-amateur quality remained strong in the provinces. Likewise, while music hall thrived in London by 1880, in Rochdale the commercial challenge to the pub, church, and chapel as centres of communal recreational activity only developed in earnest in the new century. The development of mass culture brought about by the breakdown of community-based commercial entertainment can again be seen in the case of the Brittania theatre. With the extension of the North London Railway in the 1860s, the traditional composition of the audience was challenged; and, in 1881, as a largely home-grown repertoire no longer seemed profitable, so the management began to import standardized melodramas, further reducing the nexus between community and leisure.[48]

Community aside, the most important factor influencing leisure choices is that of work. Before the industrial revolution the line between the two was not finely drawn, although the effective need for work discipline tended to separate them more and more: as the *Leisure Hour* cautioned in 1852, "Let there be no intermingling of work and play."[49] Victorian moralists actively attempted to divide work from leisure in order to isolate, gain control of, and reform the latter, producing a plethora of uplifting pastimes that would re-create one for work. In more recent times, however, this Victorian need to demarcate between them has become a belief in their actual separation. This belief is particularly strong in some of the worst Marxist scholarship, either of the type that separates work from leisure in order to study the former and forget the latter as unimportant, or of the type that naively believes in the possibility of freedom in the sphere of leisure. Terry Bushell falls

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47. Clive Barker, "The Audiences of the Brittania Theatre, Hoxton", *Theatre Quarterly*, 9 (Summer 1979), pp. 32-4, 40 (note 13); Barker, "The Chartists, Theatre, Reform and Research", *Theatre Quarterly*, 1 (October-December 1971), pp. 4-5.
48. *Edinburgh Review*, 94 (October 1851), pp. 410-1; Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (New York, 1976), p. 107; Paul Wild, "Recreation in Rochdale, 1900-40", in Clarke, *Working Class Culture*, p. 140; Barker, "Audiences", pp. 30, 36, 38-9.
49. Quoted in Peter Bailey, " 'A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures': the Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure", *Victorian Studies*, 21 (Autumn 1977), p. 16.

into the latter category: "...at work nothing is ours; our leisure is all we have got that we can call our own."[50] While sociologists suggest that decline of work as a central life interest for many workers, this does not mean that it no longer plays a role in shaping attitudes towards leisure activity. To believe that leisure can be studied in isolation from work is to forget that most Victorian workers, at least craft and skilled workers, developed their identity from their work activity; relations at work, and those derived from the industrial situation, were fundamental in shaping leisure choices. As Paul Willis has written, "Non-work supplies many of the categories and meanings for work but it can only be understood in relation to work and is finally shaped by it."[51]

Sociologists have been seriously studying the connections between work and leisure much longer than historians. Unfortunately, many of their studies cannot be taken too seriously. In the 1940s Georges Friedman suggested that increasing mechanization and division of labour led to a lack of job interest, and a tendency amongst workers to view leisure as a compensation for their jobs. More recently, it has been shown that the greater the prestige of an occupation, the more likely leisure activities will be selected less as a compensation for work, and more as an extension of the values implicit in it.[52] In this vein, James Mott has considered pigeon racing in nineteenth-century England both as a compensation for the coercive, fragmented, and repetitive work of miners, and as an extension of the values of autonomy and solidarity held by weavers.[53] The problems with such approaches

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50. Bushell, "Thoughts on Leisure", p. 366. Bailey, responsible for some of the best scholarship on Victorian leisure, by stressing the "relative autonomy" of leisure from work, also tends to overlook some of the relationships: "A Mingled Mass", p. 16; *Leisure and Class*, p. 5.

51. Paul Willis, "Shop Floor Culture, Masculinity and the Wage Form", in Clarke, *Working Class Culture*, p. 187; see also Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, p. xiii. For one standard account of the minimal role played by occupation in shaping working class life interests, see Robert Dubin, "Industrial Workers' Worlds: a Study of the 'Central Life Interests' of Industrial Workers", in Erwin O. Smigel, ed., *Work and Leisure: a Contemporary Social Problem* (New Haven, 1963), pp. 53-72. For the importance of the connections, see Stedman Jones, "Class Expression Versus Social Control", p. 169. Cunningham (*Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 67) admits that the two are related, but never develops this.

52. For Friedman, see Joffre Dumazedier and Nicole Latouche, "Work and Leisure in French Sociology", in Marrus, *The Emergence of Leisure*, pp. 118-9. For more recent notions, see Leonard Riessman, "Class, Leisure and Social Participation", *American Sociological Review*, 19 (February 1954), pp. 76-84; and Alfred C. Clarke, "The Use of Leisure and its Relation to Levels of Occupational Prestige", *American Sociological Review*, 21 (June 1956), pp. 301-7.

53. James Mott, "Miners, Weavers and Pigeon Racing", in Michael A. Smith, *et al.*, *Leisure and Society in Britain* (London, 1973), p. 92. For a critique of such approaches, see Joel Gerstl, "Leisure, Taste and Occupational Milieu", in Smigel, *Work and Leisure*, pp. 161-3; Doyle W. Bishop and Masaru Ikeda, "Status and Role Factors in the

are obvious. Leisure is viewed as mechanically determined by work, and no attempt is made to isolate this form of occupational determinism from the effects of other variables. Hence the need to broaden the base of study, to take into consideration other factors such as energy expenditure at work (a high expenditure will often lead to an avoidance of this in leisure), the interpersonal orientation of the job, and, more importantly, the relationship between work, family, and community structures.

For many Victorian workers, the values of the job were so strong in binding the workforce together that they provided the focus for most leisure activities. This is particularly true in occupations that were geographically isolated, such as mining. But it also played a large role in many other trades—weaving, for example, where traditions of work and leisure served to create an active occupational culture that flourished until the final demise of the trade in the 1830s. Moreover, there was also the possibility of leisure in work, of patterns of sociability tied to an active shop floor culture. The extent of this varied from trade to trade, and was more possible in smaller artisanal crafts. But here, as Thomas Wright observed, committing oneself to a workshop implied the need to learn its code of conduct and patterns of leisure, learning, for example, how to smuggle in drink to the place of work. Henry Broadhurst, who entered a stonemason's shop in 1853, was quick to understand this, discovering that at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm he had to make the rounds in order to note how many pints of beer would be wanted an hour later. He would then have to purchase them at a particular pub a mile away because its landlord also served as the foreman of the works.[54]

The increasing differentiation of work roles brought about by the division of labour broke down this cultural unity of the workplace. But even in many large mills of the North, company festivals, brass bands, and sports days tended to foster "company cultures," albeit ones that tended to be imposed from above rather than generated from below. Moreover, the general sociability of the small workshop could also exist in certain tasks in the larger factory. Women were particularly aware of this, discovering that its culture supplemented the limited possibilities for social life afforded by the corner shop and Sunday School. Many servants were drawn to this life, and women who left work in order to marry and

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Leisure Behavior of Different Occupations", *Sociology and Social Research*, 54 (January 1970), pp. 190-1, 203-5; Thomas M. Kando and Worth C. Summers, "The Impact of Work on Leisure: Toward a Paradigm and Research Strategy", in Theodore B. Johannis, Jr. and C. Neil Bull, eds., *Sociology of Leisure* (Beverly Hills, 1971), pp. 75-6; Tom Burns, "Leisure in Industrial Society", in Smith, *Leisure and Society*, p. 41; and Stanley Parker, *The Sociology of Leisure* (London, 1976), p. 68.

54. Wright, *Habits and Customs*, p. 84; Henry Broadhurst, *Henry Broadhurst, the Story of His Life from a Stonemason's Bench to the Treasury Bench* (London, 1901), pp. 6-7.

bear children would often re-enter the factory in order to enjoy a level of camara-
derie, status, and respectability not always to be found in the home.[55]

Whether or not this shop floor culture, of either artisanal workshop or large
factory, can be considered an active working class culture is more difficult to ascer-
tain. Uncritical deployment of the term in the past has tended to discredit it by
viewing this culture as monolithic and autonomous. By contrast, Richard John-
son, reiterating a claim made by Thomas Wright over a century ago, emphasizes
"the heterogeneity or complexity of 'working class culture,' fragmented not only
by geographical unevenness and parochialisms, but also by the social and sexual
divisions of labour and by a whole series of divisions into spheres or sites of exist-
ence."[56] This fact has usually been ignored, and historians have set out to discuss
a separate working class culture in ways that preclude an understanding of the
pressures exerted by various work situations on the formation of distinct patterns
of class-specific leisure activity.

Attributing such autonomy to working class culture has also resulted in a fail-
ure to notice that many elements of this culture may not be that unique. Indeed,
as Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin have suggested, it may be hard
to speak of a working class culture at all when what passes for it may consist merely
of ideas and activities of the dominant culture that have been seized and given
temporary new meaning by the working class in ways inseparable from the values
of their specific occupations.[57] Their observations suggest the need to examine even
more closely the interrelated structures of work and leisure.

IV

Some of the most successful studies that correlate work values with leisure pat-
terns have been undertaken by historians of the labour aristocracy. As Robert
Gray has suggested in his account of skilled workers in Edinburgh, traditions that
underlied older crafts tended to enforce distinct leisure patterns within the occu-
pational community in ways that afforded few workers the freedom to deviate
far from these established norms.[58] Conversely, skilled members of newer trades

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55. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, pp. 115, 180; Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women
    Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (London, 1930), p. 308; Jill Lidding-
    ton, "Working Class Women in the North West, II", *Oral History*, 5 (1977), pp. 32-4;
    Peter Stearns, "Working Class Women in Britain, 1890-1914", in Martha Vicinus, ed.,
    Suffer and Be Still (Bloomington, 1972), pp. 110, 114.
56. In Clarke, *Working Class Culture*, p. 62; Thomas Wright, *Our New Masters* (Lon-
    don, 1873), pp. 2-3. Bailey also emphasizes the need to differentiate middle class lei-
    sure patterns "in terms of age, sex, income level, type of work, religious affiliation,
    and degree of continuity with other social groups", in "A Mingled Mass", p. 27.
57. Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin, "Anatomie du goût", *Actes de la recher-
    che en sciences sociales*, 2 (octobre 1976), esp. p. 30. See also Bourdieu, *La Distinc-
    tion: critique sociale du jugement* (Paris, 1979); Hall, "Deconstructing 'the Popular'",
    pp. 229, 238; Wolf Lepenies, "Working Class Culture: Sociological Comments on the
    Currency of a Concept", *Social Science Information*, 17 (1978), pp. 489-501.
58. Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford, 1976),
    pp. 93-5.

enjoying a high and steady income, more free time, and subject to fewer occupational traditions to influence their uses of leisure time enjoyed greater freedom in their leisure choices. Nonetheless, rather than implying the total collapse of specific occupational constraints on patterns of leisure, the existence of a labour aristocracy merely posits their loosening and rearrangement. Joffre Dumazedier has written that as leisure came to be seen as free from the influence of work, so the style of life that developed from a personal ordering of leisure activities became increasingly important as a basis for acquiring personal values that were formerly derived from the work situation.[59] The labour aristocracy affords a unique opportunity to test this observation, and, moreover, to see in what new ways patterns of work were related to patterns of leisure.

The extent to which the new skilled trades differed from older crafts in the specific types of pressure they exerted on personal leisure choices has yet to be explored in detail. Even in traditional crafts, however, there was no direct correlation between work and leisure; in many instances both the secular radical culture and the new commercial popular culture offered leisure options that increasingly broke the hold of communal work/leisure patterns. Many artisans took advantage of these new options. Others experienced the tyranny of enforced work-related leisure and were unable to do so. Henry Broadhurst, a stonemason, recognized the pressures that urged conformity: "If a man did not drink beer he was regarded by his fellows as a muff or a 'Ranter.' Such men were, however, an exception."[60] Joseph Gutteridge, an apprentice in a Coventry ribbon-weaving factory around 1830, felt likewise, but also found a way out: "...not feeling any inclination to join the others in their pot-house pleasures, I generally amused myself with bits of incipient carpentering, wood-carving, or reading." Later he joined a mechanics' institute, meeting individuals with similar tastes from different trades.[61] The pattern was repeated by others elsewhere: as leisure options increased, so they tended to minimize occupational influences on leisure time. This was particularly true in communities where both a diversity of trades and leisure options co-existed. Increasingly, occupational pressures on leisure patterns became complicated by autonomous and rival structures, such as networks of stratification and styles of life, and the shifting interrelationship between the two has yet to be charted.

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59. Joffre Dumazedier, *Towards a Society of Leisure* (London, 1967); also Ken Roberts, "The Changing Relationship Between Work and Leisure", in Appleton, *Leisure Research*, p. 28.

60. Broadhurst, *Story of His Life*, p. 6.

61. Joseph Gutteridge, *Lights and Shadows in the Life of an Artisan* (Coventry, 1893), p. 30; see also pp. 28, 85, 140-2. For a similar experience, see John Younger, *Autobiography of John Younger, Shoemaker, St. Boswells* (Kelso, 1881), pp. 103, 119-22, 144-5, 238-9.

The widening of traditional occupational and craft cultures into what Geoffrey Crossick has termed a stratum culture,[62] comprising the local elite of the working class that enjoyed a certain cohesiveness through its participation in communal leisure activities, is indicative of a unique phase in the social history of leisure. While rejecting older, more riotous popular pastimes, many labour aristocrats also rejected mass leisure pursuits. In their place, they stressed forms of moral sobriety and mutuality that had also characterized the earlier secular radical culture. But in contrast to the leisure activities of autodidacts like Gutteridge in the 1830s, the development of self-directed leisure pursuits in the context of voluntary associations became all-important for the labour aristocracy. This still does not imply a total separation of work and leisure, although the connections here are hazy at best. Indeed, in the most general sense it was only certain skilled workers who could enjoy these unique opportunities to assert their own styles of life through the manipulation of leisure time in the context of voluntary associations. Moreover, in the last instance, even voluntary association participation was not immune from the pressures of work. As Robert Gray suggests, "there were independent sources of variation in styles of life and patterns of aspiration, related partly to the traditions, expectations and value-systems inculcated by particular occupational cultures." In his study of Edinburgh, he has discovered that, while printers were the largest group in the mechanics' library, masons, joiners, smiths, and shop-keepers tended to predominate in the flower show, although the possible reasons for this are not fully explored.[63]

Beyond the challenge posed to craft and occupational influences on leisure patterns by new, broad-based voluntary associations was the challenge posed by the steadily expanding commercial sector. As commercially provided leisure activities become more plentiful, so, according to some students of leisure, individuals tend to define themselves less in terms of self-structured activities and more in terms of their degree of consumption of selected elements of mass culture, measured by their membership in specific taste publics.[64]

In London, one such commercial taste public developed in the 1830s and 1840s around inexpensive commercial concert life. Audiences were recruited from particular types of work and seem to have consisted of artisans, clerical workers, and shop-keepers, all united in their pursuit of inexpensive musical entertainment.[65] In general, membership was too broad-based, activities too diverse, and the time spent together in pursuit of these pleasures too brief to create a sense of belong-

62. Geoffrey Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society: Kentish London 1840-1880* (London, 1978), pp. 61, 118-9, 128; see also R.Q. Gray, "Styles of Life, the 'Labour Aristocracy' and Class Relations in Later Nineteenth Century Edinburgh", *International Review of Social History*, 18 (1973), pp. 434-8.

63. Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, pp. 114, 105-8. Crossick (*Artisan Elite*, p. 128) observed a similar phenomenon in Kentish London.

64. Alain Touraine, "Leisure Activities and Social Participation", in Marrus, *Emergence of Leisure*, p. 105; Bourdieu and Saint Martin, "Anatomie du goût", pp. 21, 26, 31.

65. See Weber, *Music and the Middle Class*, pp. 88-9, 120. For the development of the concept of taste publics, see Gans, *Popular Culture and Mass Culture*, pp. 10-2.

ing to a cohesive social world, as was the case with the voluntary associations of the labour aristocracy. Such, however, was not always the case. Observers of the penny gaffs have all commented on the youthfulness of their audiences—varying anywhere from eight to sixteen, eight to twenty, nine to fourteen, twelve to seventeen, thirteen to sixteen, depending on the account—and on the ties that seemed to bind these individuals together. There was indeed an incipient cohesion amongst many members of this particular public. In one gaff, for example, youths aged from sixteen to twenty were all dressed in short coats of stout material, cord trousers, caps and showy neckties. This was a style that expressed the shared identity of the members of the group, and one that the younger members of the audience attempted to emulate. Middle class observers viewed these stylistic conventions with alarm, and equated the group's solidarity with a juvenile delinquent subculture, fostered by these commercial ventures for the provision of entertainment for youth.[66]

Taste publics can therefore be seen as another factor in the restructuring of popular leisure activity in the mid-nineteenth century. As such, they tended to re-orient more traditional connections between work, community, and leisure. In particular, they may have played an important role in further differentiating the leisure experiences of men and women, although such differences were already in existence and related to patterns of work. For example, while women were active in the culture of the voluntary association, in traditional crafts, where "Saint Monday" was a common holiday for men, wives and daughters were often compelled to use the time to undertake domestic chores. Ben Brierley, in one of his working class tales from the 1850s, noted the extent to which such holidays often threatened domestic tranquillity. The protagonist of his story, "A Summer Ramble in Daisy Nook," received a day off from his job in a warehouse and was encouraged by his wife to stay home and rest. Before ignoring her advice, and enjoying the holiday while she worked, he considered the matter: "I never knew an industrious, striving woman, who liked holidays. She looks upon them as so many opportunities held out to weak-minded men for getting out of the steady path of business, as encouragements to loose principles and spendthrift habits...."[67] As commercial opportunities for leisure expanded, and as the later nineteenth century witnessed the introduction of new machinery, often resulting in greater job tension, the different leisure experiences of men and women may have become even

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66. Mayhew, *London Labour*, I, p. 42; Day, *Juvenile Crime*, p. 181; Grant, "Penny Theatres", pp. 5-6; Dickens, *Sketches*, p. 130; Burgess, *passim*. For the importance of youth in the restructuring of Victorian leisure, see Lilian Lewis Shiman, "The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working Class Children", *Victorian Studies*, 17 (September 1973), pp. 49-74. For the continuities between nineteenth and twentieth century youth cultures, see Chris Waters, "Badges of Half-formed, Inarticulate Radicalism: a Critique of Recent Trends in the Study of Working Class Youth Culture", *International Labor and Working Class History*, 19 (Spring 1981), pp. 23-37.
67. Benjamin Brierley, *A Day Out: A Summer Ramble in Daisy Nook* (Manchester, 1859), p. 3. See also Pinchbeck, *Women Workers*, pp. 279-80. For Brierley, see Vicinus, *Industrial Muse*, esp. pp. 200-8.

greater. Drinking separated the sexes more than it had earlier, and the new world of spectator sports, primarily open to men, created new taste publics that enhanced this segregation.[68]

By mid-century, then, especially in larger towns, leisure options had increased to the point that many workers enjoyed freedom in choosing amongst them or in developing alternatives to them. But work still influenced the meaning attached to different leisure pursuits by different social groups, although this, too, has seldom been explored. For example, to what extent did labour aristocrats step out of the world of their voluntary associations into the increasingly important world of commercial entertainment? If they did, what values did they attach to the different experiences? More importantly, how did this change over time? Such questions need to be answered in order to overcome a rigid occupational determinism of leisure activity where the earlier artisan is equated with a respectable radical culture, the labour aristocrat with the self-created leisure of the voluntary association, the unskilled worker with the new commercial music hall. Moreover, the question of motive and intention in ascribing specific values to these various choices needs to be addressed; not all leisure options were equally attractive, and individuals would often arrange them in hierarchies related not only to the values implicit in their occupation, but also to their status aspiration.[69]

This urge to categorize pastimes began first with the middle class, a class that particularly felt the need to judge leisure activities according to their social utility. While historians have stressed the intensity with which these individuals preached against the old popular culture in favour of more "rational recreation," they have often failed to look beyond the polemics in order to ascertain the rationale for their encouragement of specific activities. Trollope, for example, in his essay, "British Sports and Pastimes," ranked the various activities he discussed according to their "dignity."[70] Such classifications were fairly common amongst educated Victorians of the period, and are suggestive of the complex value-systems that underlied class-specific descriptions of popular recreation.

Like Trollope, William Stirling, member of the St. Paul's Mutual Improvement Society in Manchester, desired, as he put it, the development of "a proper estimate of each class of amusements." At the top of Stirling's hierarchy were secular music concerts, especially those presented on Saturday and Monday evenings, and that spread feelings of loyalty and cheerfulness. "First class" amusements also included exhibitions of art and nature: art would introduce the audience to the manners and customs of all societies, past and present, while botanical gardens and parks would be more than mere "vegetable museums" as they, too, would

68. Stearns, "Working Class Women", pp. 117-8; Stearns, Lives of Labour (New York, 1975), p. 293.
69. For the most stimulating suggestions in this direction, see Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?': Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working Class Respectability", Journal of Social History, 12 (Spring 1979), pp. 336-53.
70. Discussed by Bruce Haley, The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 124-5.

combine instruction with pleasure. Stirling warned against popular theatres. Singing saloons and "casinoes" were rated even less attractive, free and easy's beneath them, and penny theatres at the bottom of the list. While Stirling's admonitions may sound superficially like those of any other Victorian who stressed the need for "improving" recreations, on closer inspection it can be seen that his ordering of amusements is related to an understanding of the nature of the specific leisure pursuits available in Manchester. Free and easy's and singing rooms abounded, while public galleries and parks, along with commercially provided "Concerts for the People," were relatively recent phenomena that suddenly offered the worker new alternatives. Stirling felt the need to evaluate these particular options for his readers.

Other writers who emphasized the need for "elevating" amusements arranged them in different ways from Stirling. In 1849, for example, the "Committee for Conducting the Saturday Evening Concerts, Established for the Purpose of Providing Rational and Elevating Amusements for the Working Classes of Liverpool," published essays written by three local artisans on the would-be influence on the populace of elevating amusements. All railed against concert rooms, of which Liverpool seemed to possess an inordinate number, and lauded the effects of elevating and rational music—obviously, given the nature of the sponsors of the competition. However, these authors, James Norris, a journeyman printer, John Priest, a watchmaker, and John Teare, a toolmaker, seemed to emphasize private intellectual development to a far greater degree than Stirling, who appeared much more enamored of the "elevating" municipal and commercial opportunities for leisure in Manchester. This may be suggestive of the variety in types of leisure provision in the two cities, Manchester being much more advanced in its provision of municipal facilities for leisure. It may also indicate the extent to which artisans in skilled trades generally valued specific leisure activities in ways that differed from those of factory operatives, even when both groups were concerned with warning would-be converts away from certain inexpensive commercial entertainments.[71]

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I would like to conclude with a brief examination of the restructuring of the social space available for the development of self-directed leisure activities in the last

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71. I can find no reference to Stirling's occupation beyond the fact that he appears to have been a "factory operative". Given his poor spelling and grammar in this handwritten essay, one might assume his level of education to be inferior to that of the three Liverpudlian artisans discussed here, although of course their prose might have been edited for publication. I can also find no information about the social background of the members of the St. Paul's Mutual Improvement Society. On the whole, mutual improvement societies were smaller and more autonomous than mechanics' institutes; while they often stressed the same activities, the mutual improvement societies were often firm in their rejection of middle class patronage. See Mabel Tylecote, *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Manchester Before 1851* (Manchester, 1957), pp. 103-4, 126, 162, 229. See also Crossick, "The Labour Aristocracy", pp. 308-9. For Liverpool amusements, the excellent study by Hugh Shimmin, *Liverpool Life*, is indispensable.

third of the century. Through this I would like to return to the pessimism of the mass culture critics that I began with.

Supporting those who spoke disparagingly of the trend towards commercially produced recreation of an undesirable nature, Stirling cited the example of those who passed by art galleries to see the "cannibal gorging raw beef at the Manchester Royal Casino." The Hammonds once wrote of the dismal attempts made by local Ancoats residents to establish their own theatrical amusements in the face of both moral opposition and competition from successful commercial singing rooms. Moreover, itinerant street-singers had become an anachronism by the 1860s, squeezed out as saloon theatres and music halls gradually began to hire writers to compose whole sheafs of standardized fare. Later, workingmen's clubs increasingly felt that they had to compete with commercial leisure interests; "beer and billiards," and amateur entertainment of all sorts, stood in the place of the earlier lectures.[72]

Many radicals became more and more alarmed at the threats posed to what they considered autonomous culture-building by such examples of commercial entertainment. Thomas Wright, in an article in the *Contemporary Review* in 1881, actually equated the spread of this culture with the inability to develop any alternatives to it. In particular, he feared the extent to which many of its less wholesome aspects came to dominate the shaping of general taste, leading to what he called the "virtual non-existence of a popular culture," by reducing the possibility "of the production of individual chances of culture among the working classes... ."[73] Wright was not alone in these fears, the aging Chartist Thomas Cooper believing that working men had "ceased to think," and now directed their attention to organized gambling on horses and pigeons.[74] Both Cooper and Wright might have agreed with a critic of the 1950s who wrote that "mass culture creates addiction to prefabricated experience, depriving most people ... of the remaining possibilities of autonomous growth and enrichment."[75]

We have come full circle, exploring the intellectual traditions and structural changes that foreshadowed the pronouncements of Leavis, and have since shaped many historical and sociological approaches to the study of Victorian leisure. We have seen how post-war critics and many of their nineteenth century counterparts tended to fear the massiveness of the control associated with the commercial pro-

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72. J.L. and Barbara Hammond, *Age of the Chartists*, p. 351; Senelick, "Politics as Entertainment", pp. 152-3, 155; Stedman Jones, "Working Class Culture", p. 480; Stan Shipley, *Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London* (History Workshop pamphlet no. 5, 1971), pp. 24-7. For the similar frustration felt by the German SDP at the threats posed to autonomous culture-building by mass pamphlet fiction, see Ronald A. Fullerton, "Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany: the Development of Pamphlet Fiction, 1871-1914", *Journal of Social History*, 12 (Summer 1979), pp. 500, 503.

73. Thomas Wright, "On a Possible Popular Culture", *Contemporary Review*, 40 (July 1881), pp. 27, 35-6.

74. Thomas Cooper, *The Life of Thomas Cooper* (London, 1886), pp. 392-4.

75. Ernest van den Haag, "A Dissent from the Consensual Society", in Jacobs, *Culture for the Millions*, p. 60.

vision of leisure. We have also focused on one particular by-product of this, namely a hankering after some lost golden age. Such a period of bucolic recreations has usually been placed before the industrial revolution, in some mythic past when happy peasants like Bodo danced around the maypole on the village green. But if we are to have a golden age at all, it might well have existed much later. After the loosening of traditional community customs and occupational constraints, and before the development of a commercial leisure industry that fostered an illusion of free time while increasing its control over the uses of that time, genuine alternatives might have been possible. Some groups, at least, were able to seize upon the social space afforded them by this fluidity in mid-nineteenth century leisure patterns and develop viable cultural identities. I hope that I have been able to suggest some methodological approaches that address both the manner by which this occurred, as well as the effective limitations on the process. Their further development might aid in preventing the social history of leisure from degenerating into a new antiquarianism, a danger that is quite real.