International Journal of Communication 6 (2012), Feature 1297–1445 1932–8036/2012FEA1297

"THE HAPPINESS GAME"

A Content Analysis of Radio Fan Mail

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Faculty of Political Science
Columbia University
February, 1950

...It is certain that both the relations of the sexes and the economic situation are among the conditions of human happiness, in the sense of making it and spoiling it. But the striking point is that, aside from philosophical discussion and psychological analysis, the problem of happiness has never been seriously studied since the epoch of Greek hedonism, and of course the conclusions reached by the Greeks, even if they were more scientific than they really are, could hardly be applied to the present time, with its completely changed social conditions. Has this problem been so much neglected because of its difficulty or because, under the influence of certain tendencies in Christianity, happiness is still half instinctively regarded as more or less sinful, and pain as meritorious? However that may be, the fact is that no things of real significance have been said up to the present about happiness, particularly if we compare the enormous material that has been collected and the innumerable important ideas that have been expressed concerning unhappiness...

W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki
- from The Methodological Note,
"The Polish Peasant in Europe and America"

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In one of the most notable contributions to "Why Listen" research, "What Do We Know About Daytime Serial Listeners"[1], Dr. Herta Herzog tells us that she will be concerned not only "with listeners' characteristics, but with listeners own reports of their listening experiences." Dr. Herzog indicates that "the gratifications which women derive from daytime serials are so complex that we have no guide to fruitful observations unless we study in detail the actual experiences of the women listening to these programs."[2]

Now, the common basis of Dr. Herzog's study and of almost all communications research (except for the analysis of the communication itself) is the interview. Information from the listener is obtained by asking for it.

It occurred to Dr. Lowenthal of Columbia that almost no serious work has been done on one of the most widely known, and frequently mentioned, by-products of the communications industry: Fan Mail. Certainly, if research is seeking "listeners own reports of their listening experiences" there would seem to be an excellent chance that a listener's own letter to a radio program--direct response to the stimulus--would contain just such reports, minus--for better or for worse--the interviewer middle man. And it was Dr. Lowenthal's feeling, too, that much more than listening experience would emerge from a study of the letters; he felt that the listener himself would stand revealed.

Mail to several radio programs was obtained and a group of interested students from the Graduate School of Sociology of Columbia University, under Dr. Lowenthal and Mr. Gordon Streib, set about formulating the scope and objectives of the study,

what to look for and what it was hoped would emerge (hypotheses.).

Fan mail hasn't been given a chance by researchers. Commercial research is quick to point out the apparent lack of correlation between volume of mail and number of listeners. Both academic and commercial research are very aware of the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of discovering how 'representative' of the listening audience are the fan mail writers.

Early verdicts on fan mail seem to have stuck: In the 1930's, for example, a sample of fan mail was brought to Will Durant for examination. His opinion was that the mail was written by invalids, lonely people, very aged, very youthful, hero worshippers and mischievous children; and few from "the average man or woman".[3] Burt, a BBC psychologist, announced that an excessive proportion of the writers were obviously neurotic".[4] Cantril and Allport tell us that "many letters come from neurotics who tell the broadcaster their troubles... (and) in spite of its impressive volume, this audience mail is sent by isolated, unorganized listeners, composing only a fraction of the total listening population... The individual listener writes a letter, not because others are doing so, but because it is a sure and immediate way for him to resolve some tension the program has created...The large proportion of fan mail from the lower economic and non-urban areas suggests that the writers are comparatively limited in other means of self expression. Instead of praising or condemning a program to their friends, arguing about it with other people, or finding some substitute outlet

for their emotions, these listeners apparently gain relief and satisfaction only by responding directly to the person or organization that has provoked them...."[5]

That fan mail is almost certainly no indication of the number of listeners to a given program is certainly true.[6] But thinking about some of these other ostensible shortcomings of fan mail, if anything, lead to further interest in this by-product of American radio.

In might be wise, first, to dispel the overtones of the word 'fan' from the idea of fan mail. Much of what is called 'fan mail' is not the eulogizing, hero-worshiping kind of letters that we might expect; much of it centers on the writer of the letter and not on the program, as we shall see. Furthermore, much of the mail that is lumped together under the label 'fan mail' is solicited--subtly incited or frankly invited--by the broadcaster, and although these letters lack the spontaneity of unsolicited mail, they often contain the added feature of focus--centering on a given topic--which may be of genuine interest to radio researchers and sociologists. It is a focused topic of this kind which we shall be concerned with in this paper.

Next, we should return to an examination of some of the criticisms of the value of fan mail for social research. To say, in the 1930's, that a large proportion of the writers are "obviously neurotic" must have made quite a different impression that it makes on us today. The continuum between neurotic and normal has been all-but-too-well established during the past decade by Horney and Fromm and others. When Cantril and Allport

decided that fan mail is "sent by isolated, unorganized listeners...comparatively limited in other means of self-expression", perhaps they did not anticipate that this very description of what they apparently considered to be a small segment of the population, would become a major characteristic assigned to large parts of our population by the social diagnosis of our time. In any event, it is easy to agree that "letters can be a valuable source of research data if only because they express the sentiments which are shared, although somewhat less volubly and perhaps less consciously by people who do not write".[7]

The variation in writers, frames of reference, function of the letter will be very great from program to program. The nature of the stimulus--the program to which the writer has listened--will determine not only who writes, but what is written about. The effect of the program, the meaning of the program and the relationship that is established with the listener-writer will be a chief determinant of the kind of fan letters that are to be expected. Study of the mail response to different programs can, and does, provide real clues about the <u>effect</u> of different kinds of programs, about the <u>meaning</u> of different kinds of programs to the listener in terms of learning and gratifications, and about the kinds of personalities who identify or become involved with different programs.

It remains for the overall report of the Fan Mail Project to compare different kinds of fan mail in terms of both the writers and the programs. Such a comparison will not only be psychologically and sociologically fruitful, but it may also

point up the fact that fan mail corresponds much more closely to the stratification of the listening audience of a particular program than has been suspected. And further, it will demonstrate WHY one kind of letter is received by one kind of program and not another and WHY certain programs have a much higher proportion of listeners-to-letters than do other programs. This paper will not attempt comparisons--it will attempt to show what kinds of things can be learned from a very particular sample of fan mail; and to demonstrate that it is worth the effort.

The method adopted by the group for analysis of the mail followed, although not in a formal manner and with some violations, the procedure outlined in Lazarsfeld and Berelson, in their chapter on "The Categories of Content Analysis".[8] If we turn now to introduce the particular study with which we shall be concerned, the procedure employed will be evident.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER I

1. In Lazarsfeld and Stanton (eds.) Radio Research 1942-3, New York Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944, pp. 3-34.

2. Ibid., p. 23. This section on gratifications also reprinted in Newcomb, Hartley, et al, Readings in Social Psychology, New

York, Henry Molt and Co., 1947.

3. F.H. Lumley, Measurement in Radio, Ohio State University, 1934, p. 317.

4. Ibid.

5. H. Cantril and G. Allport, The Psychology of Radio, New York, Harper and Bros., 1935. Cited in Lumley, op. cit., footnote pp. 95-6.

6. L. Bogart, "Fan Mail to the Philharmonic", Public Opinion Quarterly, Fall, 1949

7. Ibid.

8. a. Definition of the problem for investigation
   b. Statement of hypotheses related to the problem
   c. Identification of the categories appropriate and necessary for testing the hypotheses
   d. Identification and definition of the indicators of the categories in terms of the content to be analyzed
   The Analysis of Communication Content (preliminary draft, mimeo) New York, Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1948.

CHAPTER II

THE HAPPINESS GAME

Some 7,000 letters, one of the largest batches obtained by the Fan Mail Projects represents the mail received by Ted Malone--daytime radio raconteur and practical philosopher--during the four month period from January to April, 1948.

Malone's style is very unique in radio--he tries to be intimate, to 'visit' with each of his listeners. We shall have occasion to consider Malone's philosophy and his radio style below[1], but it will be important here, to introduce Malone's emphasis on projects: on involving his audience in some common plan. In January 1948, for example, Malone asked his listeners to send neckties for the Mayor of Omaha; during the month of March, listeners were asked to join in a plan to "Make the Most of March" which involved setting a goal for oneself and planning, step by step, to attain it; another campaign was called "Adventure in Letter Writing" in which listeners were urged to experience the thrills and the satisfaction of letter-writing. Each of these campaigns, of course, also resulted in increased mail to the program.

But during the four months of broadcasting for which we have Malone mail, no one topic stimulated more letters than the month-long campaign of February, 1948, when Ted Malone explained "The Happiness Game". This project was designed to help the listener attain happiness; to help the listener know what to look for in deciding whether she was really happy; to point up

the importance of the 'little things' in the making of individual happiness.

Here's how the game was played: On Monday, February 2, 1948, Ted Malone told his audience that he had a new idea--an idea for an adventure in happiness. Ted told how to play the game:

> If people would look for, watch for, hunt for all the little things that add color, adventure, happiness to their every day they might be amazed how much they could treasure up...
>
> Several years ago we tried it; several thousand people. We began with a month, and the game was to watch carefully every day of the month to see on which day we had the most pleasure--the most genuine happiness. To do this, of course, we had to be aware of all the things that happened each day that added color to our lives that day. And while the game was to see if there was some one day when a wave of happiness seemed to roll across the country, one day that everybody would check as the happiest day of the month--we found as we started keeping track of everything that happened each day which added to our happiness that we found many, many little things we hadn't even noticed before. This was important--because as a result we actually were happier. The game really worked--and it was fun!
>
> So today I'm challenging you to play the game all through

> February. Keep track of every day this month, make notes on your calendar, look for color, watch for everything that happens every day--every little thing--that adds happiness to your life. Do everything you can think of that will add happiness; try to crowd as much happiness as you can into every day of February, and at the end of the month tear off the February page of your calendar and mail it to me with your happiest day checked--and I hope, a note as to why it was the happiest.
>
> If you will start today, looking for and noting down everything good that happens, if you will do everything you can think of that adds happiness to each day, I promise you this month will be one you will long remember. The game is to find your happiest day in February. It really works, it will amaze you. I challenge you to try it. You will become aware of colors all around you you never noticed before. It will take the dullness and monotony out of your every day; it will add happiness to your life--and that's important.[2]

All through February Malone told his listeners how he himself was playing the game and reminded them to keep at it.

We will never know how many people played the game without writing reports about it; what we do know is that almost 2,000 letters were received telling of happiest days. The letters were almost all written on the last day in February or during the first week in March, and although 2,000 letters is by no means an overwhelming volume of mail for a radio program that invites

letters, it is a fairly large response. It represents something less than one-forth of the total mail received by Malone for a four month period.

It was decided, for the purpose of the overall Project, to sample the Malone mail on a 1 to 7 ratio. All the Malone mail was sorted and sampled by weeks--according to date of receipt--but the mail for the Happiness Game, although it fell largely within the first week of March, was sampled separately.

Thus from the nearly-2000 letters written during "The Happiness Game" our sample contained some 265, of which 260 constitutes the final number employed in this study.

It was not until the Project was well underway that this study was decided upon. Careful reading of some of the Happiness letters--which constituted such a large part of the total Malone mail--convinced us that this mail might contain not only many of the characteristics of fan mail which we sought, but also a completely fresh treatment of a subject that has been the concern of philosophers throughout the ages, of psychiatrists and marriage counselors and popular song writers: a subject which carries the endorsement--and represents an ultimate goal--of every man, woman and child in Western civilization.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER II

1. Chapter IV.
2. Broadcast February 2, 1948; American Broadcasting System.

CHAPTER III

IS EVERYBODY HAPPY?

The answer to the night club MC's question "Is everybody happy?" is an unqualified "yes". One does not usually have to wait long in a conversation about somebody else's job to hear: "But is he happy? That's what counts." In the New York Public Library, there is a card file a foot long of popular songs whose titles or first lines contain the words "happy" or "happiness". Each year countless radio programs, magazine articles and newspaper columns are devoted to advice on how to be happy, recipes for happiness, how you can be happy despite such and such handicap, how you can be happy in love, in play, at work. And we know, from the Declaration of Independence that "The Pursuit of Happiness" is the third of man's inalienable rights.

Happiness is pursued, probably, more in America than anywhere else. Not that Americans are the happiest people necessarily--we shall say more on that later. Happiness is pursued, at least in part, because there is a cultural emphasis on being happy. An American is constantly reminded that he is supposed to be happy, that he has every reason to be happy, that perhaps it's his own fault if he's not happy, that the family next door, and the family in the magazine advertisement are always happy. Americans, then, are concerned--we might say--with the very word itself.

The word happiness has become part of the American way--it has become a test for an individual to administer to himself on

all occasions: Am I happy?[1], he asks, over and over. And thus, to examine the nature of happiness in the United States, in 1949, we must concern ourselves not only with criteria which will satisfy the medical scientist and social scientist and the psychiatrist and the minister, but we must pay careful attention to the high cultural regard for being happy.

Americans are, in their own judgment, a very happy people. The Ladies' Home Journal asked people in the United States, Canada, Britain, Holland and France whether they were very happy, fairly happy, or unhappy. In the United States, 46% were "very happy", 45% "fairly happy", and only 8% "unhappy". But in France, on the other hand, only 9% were "very happy", 52% were "fairly happy" and 35% "unhappy".

But the Life Round Table on "The Pursuit of Happiness"[2], before whom these Ladies' Home Journal figures were presented was quick to point to other statistics and the stories behind them: divorce, juvenile delinquency, mental illness. Reflection for a moment on the kind of ghoulish events presented in soap operas, which have titles such as "Life Can Be Beautiful" immediately focuses on the very questionable use of 'beautiful' and 'happy'. Erich Fromm, in the Life Round Table, maintained that "there is always considerable pressure on the individual to persuade himself that he is 'happy' because this is part of the American pattern."

And so the evidence that Americans consider themselves happy is countered with the question "Are Americans really happy?" And to that, there is perhaps too resounding an answer in the negative. Russell Davenport, who wrote the report of the

Life Round Table says that "the Table felt that there is a failure in America to achieve genuine happiness." The British author, J.S. Priestly, writes that "...the Americans...should be leading happy lives, for they live in comparative security, with immense resources, a very happy standard of material comfort and convenience and with much to keep them entertained....But I should not, at large, call them a happy people...."[3] Henry Luce, at the Round Table, felt that it was a paradox that "the very country in which the pursuit of happiness is asserted as a political right should be the one most often singled out as the place where happiness is least understood."[4] And Margaret Mead writes that "just as virtually no American family is completely certain of its social antecedents...so also no American family is sure of its position on an unknown chart called 'happiness'. The mother anxiously scans her baby's face. Are his 'looks' something which should make her happy, is his health something which shows she is a good mother, does he walk and talk early enough to be a credit to her, to prove to others and so prove to herself that she has a right to be what she wants to be--happy?"[5]

All of this forces us to ask three questions and to require as many answers. Question one: What criteria do Americans apply in deciding whether they're happy, and what things do they say make them happy? Question two: What "scientific" evaluational criteria can we apply in deciding whether an individual, or a nation is really happy? The two answers to these questions will lead naturally to a third question: How do the cultural criteria--the criteria we find applied by our letter writers--measure up against the "scientific" criteria? Naturally, we

shall be unable to venture far, in generalizing, from the limited sample of our study, but perhaps our inquiry will succeed in illuminating a larger area.

The first question makes up the largest part of this study and is the concern of Chapters VII, VIII, IX. The second question--evaluational criteria for happiness--is discussed in Chapter X and in Appendix B. The last question cannot be asked before we see if the first two can be answered.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. See Margaret Mead, And Keep Your Powder Dry, New York, William Morrow and Co., 1942, p. 87.

2. Russell W. Davenport, "Report of the Round Table on the Pursuit of Happiness", Life Magazine, July 12, _____. Participants in the Round Table included Davenport (moderator), Erich Fromm, Stuart Chase, Sidney Hook, Henry Luce, Charles Luckman (Pres. Lever Brothers), Thomas D'arcy Brophy (advertising), Father Edmund A. Walsh, and others.

3. In What is Happiness, London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1938.

4. op. cit., p. 97.

5. op. cit., p. 87.

CHAPTER IV

YOU CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS

We have seen that there is a cultural emphasis placed upon being happy. And we have found the pattern of uneasy self-examination running through American culture: "How do I measure up?" "Am I happy?" Mead points out that this is a culture which provides no one to tell an American woman "whether her expectations are too high or too low, no one to quote from the experience of other generations, no yardstick, no barometer...[1] and Merton concludes that this is a culture "which continuously batters the ego of the 'unsuccessful'.[2]

The compulsion to appear successful is a dominant theme in American culture and it is this compulsion which leads to the dual, and often contradictory, emphasis on conformity and at the same time on demonstrating that one is getting ahead. As getting ahead becomes increasingly difficult, and as unsuccessful egos multiply themselves the chance of remaining just where you started seems more realistic and we find, more and more, that the American dreams of fulfillment and happiness not tomorrow, but today. And as the ability to increase one's consumption (and to be conspicuous about it) is reduced, the American turns increasingly from an outer to an inner search for happiness.

It is precisely here that we first come upon a culturally structured definition of happiness. It is not a definition for all classes, or an absolutely binding one; and, if we are correct, it seems to have been evolved only in the last several decades, representing in part, another shift on the seesaw of

American values[3]. This definition says that "You Can't Buy Happiness".[4] It says that money not only isn't everything, it is hardly anything at all. It says that anybody can be happy, providing he sets his mind to it. It says that there is much to be thankful for, and that it is the 'little things' that count. It says that helping others is helping yourself and making others happy is real personal happiness. And finally, it implies--and perhaps this is where it departs from an acceptable Christian progress--that happiness is not somewhere in the future, not at the top of a long, hard pull, but right here and now.[5]

These values have long been with us, but they have not often had the upper hand. Getting-ahead values meant more in America. Unlimited opportunity, mobility, work industriously and you will find happiness, risk everything for something big, charity and handouts demoralize people, were much more commonly held concepts. The institutional competition resulting from the co-existence of these two sets of ideas has often been pointed out, and perhaps best by Professor Lynd.[6] During the war, American propaganda reflected the increasing importance attached to the little things: Soldiers were told to look forward--not to becoming Senators, or factory superintendents or Wall Street financiers--but to "Ma's apple pie" and to the "little house half way down Elm Street".

Ted Malone, like Kate Smith, is an American philosopher. In Mass Persuasion, Merton suggests that Kate Smith "is the custodian of the ever-old values that can replace the goal of success. She provides a substitute frame for self-judgment".[7] Ted

Malone does this, and somewhat more. Over and over he helps to provide rules, carefully and clearly formulated, on how to be a success in these new terms, what criteria you may use when you ask yourself the recurrent questions: How do I measure up? Am I successful?

Ted Malone has a daytime audience. He talks to and with his listeners directly and intimately. His audience, for this reason, perhaps, is not exceedingly large, but his listeners are very devout. Rapport, sincerity, friendliness and a devotion to the idea of a visit with the listener characterize Malone's fifteen minutes every day.

And Malone's soft-spoken, friendly, homespun, cheerful voice has an effect, too; Malone is soothing. Unlike the soap operas which provide gripping emotional ups and downs and surprises, Malone is comfort and inspiration. A listener who had just explained that she preferred listening to a program such as Betty Crocker or Ted Malone because they told about "real people" whereas, the soap operas were "just stories" was asked: how do the soap operas differ from Ted Malone?

Q. What do you mean by their being "just stories"--how do the soap operas differ from Ted Malone?

A. They are more far fetched, about things that will never happen to me. I get too much worked up listening to these soap operas--Ted Malone is much more restful....When Ted talks to you it's peaceful--he quiets your nerves and makes you forget the troubles of the world.[8]

Malone's voice and the soothing, inspirational character of the program are mentioned repeatedly in the letters:

> I love your program and even your nice soft voice... (7012)
>
> Even if I don't always hear your words it's good to hear your voice. (That last sentence might sound crazy but really it makes sense if you think about it hard enough.) (6040)
>
> Each morning we look forward to your program of encouragement and advice. In our moments of despair you bring us joy and happiness through your kind words. (7032)

Malone tells stories and gives advice. He is soothing, inspiring, and helpful. "May God bless you in your ministry of cheer" (7159) said one writer and the blessing of another was "May you continue with your good work and help others as you helped us." (7032)

Malone is a practical philosopher. His philosophy is one of good deeds, of friends and family, of the little things in life for which we should be thankful.

Malone does things. When Malone proposes an adventure, or a project or a game, naturally he participates and reports to his listeners on his own progress, just as they report on theirs via the mail.

So, on February 2, 1948, when Malone suggested the "Happiness Game" for the month of February, his listeners knew that it was Ted's own idea--not an adman's or the sponsor's--and that Ted, himself, would play.[9] The rules for the game were announced and throughout the month Ted continued to report on

how he was playing the game. On the very next day, Tuesday, February 3, he gave his first report:

Ted was going to be watching for the things he had been taking for granted; he was going to watch for the 'little things' that have never received their due recognition for the part they play in making for happiness; he was beginning on a program of good deeds and help for others; he was beginning, in short, his adventure in happiness and he invited his listeners, his friends, to do the same.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER IV

1. op. cit.
2. Robert K. Merton, Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive, New York, Harper and Bros., 1946.
3. "As one begins to list the assumptions by which we Americans live, one runs at once into a large measure of contradiction and resulting ambivalence...These contradictions among assumptions derive also from the fact that the things the mass of human beings basically crave as human beings as they live along together are often overlaid by, and not infrequently distorted by, the cumulating emphases that a culture may take on under circumstances of rapid change or under various conditions of class control....One (assumption) may be thrown into the scale as decisive at one moment, and the other contrasting assumption may be invoked in the same or a different situation a few moments later. It is precisely in this matter of trying to live by contrasting rules of the game that one of the most

characteristic aspects of our American culture is to be seen." Robert S. Lynd, Knowledge for What, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1948. For a listing and discussion of the contrasting values and assumptions by which Americans live, see Ibid., Chapter 3, "The Pattern of American Culture", especially pp.59-63.

4. Title of a popular song hit copyright, 1948 by Ben Bloom Music Corp., New York City.

> You can buy a bungalow,
> Or a seat to any show,
> You can buy a new chapeau,
> But you can't buy happiness....
>
> You can find a treasure, in some little pleasure,
> It's a story often told.
> You can buy the world with gold,
> Ev'rything on earth that's sold,
> But you can't buy happiness.

5. "The businessman still tends to point his life up whereas the workingman and many white collar workers are accepting themselves as stuck where they are....If one represents the future as it feels psychologically to the businessman as a prolonged line sloping upward, it is probably safe to depict the sense of the future of a growing mass of workingmen as a horizontal line with incidental little waves of recurrent good times such as 'getting out in the car this Sunday' and 'going

uptown to the movies tonight'. The predominant time-focus in the one case is relatively long, a matter of years; and in the other, short, from week to week or month to month. No research has been done on this cadence of life; but if, as seems likely, this differentiation is taking place, it presents a formidable disjunction in the American pattern of culture." Lynd, op. cit., pp. 92-3.

6. Ibid., footnote 3 in the present chapter; see also the same author Middletown in Transition, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., Chapter III, "The Middletown Spirit."

7. Merton, op. cit., p. 160

8. From an untitled study cited in Training Guide on the Techniques of Qualitative Interviews, New York, Bureau of Applied Social Research, (mimeo'd), 1948.

9. Compare Merton's analysis of the public's imagery of Kate Smith (sincerity, doer of good, etc.) in terms of the social and cultural context. op. cit., Chapters IV and VI.

CHAPTER V

THE MAIL: WHO LISTENS, WHO WRITES AND WHY

We're almost ready to have a look at the mail. We shall be able to ask ourselves who writes, what the letters say about the program and about Malone, whether the writers share Malone's philosophy, what Malone means in the life of his radio listeners and what function writing to Malone serves for the writer. In the following chapters we shall be prepared to examine the way in which our writers report on their adventures in happiness: "The Happiness Game".

But, let us digress for a moment before we look at the mail, to anticipate whatever we can about the structure of the Malone audience and who would be likely to write. The first and most important factor governing a radio audience is the time of day of the broadcast. Malone is on the air at different hours in different parts of the country, but in all cases, during the daylight hours. That means that we can expect the audience to be predominantly female, largely housewives and mothers.

Malone's very intimate, personalized style is surely an important determinant of the make-up of his listening audience.

Malone really comes to visit--"it's just like you're in my living room"--and perhaps, many housewives especially in the big city are not prepared to receive strangers in their living rooms. But once accepted, Malone really becomes a friend, somebody you know, somebody to play games with.

> Dear Ted. May I call you Ted? I feel like I know you. Your program each morning means so much to me... (7036)
>
> You're truly a real friend... (7062)
>
> For years I've listened to your program off and on, whenever I could get it, and you've always been about the most welcome person in my home via radio. I've meant to write you a million times but never did, so I figure now will be a very good time, at least to thank you for so many hours of smiles, laughs, yes even the silly tears some of your poems bring, not to mention what some of them do to my spine... (7089)
>
> Most of all I always remember you as a companion for my sister who died 9 years ago....She lived in the outskirts and was alone so whenever I went out around noon she would say don't touch the radio it is ready for Ted Malone so I feel that way too. (6026)

These letters are not unusual ones. Listening to the program, one can readily understand how Malone achieves rapport with his listeners. He communicates sincerity, partly--at least--because he is sincere.

An interesting consideration, suggested by Dr. Herzog[1], which seems especially relevant for our approach to the Happiness Game is that listeners like to play games of

introspection and appreciate somebody to ask them to introspect and show them how. Introspection, in a sense, may be viewed as one of the human cravings--for self understanding--whether it takes the narrow form of "Am I happy" and "How do I measure up" or whether it is a consideration of direction or purposefulness. Malone involves his listeners and joins them in following the rules.

Malone continually has his listeners do things. They participate. They are forever embarking on something new, or talking about people who have done things--especially about people who have overcome handicaps or worked hard for others. It is true that no major tasks are suggested, and that the doing is in the area of self-repair or good deeds. Nevertheless, a direct request to do anything at all--addressed to a listener--may be much less readily accepted by many than the vicarious 'doing' and indirect 'learning' that accompanies soap opera listening.[2]

For all these reasons, it is our suspicion that although Malone's audience may not be large, it is very faithful. And writing to Malone becomes, in this way, an important part of the relationship that is renewed and strengthened day after day. Ted feels himself that the letter writers--especially those who send him their poetry--are representatives of all Americans. "In fact", Malone asserts, "I can tell you how the love life of Americans is going at any given time without any need of surveys, analyses or Kinsey reports." Malone contends that he could write the nation's headlines--without seeing a newspaper--by reading the mail that is sent to him.[3]

While we are not prepared to go as far as Malone, it is our

genuine feeling although we can prove it no further, that Malone letter writers are probably representative of his audience. There is a minimum of what Wyant and Herzog call "exhibitionism"[4] in these letters and a maximum of feeling of genuine communication. There is sincerity and easiness in this relationship.

But that is all the proof we have about who listens and who is likely to listen. We're much more certain of who actually does write and of what the letters say. So, let us turn next to the letters.

Who writes: Of 260 letters in the Happiness sample, 257 were written by women. There was one letter definitely traced to a man and two were 'indeterminate'. The distribution of the marital status of the writers may be seen from the following chart:

	No. of cases
single	10
married, no child	4
married, child indeterminate	62
married, with children	138
widow, separated, divorce	5
wid., sep., div. with children	8
	227
(marital status indeterminate:	33)

A writer was coded "married, children indeterminate", if she signed herself "Mrs." And if the letter made no mention of

children. Letters mentioning children were coded as "married, with children" and only letters specifically stating that the writer was married but had no children were coded "married, no children". It will be noted that the overwhelming majority of the letter writers are parents, and it is more than highly probable that most of the "married, children indeterminate" have children but simply did not mention them.

The age of the letter writer was not often given explicitly, but the age of children or number of years married were often reported. We therefore set up two categories for age--the first for explicit mentions (only 32 letters could be coded this way, of which 14 (44%) were from women over 60, proving of course that women over 60 are readier than younger women to volunteer their age) and the second, for a rough guess by the coder based upon any relevant information given in the letter. The age distribution based on all of the ages we could guess plus the ages explicitly stated is as follows:

	No. of cases
pre-adolescent	3
16-19	4
20-39	96
40-59	78
over 60	22
	203

Again, the pattern is clear: 96 of the 203 (47%) women were between 20 and 39, and since we learned this inductively--in most cases--from the fact that they had young children or were

recently married, the picture of the housewife-mother emerges more clearly. Quite a large number of writers were between the ages of 40 and 59 (38%); approximately 11% were over 60; and 3% were under 16.

Of the 260 letter writers only 89 could be positively identified by their occupational status, and the figures themselves are misleading because a writer who is NOT a housewife is much more likely to say so than one who is. The distribution was as follows (based only on explicit mentions, no guessing):

	No. of cases
gainfully employed	12
retired, invalid	12
housewife	61
student	4
(indeterminate:	171

The geographical origin of the letters is ascertained quite simply by the return address or the postmark on the letter. The regional distribution will be less meaningful than it might be because we have no statistics on the number of stations that carry Malone in each region nor have we his "rating" by areas. It will perhaps be of interest, nevertheless, to list the number of letters from each region:

	No. of letters
East North Central	46
Middle Atlantic	44
Pacific	42
West North Central	40
South Atlantic	24
West South Central	24
New England	16
East South Central	10
Mountain	7
	253

(indeterminate: 7)

It will be noted that East North Central (0, IND, ILL, MICH, WIS), Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA), Pacific (WASH, OREG, CAL), West North Central (MINN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NEBR, KANS) are represented by almost equal number of letters. It is true that these areas contain the largest concentrations of population and the largest cities, but the letters themselves do not come largely from cities, as can be seen from the following table:

Population[5]	No. of letters	% of total letters
Rural (less than 2500)	74	29
2500 - 10,000	43	17

10,000 - 25,000	39	15
25,000 - 100,000	31	12
100,000 - 500,000	40	16
500,000 - million	14	5
over million	15	6

(indeterminate: 4)

Now, of the 156 letters from places with less than 25,000 population, 17 are from places which are within metropolitan areas of which only 5 of the 74 letters from places with under 2500 population are from metropolitan areas. It is evident that comparatively the number of Malone letter writers from large cities is extremely small. It may be interesting to consider here a combination of two factors: the first is the large volume of mail from rural and semi-rural area; the second is the large volume of mail from what we call, roughly, the Midwest (a combination in our terms of East and West North Central). It is quite interesting to see that the locale of Malone's greatest impact is rural and Midwest--precisely where the American pattern of individualism, homesteading, and getting-ahead--developed. Do these figures, perhaps, add weight to our hypothesis that the other side of American see-saw of values is now the side that's up?

Another speculation which is difficult to resist--though as impossible to prove with our data--is that Malone's style is too

intimate for New England. New Englanders do not hasten to accept strangers into their homes; nor would they be attracted by the syrupy pattern of Malone's program.

The large volume of rural mail, too, may lend some weight to theory that fan mail writers--and perhaps listeners to Malone have few forms of self-expression open to them.[6] This evidence cannot be so readily accepted, however, since rural letters have essentially the same characteristics as have letters from the big city.[7]

An examination of the form and style of the letters themselves will give us some additional clues to the nature of the people who write and will serve as an introduction to the content of the letters.

What the letters are like: form and style.

Because of the Happiness Game, it must constantly be remembered, this sample of Malone mail is atypical. The letters are longer, for one thing. While typical Malone mail includes a large number of relatively unembellished requests for the script of a particular broadcast, this sample contains only 20 requests for scripts, and each request is part of a longer letter. The letters range from under 50 words to well over 1000, but the concentration is between 100 and 300 words:

	No. of letters
under 50 words	28
50 - 100	75
101 - 300	107
301 - 500	25

501 - 1000	17
over 1000	8
	260

Almost 65% of the letters were 100 words or over, so it can be seen that writers went to considerable detail. This figure should be compared with another, probably more typical, Malone mail sample in which letters over 100 words constitute about 40% of the sample.[8]

207 of the letters were written in ink; 22 in pencil and 31 were typewritten. The largest number of letters (173) were written on what we classified as "unmarked stationery, or plain white paper"; 25 were on monogrammed or personal stationery; 5 were on the stationery of business or organizations; 28 were written on scrap, or torn paper; 17 were postcards and 11 were written on the backs of calendars. If we exclude the 17 postcards and the 11 calendars from consideration, it will be apparent that the number of personal and business stationery letters just about equals the number of letters on scrap or torn paper, leaving the largest group of 173 unmarked stationery or letter paper exactly in the middle.

In several categories, an attempt was made to code the grammatical and literary style of the letter. One category divided the letters by grammatical correctness and spelling:

99 grammatical as a whole
39 ungrammatical as a whole

122 half and half

a second category considered lucidity

181 in which the point was easily seen
12 in which the point was obscure or incoherent
67 mixed

and a third category measured literacy

36 were exceptionally well written
29 were illiterate
195 were standard or average literacy

It will be noted that only 39 letters were considered completely ungrammatical, only 12 were judged incoherent and only 29 were coded illiterate.[9] These numbers are much smaller than the numbers one would anticipate based on the hypothesis that writers of letters to daytime radio programs are to a very large degree illiterate, unschooled and unbalanced. While our hope to get at the formal education of the letter writers went unfulfilled because of the few explicit statements in the letter, the fact that 99 (38%) of the letters were grammatical as a whole and 36 were considered exceptionally well written plus the fact that the largest number of letters were judged more or less grammatical, lucid and of standard or average literacy seems to point to the higher educational levels and accompanying more-or-less middle class status. To strengthen

this hypothesis, we can indicate that a large proportion of those letters on "unmarked stationery, or plain white paper" was paper with designs or color; that 10% of the letters were on monogrammed or initialed stationery; that 10% of the letters were typewritten. In addition, the wives of several teachers wrote and others mentioned that their children were at college. Our data is far from conclusive, of course, but the presence of a definite tendency towards a middle or lower middle class level--somewhat rural--seems manifest.

Now that we know fairly well, at least, who it is that writes, what the letters look like and where they come from, it will be interesting--before finally turning to an examination of the content--to look at the style and structure of the letters. Style and structure will give us our first clues to the writer's feeling for Malone and the program.

We differentiated first, between three kinds of salutations. Letters that began "Dear Sir", or "Dear Mr. Malone" were coded "formal"; "Dear Ted" were coded chummy; and "Dear Ted Malone" was coded informal. That this differentiation was meaningful was corroborated in several of the letters--showing that at least some of the writers pondered about the salutation. For example:

> Dear Ted (Hm! I appreciate now your 'hello there': it detours too much informality or formality...just 'Ted' expresses our friendliness, but seems too daring; adding Malone, formal)... (7121)

Dear Mr. Ted Malone,

I'd love to call you "ted" but it might be too personal.... (7038)

Letters that began with Dear Sir or Dear Mr. Malone were more likely to conclude with Yours Truly or Sincerely yours than were the other two groups. The distribution of salutations was as follows:

	No. of letters
formal	77
chummy	60
informal	90
no salutation	33
	260

An attempt to analyze the letters in terms of their tone--highly emotional, warm and friendly, coy and detached--showed very clearly that informality and friendliness definitely characterized the relationship between writer and Malone:

	No. of letters[10]
highly emotional	9
warm and friendly	199
coy	1
detached	14
(indeterminate: 7)	

Overwhelmingly, the style of the letters, indicated a feeling of warmth and friendliness for Malone and an appreciation for Malone and for the program. Of the total number of letters classifiable according to use of several kinds of terminology--religious, critical, appreciating, emotional and moral--the largest single number of letters fell into the 'appreciating' classification. Although several kinds of appreciation were coded here, a majority represented pats on the back for Malone and for the program.

We are now on the borderline of the fundamental section of this general analysis--the content section. It is here that we shall be able to inquire into the nature of this friendly relationship that we have discovered and to ask why--why listen, why write, why tell Malone.

I. What Is the Function of the Program According to Our Writers: Why Listen?

We have speculated on this point at some length already (Chap. IV): the program is soothing, it's philosophy fits well into what seems to be a currently dominant American culture pattern, it affords the writer companionship and warmth. The salutations--the chummy ones and the informal ones--seem to show this, but the most eloquent testimony is in the letters themselves.

When we coded the answer to "What does the writer say she gets out of program", "pleasure, enjoyment, happiness" ranked highest, "inspiration and culture" ranked next, and "advice for self" and "recognition of the addressee as a force for good" followed close behind. Other explicit motives for listening

given by letter writers were "friendship", "contact with the radio star" and "a vicarious sharing of the star's activities". These analytical code categories are based only on explicit statements about the program by the writer. They indicate clearly what the writer says she gets from listening, and give us some clues about the function of the program.

When a writer says that she gets entertainment or enjoyment or happiness from listening, it is our job to ask why. Many answers are indicated by the letters themselves:

> You can never guess how much your programs mean to me. Being a stay-at-home, the radio entertains me every minute of every day as I work along in my little home. Most of the people I know are just as dull as I am, and I'm feeling quite spoiled in having new friends to talk to me and teach me many new and wonderful things--friends like you and Galen Drake, Kate Smith, Betty Crocker and all those others I listen to daily. I look forward to your visits with me every day and have never been lonely or bored one single moment. (7022)
>
> I have been ill for the last three months and what a joy to hear you read those lovely poems as no one else can. (7036)
>
> Chief among my joys for many years has been the learning of stories and poetry on your programs. (6024)
>
> Before I close may I express my sincere appreciation of your restful program in this day of "harsh" music and talk of war. It is an oasis in the desert of singing commercials and soap operas on the radio. (6019: a man)

While the writers call what they feel "entertainment", "joy", "pleasure", etc. there is the recurrent emphasis on friendship with Malone and on the soothing "oasis" nature of the program. Malone is a friend who inspires:

> I do so enjoy your program, it is so inspiring to me--am sure it is to many other also... (7024)
>
> P.S. I must tell you at this time how much I enjoy your wonderful program. It has always been an inspiration to me...The world is truly richer because you have lived in it and may God continue to bless and prosper you in all you do. (6036)
>
> ...I was 'down in the dumps' and I turned on the radio and immediately heard your cheery 'hello there' and I sat and listened...and the blues were gone. (7185)

But it isn't only for a pick-up or for other cheer that listeners tune in. Malone is credited for advice; for giving life some direction:

> We never looked forward to 'most happiest days' until you suggested same. (6062)
>
> It gives me so much to look forward to in life... (7051)
>
> Each morning we look forward to your program of encouragement and advice. In our moments of despair you bring us joy and happiness through your kind words. (7032)
>
> Your broadcasts are so good and seem to give us such an uplift, in our every day life. My husband has just been retired and we have bought a little house in the country, and it has been especially hard for me to take

> as I have always been so active. But after one of your broadcasts, this past month, the thought came to me to make the best possible use of life, a load just seemed to slip off my shoulders.... (6023)

That was the writer's happiest day, she said, and among the other reports of happiest days we shall discover Malone's advice or his suggestion to look for happiness (for happiness is all about) adapted very successfully. Often letters attribute the adoption of new resolutions or a change in habits to Malone.

Recognition of Malone as a force for good is not found only in letters describing the help or advice or inspiration he gave to the writer. More often, recognition of Malone's service is expressed in terms of the good he does for others, for the world.

> ...I want to say thank you for your friendly chats and the lovely poems you read that give courage and inspiration to many... (6030)
>
> May God bless you in your ministry of cheer... (7159)
>
> May I say in closing I enjoy your radio program so very much and know you must be a wonderful person. I call your program the "cheer program" because you do bring so much cheer to shut ins and lonely people... (7064)

But in addition to Malone as entertainment, and Malone as inspiration and Malone as counselor and Malone as a force for good, there are two other important roles in which he serves. The first, perhaps the anticipated one, is vicarious adventure;

> ...you took me right from my work in the kitchen to join your party in Florida. Say, you didn't enjoy the

> luscious orange juice, grapefruit, pretty girls, warm sunshine and scenery which must resemble Canaan Land more than I did. The trip to Florida and back was short but will never be forgotten. I have had eye surgery and unable to read for months you can guess what that trip meant to me. (7102)

And second, perhaps unanticipated, is Malone's role as an emotional link with a dear one:

> Most of all I always remember you as a companion for my sister who died 9 years ago 37. (6026)
>
> My mother listens to you in Boston each day and your programs give us a pleasant illusion of being together while you are on the air. (7156)

II. What Is the Function of Letter Writing: Why Write?

There can be no doubt that the cathartic function involved in letter writing is the primary reason for radio fan mail. People who do not have adequate outlets for expression are certainly more likely to turn to this kind of opportunity for being heard. When it is made clear that letters received are carefully read, volumes of mail and more elaborate letters are probably to be expected.

But it will remain for the larger study of radio fan mail to present a conclusive functional analysis of letter-writing to radio programs. Here, we will stay with our sample, and ask: if you are going to write...

III: Why Write to Ted Malone?

Catharsis alone cannot explain the selection of one addressee rather than another, although Malone's sincerely

persistent requests for letters must surely be an important factor.

But having analyzed the gratifications that the program provides for the listener and the "friendship" that so many of the letters report, it is not difficult to answer the question "Why write Malone?"

The most interesting answer to this question seems to be simply that Ted asked us to write. First, Ted is a friend who deserves an answer:

> Well, to get back to the reason for writing you this letter: On Feb. 1st you asked your radio audience to jot down all the experiences of...this month... (7014)
>
> ...I was going to send in my calendar sheet to show my happiest day in February. But I didn't until almost five days of March slinked by, looking at me guiltily as if to say--there she goes again putting things off. (6020)
>
> Since I owe you so very much for all the many hours of pleasure you have given me through the years with your broadcasts, I feel that I must answer your appeal for letters from your listeners... (7032)

Secondly, Ted is a friend who is interested in us, in our families and in how we're getting on. It isn't just that he asked--or that we 'owe' him a letter--we're going to write to tell Ted 'what's doing'. That this is perhaps the most typical reaction to Malone's request for mail will be evident in the next chapters where the subject matter of the letters is examined. For example:

> My letter is much too long I'm sure, but knowing you

> have a little daughter of your own, just thought you might enjoy sharing the experience with me... (6036)

Thirdly, there seems to be the feeling that if Ted asked us to do something, it must be for our own good; like a prescription:

> I forgot what we were to write in for but I know it was to make someone happy and in so doing we are happier ourselves. (7171)

Another reason for writing Malone stands revealed in a small pilot study of another batch of Malone mail referred to above (p. 28). Here it was clear that Malone was not only felt to show a genuine interest in his friends, the friends with whom he visits daily, but was felt to represent a source of aid as well. Some specifically requested aid; others just presented their problems, perhaps, expecting Malone to take the initiative in helping. But this group is quite small. Contrary to what might be popularly expected, the very largest majority of Malone fan mail writers by no means consider themselves unhappy. There is no proof, here, for the thesis that fan mail writers to daytime programs write about their troubles.

As we will see from the present study, there is ample evidence that Malone has really achieved a personalized relationship with many of his listeners. They are anxious to tell him everything--they are convinced that he really wants to know. They are eager to meet Malone half-way and are not content with a one-sided relationship via their kitchen or living-room loudspeakers. They crave to respond, to tell Ted how they're getting along. This is not mere catharsis--it is a definite

desire to make a specific report; not just to anybody, but to Ted Malone. Perhaps the success of this kind of radio rapport has implications for the problems of education via radio. But that is not our subject.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER V

1. In a personal interview with Dr. Herzog.
2. "The stories are liked because they 'explain things' to the inarticulate listener. Furthermore they teach the listener appropriate patterns of behavior." Herzog, op. cit., pp. 25-32.
3. From a feature article on Malone, "Every Man Would a Poet Gladly Be", Nation's Business, February 1949.
4. Rowena Wyant and Herta Herzog, "Voting Via the Senate Mailbag, Part II", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 4, Winter 1941.
5. Source: Rand McNally marketing map.
6. Suggested by Cantril and Allport, op. cit.
7. For a discussion of this see Appendix A: Some Suggested Problems for Further Research.
8. Finding in a small, pilot study (unpublished) by the present writer.
9. The tendency of a coder to choose the in-between category is well-known and was guarded against, although no doubt errors remain nonetheless. Unfortunately, no systematic reliability check was made, although in several informal reliability 'check-ups', agreement between the writer, who coded this entire sample himself, and another of the coders was high.
10. Only letters with 50 words or more were coded in this category.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAIL: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

The most sweeping statement that can be made is that these letters are personal--they are about the writer, or about her family. Classifying each letter by its main subject matter, the 260 letters can be divided as follows:

Total Content Re	No. of letters
writer	104
writer's family	88
writer's friends	12
Malone	3
writer's social situation	3
wider social context	1
other people	1
sponsor	1
program	1
other	5
mixed	8
intermediate	33
	260

We counted the kinds of people that are mentioned in the letters and the distribution looks like this:

People Mentioned	No. of letters
members of family	204
friends	61
"people", in general	19

public figures 5

(no mention of any of above: 25 letters)

It is evident that the perspective of the letters is largely a narrow one--self, family and some friends. Compared to the mail received by a news commentator, for example, the subject matter is wholly personalized. There is extremely little reason to think that the writers of these letters participate actively--or think very often--about politics or social issues or even local politics or issues. Organizational affiliations mentioned give virtually no indication of any "civic mindedness"--and there is every reason to think that if the writer did belong to such organizations and participated, the letters would say so. Only 54 of the letters mentioned organizations at all, and of these, 11 were civic or fraternal, 2 were economic (union, farm association, etc.) and 40 were church organizations. In an attempt to classify terminology, too, 52 letters could be clearly classified as containing religious terminology, a number which is second only to 'appreciating' terminology (with 94 so classifiable).

The church--church-going and affiliation--seems to be quite important in many of the families from which letters were received. It is clear, of course, that the church is a strong factor in making for unity and preservation of family and the idea of family. Only a few of the letters mention church in any specifically religious sense, while most mention church in a social context, in terms of the whole family going to church, of recognition achieved in the church group, etc. The many mentions of church affiliation, though, hardly dispel our feeling that

the writer's perspective is very narrow.

A very clear indication that the scope of the writers' concern does not extend to general problems can be seen from the fact that there were only 2 letters of the 260 which could be coded either under the category "Writer's conception of the world and/or American situation" or under "Social Problems Mentioned". We hoped to find comments on the writer's feelings about the future--whether she was worried or optimistic, whether she was concerned with any of the crises anywhere in the world. But our hopes were unfounded.

The letters that did comment on problems of a social nature, five discussed the international situation (3 in general; 1 about Russia; and one about a third World War), six discussed the domestic scene (2 depression and unemployment; 2 inflation; 1 housing; 1 domestic political problems), and six fell into "other" categories.

Even personal problems, however, were not very prevalent in these letters. Of course, it is evident that this sample of mail for the Happiness Game is much less likely to contain problems than might a more typical sample of Malone mail. It should be clear, too, that satisfactions will far outweigh problems in this sample, since almost all of the letters contain descriptions of which day was happiest and why, and many comments on what, in general, is satisfying and what, in general, makes for happiness. Nonetheless, it is our impression that satisfactions will outweigh problems even in a typical Malone sample. Ostensibly, at least, this hypothesis contradicts the prevalent one that fan mail represents an endless number of

case histories of physical and psychological ills and a perpetual request for aid or advice.

The personal problems dealt with concerned either the writer or her family and can be divided as follows:

Nature of problems	No. of letters[2]
illness[3]	35
death (family member, friend)	16
economic	13
'emotional'	10
husband-wife	5
monotony	2
family, other than marital	1
moral/religious	1
other	4

Illness: ...for you see my daughter is a cerebral palsy child and her radio programs are so much to look forward to. (7165)

Death: My love story ended a year ago the week before Christmas. That was the day my beloved husband and the children's father was laid to rest... (7153)

Economic: I am a widow with four boys to keep in school. I do laundry work in my home for a living. (7029)

Next, compare these problem areas with the areas of satisfactions reported in the letters:

Nature of satisfaction[4]	No. of letters[5]
family, other than marital	116
husband-wife	35
friends	34
moral/religious (incl. "good deeds")	29
'emotional'	26
health	20
nature (weather, scenic beauty, etc.)	8
economic	5
others	44

And now compare the incidence of reported satisfactions with reported problems in the six areas common to both:

PERCENT OF PROBLEMS AND SATISFACTIONS REPORTED IN SIX AREAS[6]

	% total problems reported	% total satisfactions reported
Economic	15	2
Health	40	6
Family (other than marital)	1	37
Husband-wife	6	11
Moral-religious	1	9
'Emotional'	12	8

The most striking thing about this table is what it teaches

us about the areas in which people report satisfactions and the areas in which they report problems. The problems reported are largely external (economic, illness) to the individual, while on the other hand, almost no external satisfactions are reported in these areas. Examples of such satisfactions would be job satisfactions, money satisfactions, physical and bodily satisfactions. Contrariwise satisfactions are reported in the areas of family life and of good deeds i.e. in the realm of inter-personal relations--but no problems are reported in these areas.

Now, there is no reason to blind ourselves, in scholarly neutrality, to the implications of the data. These data do not indicate that there are no problems in the family life of our writers; they indicate that these people--and the culture--do not look with favor on the articulation of such problems. The data do not indicate that there are no economic or health satisfactions; they indicate first, that external satisfactions--where present--are taken for granted (Ted Malone fights against this) and secondly, that people are more apt to report problems which can be attributed to forces outside themselves--the economy, sickness--than problems which are attributable to situations in which their own egos are involved.

People readily report satisfactions derived from a prevalent or continuing situation--e.g. "when a mother can see the character of her child molded in the right direction" (6053)--but they do not do the same for problems. Problems are reported more often in terms of 'something specific happened' rather than in terms of recognition of a problem inherent in a

continuing situation.

It will be evident later in our examination of the reasons given for happiest days that satisfactions may also be connected with 'something that happened'--a gift, or a birthday party, etc. This will seem especially so because people were asked for a 'reason' for their happiest day. An entire group of reported satisfactions will be seen to be characterized by what we have called 'satisfaction situations' and another group will be seen to emerge largely from everyday, fully-expected--though temporarily discrete--experiences.

Many of the satisfactions reported emphasize the 'little things'--the things that Malone himself holds up for emulation, the things that the church, for one, would applaud very loudly. Recognition of the little things represents Malone's crusade against taking things for granted:

> ...and I thought as we drove along--it's good to be alive on a day like this with everyone on a congenial mood. We have our homes and plenty to eat... (6020)
>
> Family 'get-togethers' are so wonderful always, but this one was more so--yes a hundred times more so... (6038)
>
> ...There is nothing unusual about our family or way of life but we have so much love, and as you can tell from my letter, it's just little things that keep me happy, not material things. (7077)
>
> Friends to lend a word of encouragement and smiles as they come and are like bright rays of sunshine... (7054)
>
> We have enough to keep our stomachs full, our minds busy and most important smiles and laughter all around. Isn't

that more important than each days particular happiness...(7054?)

There seems evident here an effect of communication. Not in the sense that these people are parroting Malone. There is no need to maintain that Malone has reached and changed attitudes and opinions of people who held views in opposition to his. Rather, it would seem accurate to maintain that Malone has provided guidance for many people, he has helped them seek out 'the little things', he has equipped them with introspection--an instrument for 'finding' happiness in the little things that are already all about, and not in things that 'happen' or in the things one 'does'. He has succeeded in the communication of reinforcement for a pattern of ideas to which his radio friends were already conditioned and receptive.[7]

Another main tenet in Malone's philosophy is the Good Deed. In our list of satisfactions, the satisfaction derived from doing good deeds ranks fourth and represents only about 10% of the number of satisfactions mentioned. But we are able to gauge the esteem in which 'doing good unto others' is held, in a category which we call "Values". A value was coded only if it was explicitly stated as such. Thus, for example, "It is a wonderful thing to have friends" is a value, but "My friends please me" was coded as a satisfaction. Values are distributed as follows:

moral-religious	23
family, children	22
love and affection	10

cultural	7
friendship	6
happiness	5
success	1
"American way of life"	4
other	11

"Moral-religious" was made up mostly of good-deeds people. For example, the lady who said "'Others' is a marvelous word. I believe it's part of my creed" (7159) was coded as having stated a moral or religious value. Family and children almost equaled the moral-religious category in number and it is generally to be expected that both of these categories would rank highest on any kind of questionnaire or poll which attempted to get at the values of these people. It should be constantly remembered that here we are working with given, rather than asked-for material.

It is not valid to conclude therefore that those values which got only few mentions are held in lower esteem. It is valid only to conclude here--and in most parts of this paper--that what is not frequently mentioned does not fall either within the daily articulated perspective of the letter-writer or within the letter writer's conception of what she should write. Thus, there should be relatively little question that a great number of the writers would agree on "what a wonderful thing it is to live in a country where we can still have 'birthday parties'--where our little children need never go hungry or sick" (7146). And just as most would probably agree on this value ("American way of life") so would they agree that "happiness" is a cardinal value, as well. While the omission of

explicit mention of these two values, perhaps, is not significant since it is largely a matter of non-verbalization and assumption on the part of the writer, the omission or relatively few mentions of other values is of more interest. "Success" for example got only one mention. This is especially significant for our hypothesis that success is being debunked here. One lady expresses the point:

> There is hope for people who are well-meaning--even if it takes a long while to manifest itself. Life is not solely comprised of successful people who are successful because they walk down others underfoot in contempt in their march of triumph... (7100)

And another set of values which we would also expect to find missing on the basis of our earlier analysis are what we called "social values" and "political values". We looked for mention of democracy as a value or perhaps a discussion of the idea of participation in the community, but nowhere in this sample of mail did we find any such mentions.

All of the information we have presented points clearly to the frame of reference of the very largest majority of the writers. It is a narrow one. It focuses on the home--on the immediate family and on friends; on personal or family problems and satisfactions. And that is what the letters are about, too. As we stated, there are different deductions that may be made when omissions of particular categories are noted. Thus, omission of political and economic organizations, in general, would seem to indicate that these people do not belong, or if they belong, do not participate. On the other hand, omission of

certain values--such as the 'American way of life'--may be attributed to the fact that these values are assumed and unverbalized as are so many cultural values. And yet, the omission of a value such as 'success' seems to have particular significance.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER VI

[There was no footnote 1]

2. 50 words or more.

3. While the largest number, by far, deal with illness, more than half of these are mentioned in connection with the satisfaction of "feeling somewhat better" and are also coded--in these cases--under 'health' in the satisfaction category.

4. Satisfactions category included satisfactions which were given as reasons for a 'happiest day' as well.

5. 50 words or more.

6. Percentages do not equal 100 since they are percentages of <u>total</u> problems and <u>total</u> satisfactions.

7. Compare the discussion of the "Reinforcement Effect" of political propaganda in P.F. Lazarsfeld, <u>The People's Choice</u>, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948 (second ed.), Chapter IX.

CHAPTER VII

THE HAPPINESS QUADRANTS

And now, finally, we are prepared to peer into the cauldron of the Happiness Game and examine the ingredients that make up the brew called happiness by our letter writers. It will be recalled that Ted Malone asked his listeners to keep a careful record of all the happy moments they experienced during the month of February, 1948, and then to write to tell him which was the very happiest day and why.

We shall focus on three things as we examine the happiness game. First on the reasons these letter writers give in accounting for their happiest moment--that is, we shall be able to list the things or situations which cause, or are associated with, happiness. Second, and not less important, we shall examine these happiness-giving factors and situations in terms of their psychological meaning for the individual. Third, we shall be watching to see whether the patterns of happiness reported here fit into hypotheses that have been advanced for a psychological description of our society and to what extent we may validly generalize from our sample to the society.

But--if we can hold our breath for another moment--let's look at the distribution of happiest days by dates, before we go on to the distribution by reasons.

The most popular of all the dates in February, according to our sample, is February 14th, St. Valentine's Day. Twenty letters picked the 14th; 14 letters the 28th; 13 letters the

29th, etc. Now, in a form letter that Malone sent out to thank listeners for their letters, there also appears a distribution of happiest days by dates. There is definite reason to presume that Malone's staff is very thorough about such things--and we are very certain, at the very least, that each letter is opened. Methodologically, then, this is of interest: For if our sample of 260 letters is truly representative of the close-to-2000 letters of the Happiness Game, the rank correlation of the two distributions should be high and positive.

Using Spearman's rank correlation formula, we find the correlation between the 224 letters in our sample giving specific dates and Malone's to be ł.8. Now this result does not prove that our sample, on all factors, correlates ł.8 with the total number of Happiness Game letters, but it is quite reassuring to put the sample to a test and to find fairly good agreement.

And now, on to the Happiness Reasons - -

REASONS FOR HAPPIEST DAY

	No. of letters	% of letters[1]
1. Events for self (birthdays, etc.)	30	14
2. Letters, calls, visits, gifts	27	13
3. Coming closer to a goal	26	12
4. Events for family	25	12
5. Health (recovery, improvement)	22	10
6. Identification with happiness		

of children	21	10
7. Good deeds	15	7
8. Family reunion, reorganization	10	5
9. Satisfaction with achievements of others	9	4
10. Self-realization	7	3
11. Other specific reasons	21	10

"I was happy because..."

213 of the 260 letters included a particular or major reason to account for the writer's happiest day. The largest number (30 letters) fell into the category we called "Events for Self" including birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine remembrances, etc. The fourth category (25 letters) was "Events for Family in which writer participated" such as birthdays of husband, children and other relatives, weddings and anniversaries of children and relatives, etc. 26% of the 213 letters fell into these two categories.

In the second largest category (27 letters) we grouped together telephone calls, visits, letters, presents and new acquisitions the receipt of which was reported not as means to but as ends of a happiest day i.e. the content of the phone call or the letter was not considered primary, but rather the receipt of the call or letter itself, not the nature of the visit of so-and-so, but the fact that so-and-so visited was the emphasis; not the utility or meaning of the gift, but the fact that it was

received.

The category we called "Coming Closer to a Goal" (25 letters) came next, and was distributed as follows; 8 letters where mothers expressed satisfaction at fulfilling maternal goals, including 6 who counted the birth of a child as their happiest day; 6 letters where the writer was honored as the result of an achievement or a contribution of his talent; 4 letters where the writer reported personal success in a mission or attainment of a goal set for himself; 2 letters where a financial debt was repaid by hard or steady work and devotion.

Regaining health, beginning on the road to recovery in an illness was given by 22 writers as the reasons for their happiest day. In 50% of the cases, the writer wrote about her own health; 8 letters were about children's health; 3 about husband's health.

"Identification with Happiness and Achievements of Children" (21 letters) told of the writer's happiness at hearing a report of her child's excellent progress at school; of other

achievements of children; of progress in child's development, etc.

"Good Deeds"--gifts, charity, cheer, favors, etc.--follows, with 15 letters and "Family Reunion or Reorganization"--including sons' return from overseas, reconciliation with husband, relatives' get-together after many years of separation, etc.--has 10 letters. "Satisfaction with achievements or accomplishments of others" has 9 letters and "Self-Realization"--finding oneself, adjusting to new environment--has 7 letters.

All other reasons are lumped together in the "Others" category, but it is interesting that seven of these 21 letters offer reasons for happiness that have something to do with Malone (5 concern one broadcast or another; 2 saw Malone in person). Of the remaining 14 letters, 4 have some connection with church-going.

The 213 letters which gave either one reason for a happiest day or several reasons of which one was emphasized as dominant are included in the 11 categories summarized above.

In addition, 18 letters fall into a "perfect day" category where the writer explains that a particular day was particularly pleasant because many things--especially "little things"--took place.

While the "perfect day" writers could not make up their mind about the happiest thing that happened on their happiest day, eleven more writers could not decide on one happiest day in February because "several days" or "many days" or "all days in February" were happy. These writers, too, emphasize the

importance of "little things". One letter ignored February entirely saying that she had a "happy life".

Of these 29 letters ("perfect day" and "many days"), 10 mentioned enjoying the company of husband or children; 9 mentioned friends; 9 mentioned 'nature' in one way or another; 8 mentioned church; 2 mentioned social events; one mentioned visits, another good deeds and six mentioned "other" components of a perfect day.

In this way, we have accounted for the 242 letters that

played the happiness game more or less according to the rules. Other than these, 9 letters mentioned a date without giving a reason ("Sunday between the hours of 10:45 AM until 12:30 PM" (7051); 5 letters were obscure or incoherent to the coder; and 3 letters said that the writer could on no account play the game, because she had not had a happy moment in February.

And thus, we have accounted for all of the letters:

	No. of letters
Specific reasons for happiest day	213
"Perfect day"	18
"many days", "all days"	11
"happy life"	1
no reason mentioned	9
obscure or incoherent reason	5
no happy day	3
	260

The first thing that is evident from the entire distribution is the concentration of interest around self and family. "Good deeds" and "Satisfaction with happiness or achievements of others" are the only two categories oriented predominantly toward "others". No more than 27 (approx.) of all of the happiest days reported may be said to have reported happiness resulting from a predominant interest in "others". While we are aware that the concept of happiness--no matter what

the definition--is a personalized concept, we should be aware, too, of the range of possibilities that are available, in our culture, from which personal happiness may be derived. Even our own data contain several very definite deviant cases. The "good deed" people are probably the best known. "To me the greatest happiness comes in doing things for others" (6065) said one lady. Of course, when an individual reports that her happiest day was the day she gave postage stamps to "a boy who was born out of wedlock" (6022) or the day she dug parsnips in the garden for a sick friend (7047) or the day she sent a gift package to a girl in Italy (7196), we do not exclude the personal satisfaction and increased self-esteem that result; but we are reminded of the possibility of personal happiness in another sense. Nor are we especially puzzled when an individual reports that her happiest day in a whole month was when homeless newly-weds who appeared on a radio program called "Bride and Groom",

> Had as a surprise a furnished modern trailer home...I was so HAPPY! I started to cry. By the time... (the MC) told them about it, I was about to burst with happiness. "Don't cry" said (the MC's) voice over the radio. "I can't help it", I sobbed, "I'm so happy!" I guess he must have been telling the little bride not to cry. (7066)

We are not unacquainted with the dynamics of--or the probable explanations for--such behavior ("There was a blizzard raging outside. I was ill with a cold...") but we are aware that this

situation is still another kind of event that is reported as happy, and that this is different from both the happiness that comes from having a birthday and from "good deeds". Another--and perhaps the example of greatest--deviance is in the following letter:

> ...my happiest day in February (was) the 18th. It was a Temperance victory in Miss. as that day the Senate voted out our ridiculous Black Market Law, and the House killed the Bill sponsored by a woman! To Legalize Whiskey in Miss. (7154)

Against the range of possibilities, then, we are able to discern clearly in this group of letters overwhelming agreement on a definition of happiness in terms of self and family. Events for self, Events for others in Family, Visits, Phone calls, gifts, Health and Identification with happiness of Children are the playing field for the happiness game.

Let us take a major analytical step now and distinguish between those people whose happiest day, in some way, resulted from doing something, and those whose happiest day involved, primarily, something happening to them or being done for, or to, them.

Of the 213 letters which can be analyzed in these terms

65 involved DOING
and 148 involved HAPPENING

This is a major finding. It means that 69% of the letter writers reported that their happiest day in a month resulted from something with which they had relatively little to do. It means that that which produces the happiness of 69% of these people lies outside of them; beyond their control. For 31% of the letter writers, some measure of control, some amount of DOING was involved in their happiest days.

Now, we say ask a second question. Was the happiness reported (whether it was a result of DOING or whether it was a result of HAPPENING) relatively anticipated and expected or was it a surprise? It must be made clear before examining this question that DOING will be expected to yield the largest proportion of happiness that is anticipated and that HAPPENING will be expected to yield the largest number of surprises. But DOING will not yield all of the happiness-that-was-anticipated and HAPPENING will not yield all the surprises.

Happiness may result from a deed that was not calculated in advance to produce happiness or from a deed that might produce happiness only if successfully executed or from a deed, the worth of which must be judged by another. And while it is true that deeds that did not produce happiness would not be included in reports of happiest days, it will be valid--and possible--to ask whether the deed, as reported, was done with the assurance that it would produce happiness (happiness-that-was-anticipated) or whether it might just as easily have failed and not resulted in happiness (surprise).

Similarly, it is possible to distinguish between two kinds of HAPPENING. There is HAPPENING where what happens is

unexpected and unanticipated (surprise) and where what happens is thoroughly, or with fair certainty anticipated.

The last few paragraphs are warning signals against misinterpretation of the four-fold table that follows.

	Doing	Happening
Anticipated		
Not anticipated.		

Of the 213 letters reporting happiest days classifiable in these terms,

95 may be said to be anticipated happiness
and 118 may be said to be surprises.

When these figures are broken down in terms of DOING and HAPPENING and placed in a four-fold table, the correlation between DOING and anticipated happiness and HAPPENING and surprise seems very great, but it is clearly a misrepresentation to work with this correlation. For, as pointed out above, DOING is expected to yield the largest proportion of anticipations since it is possible to DO something and it is not possible to HAPPEN something that will give you happiness. Similarly, HAPPENING IS expected to yield the largest number of surprises. The four-fold table, then must be analyzed carefully in terms of this study. It will answer, of course, the elementary questions of how many surprises there were in DOING and how many anticipations there were in HAPPENING in this sample. But, much more important, it will help us to distinguish and label the

several kinds of activity and events which were reported in the HAPPINESS Game.

	Doing	Happening
Anticipated	48 (22%)	48 (23%)
Not Anticipated	18 (8%)	100 (47%)

Which means that 48 of the 65 happiest events resulting from Doing were anticipated and that 18 were surprises (in the sense that the outcome of the Doing was either not certain or not calculated to result in Happiness). It may help to describe the former (doing-anticipated) as Controlled Happiness and the latter (doing-surprise) as Reward Happiness. And, 48 of the 148

happiest events resulting from Happening were anticipated in advance--i.e. they were scheduled events--and 100 were surprises. Let us call the former of these last two "Calendar Happiness" and the latter "Surprise Happiness" or "Luck". With these labels, our four-fold table looks like this

	Doing	Happening
Anticipated	Controlled Happiness	Calendar Happiness
Not Anticipated	Reward Happiness	Surprise Happiness

Now, let us consider this four-fold table as our framework for analysis, and examine each quadrant in turn.

Quadrant I: Controlled Happiness

Anything at all involving even the simplest deed, the doing of which was calculated to increase happiness, was included in this category. Thus, it would include the woman who was glad to return home after a two-day vacation (7075); the woman who spent a planned holiday with her husband (6033); the woman who got happiness from giving her sister and her sister's husband a 50th wedding anniversary present.[2] Even the very slightest deed whose outcome could reasonably be expected to yield happiness directly, was included here.

Thus, it will be understood, almost all of the "Good Deeds" category belongs here. The lady who baked a birthday cake for a sick friend (7131), the woman who made a poor friend happy by saying she liked her pie (7101), the woman whose turn it was to serve refreshments to the school orchestra reported "Controlled Happiness."

> In answer to your request to send in and tell my happiest day in Feb. I'm circling Feb. 28th--a few friends and I packed and mailed a box to a young girl in Italy...Seems to me when we're helping others we should be happiest. (7196)

Similarly, the largest proportion of the letters in the category of "Coming Closer to a Goal" belongs here. The family who repaid the last installment on their home after 18 years of hard work (9036); the woman who submitted the first of the Easter Seal money she had collected (7200); and all of the women

who gave birth to children (we are assuming that the child was planned and desired, since it is reported as happiest day) are examples of "Controlled Happiness".

> ...We had been to a wedding the first week in February and it was a double ring ceremony, my husband...mentioned to me he'd like to have a wedding ring, now not only was I surprised at this but complimented because of the fact we have been married ten years. So I managed to get work on Fridays (one day
>
> because we have a 13 month old baby) and saved enough to get him a pretty wedding ring...which not only made one of us happy but both of us on the 21st February. (7178)
>
> ...You see sir, (6) months ago we bought our own home. Having two children and with prices so high this was quite an expense--but we worked so hard these past few months and it so happened on Feb. 10th, we had paid all money borrowed...Can you blame me for being so happy? (6050)

"Good Deeds" and "Coming Closer to Goal", then, contribute the largest number of the 47 cases of "Controlled Happiness".

Quadrant II: Reward Happiness

Quadrant II differs from Quadrant I in that the outcome of the deed or the event embarked upon did not offer the guarantee

of happiness. In come sense, then, we shall encounter "Bigger things" in Quadrant II. The young man who had worked very hard and saved to be able to go to college, who then applied and was very uncertain that he would be accepted was notified of his acceptance (6019). This represents a planned deed the outcome of which is not known as it is in Quadrant I, i.e., happiness was not a necessary sequel of the deed. In other words, when an unhappy or not-necessarily happy outcome is possible--of course, only happy outcomes are reported here as happiest days--we call the event "Reward Happiness."

Only 18 letters fell into this category and a characteristic of many of them is repeated attempts at some goal and finally, unexpectedly, success. Looking for an apartment continuously during a year and a half stay with in-laws (7094); after ten years of trying, finally convincing husband to go to church with the family (7033); receiving an unexpected letter from a man she has been working to convert to religion saying that he's finally turned to prayer (7062). These are examples of repeated trying, and success: Reward Happiness.

Another major source for this classification is the category of "Self Realization". Six (of the 7) letters in Self Realization" are "Reward Happiness". The common characteristic of these letters is some kind of strain or indecision and then a sudden deed or resolution or an idea that is acted upon. The deed, the execution of the idea, the resolution, reduces the strain and solves the problem. In each case, it was not until after the decision was made, or the deed executed, that an awareness that the problem had been solved resulted.

This characteristic--sudden realization--distinguishes these reports of happiness from that of the lady who had been living in the neighborhood for over a month now, and

> was plain lonesome. I knew I must start getting acquainted by joining the neighborhood church...so finally Feb. 1st I made it, and I did enjoy the friendly fellowship... (7118)

This lady defined her problem, knew the solution and acted upon it. Her letter was coded "Self Realization" and was classified in Quadrant I, "Controlled Happiness" and not "Reward Happiness". On the other hand, note now, an example of "Self Realization" in Quadrant II:

> ...after each letter had been read and re-read, I crossed the room to our large bay window and, looking out across our land, I thought, the pulse of the earth is here, the sun and wind and soil are my friends--no matter the weather, no matter the day, those do not change...And since that day, Ted, my lonesomeness is gone... (6061)

The coding of "realization" as Doing may be questioned. While, perhaps, a purely logical analysis would be tenuous, it seemed to us that a "realization", and "insight", a Malone suggestion that is adopted for the solution of one's own problem is a kind of Doing and should be so classified. For example:

> On Feb. the third (my big day) I was waiting for you

again. Before that program was over I had an idea. I'd tell this person what I wanted to tell them by writing a letter... Then Ted it hit me full in the face! So to speak. The best way in the world to impress this young person was to turn that letter around and take the advice for myself... (7140)

Quadrant III: Calendar Happiness

Many more than the 48 letters included in this quadrant centered about a recurring date. February 14th, for example, was the most-chosen happiest day; "Events for Self" and "Events for Others"--the first and the third largest categories--were made up, almost exclusively, of birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, etc. The distinction, then, between the 48 letters in this quadrant and all of the other happiest days that centered on calendar events is that either nothing at all is done by the writer in connection with the date or, that no apparent reason, other than the very date itself, seems to account for the happiness reported. Wherever a deed was reported in connection with a calendar event--a visit, a gift, a planned holiday--the event was coded elsewhere. In general, where a date is listed together with generally brief notations such as "Husband's leap year birthday", (6014) "Aged mother's birthday" (7003) the letters belong here. Events in 16 of the 25 letters with "Events for Family" and 29 of the 30 letters in "Events for Self" were classified here.

Feb. 19 was my birthday and my family are especially nice to me... (7151)

> Our children all 4 was with us on that day, and what a lovely day we had received so many lovely gifts and cards from relatives and friends (7030)
>
> Are thirty gifts good for an old lady? (7083)

These are all examples of Happening that has been anticipated and that will be anticipated again next year. It is the Happening of cards and gifts and recognition, and is fully expected: "I have received cards and gifts for 60 years. I am 71." (7164)

Others are happy on Calendar days not so much because they are honored or remembered but because they have memories or because the day is a relative's birthday or an anniversary, and one is happy simply because a birthday or an anniversary 'is a happy day'.

> I'll say Feb. 2 was my happy day many years ago. It was my Wedding day...and I do not forget that day. 50 years ago it snowed on that day. (7420)
>
> My happiest day in February happened 30 years ago on the 24th. It was on that day my first daughter was born, while my husband was in the service during World War I. I was truly glad God had sent me a daughter because I knew she would never have to suffer the heartache of a separation from family and friends like a son would. (6008)

Quadrant IV: Luck--Surprise Happiness

One hundred of the 213 letters (47%) reported happiest days which resulted from things that happened that were surprises.

A majority of the letters in "Health", "Letters, Calls, Visits", "Identification with Happiness or Achievements of Children", and "Family reunion reorganization" fell into this quadrant.

The most famous example of this kind of happiness in our culture is the give-away-show. A radio announcer in some far-off city selects the telephone book of your city, by chance, picks your telephone number, by chance, you're at home and know the answer to his question, by chance, and suddenly you find yourself in possession of a large fortune. Our sample had two such events: one raffle winner and one give-away-show winner. Ted Malone introduced "The Happiness Game" with:

> important things do sometimes happen some days to people...surprising things.
> A woman in Texas was busy around the house all day one day never dreaming that that night she would name Miss Hush...and get rich.
> Irish sweepstakes winner forget their lucky days.
> But there are other important things that happen too... a girl gets a proposal...a boy gets a new job...a man gets a raise...important things happen to lots of people nearly every day.[3]

Surprisingly few letters reported events such as proposals,

new jobs, salary raises--but that is partly because of the nature of the audience that listens to Malone. But neither were there "important things" of almost any kind at all.

Malone goes on in his introduction to tell how to do something about increasing happiness, but he doesn't say exactly what--except that you should "look for color", for all the "colorful things that make up every hour of every day of our lives." The emphasis, throughout this introductory broadcast is on these two kinds of events--things that happen, and looking for the little things. And it is quite clear, in our sample, that Happening and surprises won over Doing--even the doing of or watching for little things--by many votes.

> My mother has been in Tucson, Arizona for the past 2 years trying to conquer tuberculosis. On Feb. 16th I received a letter from mother saying that the Doctor had pronounced her cured... This was wonderful news to me... so you can see February really brought me great and unexpected happiness. (6059)
>
> After a month of almost frenzied terror, my doctor assured me on Friday, February 27th, that I did not have cancer! (7034)
>
> My happiest day in February came the very last day of the month. I was putting out the milk bottles that cold Monday morning when a Messenger Boy came up the walk with a telegram. When I opened it and read "Dear Mom, Arrived in Frisco Saturday. Be home soon. Love Jim". You see Jim is

my eldest of three sons, he's only 19 and has been on Korea fourteen months and since conditions are so bad down there can you blame me for saying this was the happiest day of many days and months for me. (7176)

I thought the best day was...when my brother who lives in Montreal visited New York City and called me from there. It is wonderful to hear from someone unexpectedly. (7026)

Aunt and Uncle came (surprise visit)... (7039)

Seriously though, I thought what could possibly happen today just then the phone rang and my boy called me from High School and told me to have a picture of him, data and school honors I could remember ready for him by noon as he had been told...he was eligible to try for a Scholarship at Indiana University. You probably think how could that possibly make her happy. He may not win! Well I guess you have to be a Mother to know the thrill of honors great or small if it does not mean material gain... (5042)

***

It must be reiterated again--and it is hoped that the above examples emphasize this point--that no value judgment has been placed on these categories yet. If a category called LUCK or Surprise Happiness has a connotation that is less pleasing or seemingly less deserving of respect than "controlled happiness"

one has only to abandon the role of reader or analyst and ask whether assurance of not having cancer or the unexpected return of one's son from the army, or the marriage of one's daughter might not be considered a happiest event in a month. What is significant, however is, first, that we call all of these many things happiness, and, second, the relative frequency of each of the kinds of happiness as compared to what we might have expected...(or what we might have liked to see.). Thus, in our sample, concern with self and family outweighed any concern with others almost 9 to 1; happening outweighed doing 70% to 30%; that happiness of "Self Realization" plus "Coming nearer a "Goal" plus "Good Deeds" combined did not equal the happiness attributed to "Events for self" plus "Events for family".

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER VII:

1. Percentage of letters giving specific reasons.

2. Note that these last two cases would have been coded under "Calendar happiness" had they not involved "doing" something. Even the slightest indication of "doing" received 'the benefit of the doubt'. That even such slight deeds are genuinely different from the mere taking note of the occasion (today was mother's birthday") seems psychologically tenable.

3. Broadcast February 2, 1948.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS

Now that we have considered the quadrants of happiness, let us go on to consider the psychological significance of some of the happiest events for the writers who reported them. What are the psychological implications of the happiness game?

We have been able to discern four major psychological categories. They are

Relief from strain
Fulfillment
Recognition
Identification (vicarious)

It should be made clear that it is quite possible for a simple event to fall into more than one of these categories. Percentage-wise, there is no great distinction among the categories--22% of the letters showed Relief from strain; 23% Recognition; 26% each Fulfillment and Identification; and approximately 22% more did not show any of these characteristics. But percentages are not our chief concern here. We are interested, generally, in the kinds of psychological gratifications that turn up and the kinds that don't. For, if our analysis, to this point, has been accurate, the gratifications that would accompany "happening" should be far more in evidence than the gratifications that we would expect to accompany Doing.

1. Relief From Strain

All of the category of "Health" (22 letters) belongs here, most of "Self Realization" (4) and half of "Family Reunion" (5). A total of 46 letters represent strained situations--mental or material--the relief of which caused happiness for the writer.

The cases of recovery from illness, or reassurance that one does not have an illness, cited above, will be recalled. The long and anxiously awaited return of sons serving overseas belong in this category. And here are some others:

> My happiest day in February was Sunday when my husband agreed to offer suggestions instead of criticisms. (7173)
>
> ...A letter from Radcliffe with the news that my daughter had won a $125 mid-term scholarship!...I phoned my husband immediately to tell him the good news as we had quite a struggle getting enough money together to pay Elaine's Feb. bill. (7014)
>
> Why the 14th is my happiest day is self-evident. We had a 7.5 lb. baby boy after seven years of marriage. (7048)
>
> But the greatest happiness of all was to know suddenly, awestruck, that after years of plain, awkward, intensely good-hearted sacrifices, that I personally was not the ugly duckling of a clever family that I thought I was. (7100)

II. Fulfillment

In a large measure, fulfillment coincides with Quadrant I of our Happiness Table, "Controlled Happiness", but takes in several things that could not be included under Doing. While "Controlled Happiness" has 47 letters, Fulfillment includes 55. Psychologically, fulfillment represents attainment or arrival at a goal that one had represented to oneself as desirable.

III. Recognition

Fifty letters can be classified under recognition. All of the greeting cards, and the happy birthday wishes and the phone calls and letters (the receipt of which, rather than the content or import of which, were reported as happiness) are included here. In addition, the following may be cited as typical:

> I began to feel like a dowdy, useless old lady...Suddenly the telephone rang..."If I come over will you fix a ribbon on my year's hat?"...Late in the afternoon I received another call. It was from another friend who lived in town. "I'm making a gingham dress and I just can't get the sleeves right. If I drive out this afternoon would you have time to sew them for me?"...Then in the evening there was another ring. "Could you please hem a communion cloth for me?"...Does all this sound trivial to you? All I can say is that I felt good inside of me at the end of the day. Perhaps I'm not so useless after all nor dowdy either! And 57 isn't so awfully old, is it Ted? (6048)

> You can imagine my surprise and pleasure when he came home with a cake... It was decorated with the proper

> Valentine decorations and a nice little note saying "To My Valentine". Now it isn't the cake as much as the fact that he remembered... (7120)
>
> It made me happy to know that he had to share his happiest moment with me, just a friend. (7153)
>
> Their welcome was so enthusiastic and cordial I was embarrassed yet pleased, that my presence among them meant so much (6051)

IV. Identification

Three categories--"Events for family" "Identification with Happiness of Achievements of Children" and "Satisfaction with Achievements, Happiness of Others"--belong here.

"Events for family" totals 25 letters and includes birthdays, weddings and anniversaries for sons and daughters, husbands, fathers, mothers and other relatives. Psychologically, there is, of course, a distinct difference between deriving happiness from the birthdays of young children and from grown children.

"Identification with Happiness of, or Achievements of Children" totals 21 letters and includes such things as a good report from son's teacher; ten-week old baby 'discovered his little hand' (7056); daughter told her she is soon to become a mother (7039); son became Eagle scout (7184), etc.

"Satisfaction with Achievements, Happiness of Other" totals 9 letters.

While the three components of this category are not altogether similar, they represent happiness derived as a result of the presence of another individual in the psychological field of the writer with whom the writer identifies herself.

V. Other

The four categories above account, alone or in combination, for 186 of the 213 letters. The remaining 27 letters are all generally accountable for under the vague heading of "Quickening of Life" and include such things as birthday qua birthday, pleasure with new possessions, etc.

In the last chapter, we examined the several categories into which the happiness reports fall and we saw the largely self-centered emphasis of these reports.

We have seen that Happening is much more prevalent than Doing, and that Surprise Happiness or Luck is the most common form. We have noted the very important emphasis on Calendar events.

With the exception of "letters, calls, visits, etc." and "perfect day" and "little things" there seems to be somewhat less emphasis than might have been anticipated on Malone's idea of "looking for color". Nevertheless although this suggestion does not too often find its embodiment in a Happiest day, the philosophy of 'looking for happiness because it is all about' appears very often throughout the letters.[1]

Finally, in this chapter, we have pointed out the several psychological equivalents of the kinds of happiness reported. Classification in these terms serves to point up the several

different effects (i.e. meanings for the writer) of the events reported. The purpose of this breakdown was not to analyze the relative frequency of each--for our criteria are much too inadequate for that--but to emphasize the several kinds of meanings these events have for the writer.[2]

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER VIII

1. See the letter quoted above, Chapter VI., p. 44.

2. And also to point to those meanings which are conspicuously absent. See Chapter XI, below.

CHAPTER IX

HAPPINESS: A CULTURAL DEFINITION

We have been trying to get at a dynamic cultural definition of happiness. To the extent that we have succeeded, we may be able to go some way in answering the three questions that were posed in Chapter III.

1. What criteria do Americans apply in deciding whether they're happy; and what things make them happy?

2. What evaluational criteria can we apply in deciding whether an individual or a nation is 'genuinely' happy?

3. How well do the prevalent cultural criteria measure up to the 'genuine' criteria?

Before we examine each question in turn it will be well to delineate carefully the limitations--in scope and in reliability--of this study.

First is the fact that we know that we have been studying housewives, probably of the middle class. Whether their attitudes and their values are in some way indicative of a general climate of attitudes and values can be ascertained only by studies of other segments of the population, of the content of the mass media, etc. We shall have an opportunity to examine several such studies in this chapter. Nonetheless, we must

recognize that housewives are a fenced-in group and that their frames of reference and their potential for say, community participation, 'others', etc. is much lower than that of other groups. Similarly, an all-embracing concern with home and children is much less strange here than it might be elsewhere.

Second is that we are dealing with written reports. It is our carefully considered opinion that these letters represent a high degree of intimacy and rapport and yet, we are very aware of the self-consciousness that almost certainly enters into writing a letter.[1] Especially in writing to Malone who, to some extent, is a respected figure, these people are certain to record only what they consider is "acceptable" happiness. The only mention of happiness from sex, for example, in this entire sample, is this highly sophisticated (and very well written) comment from a lady who submitted a list of the events that brought happiness each day during the month:

> Feb. 21st. "There." Said Jim. "You won't put that in your list", Oh, will I not? Hemingway would. (7017)

And is it possible that not one happiest day has to do with payday or, in any way, with money?[2]

But, perhaps, the very fact that we have recorded here only what is considered culturally acceptable as happiness-giving is highly important for our purposes.

Third we should be aware of the possible difference between happiness and happiest day. Happiness--like satisfactions, as we noted above--[3] might be expected to be a continuing situation if it were not for the particular phrasing of Malone's request.

Perhaps a happiest day is counted as something very, extra special and not fundamentally connected with continuing happiness situations.

Fourth we may have some concern--although it should be no more than the slightest--that some writers were so eager to participate in the game that they fabricated a happiest event. That there were some who were not at all happy during the month who participated nevertheless, we know, because our sample contains three letters which report that February was not happy.

> I have no happy day to mark on the February sheet of the calendar. It just moved along as usual nothing of much important happened. (7113)

* * *

With these limitations--and several of the possibilities for counteracting them--firmly in mind, let us proceed to attempt to answer our questions in terms of this study. When we ask, then, "what are the current-applicable criteria for happiness; what do Americans say make them happy"--we know that before we presume to discuss Americans that we must discuss Ted Malone's housewives and then see what other, more generalized corroborative evidence we can marshal for other segments of the population.

To Question 1. we can answer--for our study--that happiness seems to be derived more often from something that Happens than from something that is Done. Planning--or even--anticipation--of happiness is much less frequent than surprise. Happiness is

defined in terms of self in a literal sense (and not, e.g. in recognition that one gets personal happiness from service to others, in group participation, etc.). The environmental field for happiness seems to be--for our sample, at any rate--home and family, especially children.

The large incidence of calendar events (22%) was noted. Here, the element of surprise played little part. This happiness is a mechanical happiness; a recurrent, expected kind of thing. Thus, the happiest day reported most frequently was February 14th, St. Valentine's Day.

The idea that happiness is all about and that if 'one but looks for it, it will be found', is a primary emphasis in the Malone philosophical system. In the many reports of the 'little things"--more often as "satisfactions" than as "happiest days"--in the "Letters, Phone Calls, Visits", "Identification with Achievements and Happiness of Children" and other categories, this emphasis is manifest.[3] But, it must be pointed out, that the "Little Things" as such played only a minor part in the actual reports of the happiest day: Only 20 letters mentioned either "little things" or a "perfect day" consisting of several "little things" as reasons for happiest days. Perhaps, we have, here, an example of the discrepancy between happiness and the happiest day.

Another Malone emphasis that fared only fairly well was "Good Deeds". Only 15 letters reported a "good deed" as the basis for a happiest day. Here, we see the fundamental reluctance to bring a definition of happiness even the slightest distance away from self.

And if even "Good Deeds" did not fare well, how could we expect happiest days associated with the community, or with a group other than family? There are no more than seven letters that leave self or bosom of family; six of them are in "satisfaction with Happiness or Achievements of Others". Only one letter associates happiness with a political event.

Much more surprising is the absence of money satisfactions or the happiness of bettering one's status. There are several instances of repayment of long-standing debts, paying off mortgages, acquiring a new car, but no more than a handful of these.

Compare, here, the conclusions of Dr. Leo Lowenthal in his content analysis of biographies in popular magazines:

> As we studied our stories, we looked almost in vain for such vital subjects as the man's relations to political problems in general. Our category of sociology reduces itself to the private lives of our heroes. Similarly, our category of psychology was found to contain mainly a static image of a human being to whom a number of things happen, culminating in a success which seems to be none of his doing.[4]

For "success" in this description of the contemporary magazine biography's hero, read "happiness". Here we have our first feeling that perhaps our study does really fit into an American pattern.

And it may be interesting to add again that the concept of

"success" seems to be on the wane. In our sample, certainly, we have found no trace of an attempt to climb, and attempt to better oneself--at least in so far as such activity is related to happiness. Compare this to the study of "Values in Mass Periodical Fiction 1921-1940" by Hans Gerth and Patricke Johns-Heine. Commenting on the changing values in the Saturday Evening Post, the authors say:

> In the first period (1920's) the reward symbol is typically that of social ascent and its basis is a specific achievement. By the thirties, however, the predominant reward symbol is what we describe as recognition of deference from others. Its characteristic basis is moral virtue which is rewarded by love and esteem from others, sometimes even by a tangible reward; but never does it result in upward mobility marked by "wealth", "success", "status".[5]

How well this too describes our study. Recognition, we found, was one of the four major areas of psychological effect of the happiness events.

Recognition, of course, is a basic kind of happiness (as we see in the "four wishes"[6]) but its expression in terms of moral virtue rather than "success", "status", etc. is a development of the last two decades.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER IX

1. Compare the discussion of P.F. Lazarsfeld, The People's Choice, op. cit., on the element of self-consciousness that

might enter into the keeping of diaries (of daily personal contacts and discussions) at the request of researchers. "If people know that they have to keep a record of what they talked about with other people, they might very well be affected by their selection of topic...", p. 173, footnote.

2. One woman added her husband's happiest day: "Roland's happiness on the 19th was because he was sure of a contract he wanted." (7173) Consider this in terms of the limitations of our study, noted here.

3. See page 43.

3.[sic] See section on "satisfactions" above, p. 41-43.

4. Leo Lowenthal, "Biographies in Popular Magazines", in Lazarsfeld and Stanton (eds.) Radio Research 1942-43, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944.

5. H.H. Gerth and P. Johs-Heine, "Values in Mass Periodical Fiction, 1921-40", Public Opinion Quarterly, Spring, 1949.

6. For security, recognition, new experience and power known as "The Four Wishes" and first set down by Thomas and Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant In Europe and America, New York, Alfred A. Knopf and Co., 1927. For a discussion of the "wishes" and other lists of basic human cravings as related to this study, see Chap. X and Appendix B., below,

CHAPTER X

"THE FOUR WISHES": A 'SCIENTIFIC DEFINITION'

We have now, it is hoped, a fairly clear picture of the kinds of things that were reported by our letter-writers as determinants, or at least associates, of happiness. We have seen, too, that what we find seems to fit rather well into studies of the changing content of the mass media. This corroboration gives us some measure of courage to generalize from our sample--and from our somewhat hastily defined people--to "Americans".

But if we now turn to our second question--what evaluational criteria can we apply in trying to determine whether an individual or a nation is 'genuinely' happy--we shall find no ready, form-fitting answer.

Recently, nevertheless, paralleling the swing back from cultural relativism, psychoanalysts, sociologists and social philosophers such as Fromm[1], Lynd[2], Russell[3], and others, have attempted--as Thomas and Znaniecki[4] did--to set down, in social science terms, what the cravings of the human personality are. The degree to which these cravings are fulfilled would be viewed by these scholars as the degree to which 'genuine' happiness has been attained. The degree to which the culture permits the fulfillment of these craving is the criterion upon which these authors would evaluate a culture; although the particular forms that the expression or repression of these cravings take, would of course, be unique in each culture.

"The four wishes" proposed by Thomas and Znaniecki was one

of the earliest modern attempts at a statement of the cravings of human personality: for security, for new experience, for recognition (status) and for power (capable of being sublimated to laudable ambition).[5] In "Knowledge for What", Professor Lynd elaborates on "the four wishes" and discusses at considerable length the cravings of the personality to "live not too far from its own physical and emotional tempo and rhythm (and not in the tempo of time-and-motion studies); to experience the sense of growth and realization of personal power; to do meaningful things; to be able to 'count on' many physical and psychological requisites (security) and at the same time to have an "unstructured option to experience novelty"; to express capacity through rivalry and competition (but not all pervasive competition) and thus to gain status; to share purposes feeling and action with others (mutuality); to find consistency and not contradiction in the cultural rules; to work creatively within a cultural setting that offers active encouragement to "creative individuation in terms of the whole range of one's personal interest and uniqueness".[6]

In his definition, Erich Fromm uses the word "happiness" itself: "Happiness is an achievement brought about by man's inner productivity and not a gift of the gods."Happiness and joy are not the relief from tension but the accompaniment of all productive activity in thought, feeling and action..."[7]

Exactly at this point we encounter the argument about the "genuiness" of reported happiness. Perhaps the two extremes of the argument--and the implications of each for the present study--are best expressed by Erich Fromm, on one hand and by the

sociologist, Hornell Hart on the other.

In "Chart for Happiness"[8], Hart explains his quantitative "Euphorimeter" which measures in "Euphor-units" (the amount of happiness an individual enjoys) and his "Diagnostic Euphorimeter" which gets at the roots of the unhappiness and unhappiness in an individual. Paralleling his exposition throughout, Hart offers advice on increasing happiness and the titles of several of the chapters will be enough to give the idea: "How are your social attitudes?"; "What can Religion do?"; "Building for Thrills"; etc. Citing other studies as well as some very strange statistics of his own, he maintains that the effect of increased income or larger income on happiness is very small; that "many of the richest joys in life are free"; that "it is the friendly, popular person who is likely to be happy"; and that "altruism is evidently one of the factors most productive of happiness in the long run". The essence of Hart's approach is contained in his concluding paragraphs: He says that there are two possible ways to define happiness:

1. Happiness is the state in which people are when they say sincerely, 'I am happy' and it is the opposite of the state in which they are when they say sincerely 'I am unhappy'.

2. Happiness is any state of consciousness which the person tested seeks to attain or maintain, and is the opposite of any state which the possessor seeks to change or from which he seeks to escape or withdraw.

> At every crucial point in a long series of statistical analyses...we have found that persons who say in one form or another 'I am happy', tend also to say in various ways, "I want to keep my present way of life developing as it is now going"; while those who say, in one form or another, 'I am unhappy', tend also to say in various ways, 'I want to escape or change from my present way of life'.[9]

Let it be said for Hart that some of his diagnostic material sounds better than his definition but nonetheless it is based very largely on non-recognition of the American emphasis on the importance of being happy and of constant introspection which asks "Am I happy" and needs to answer "yes" more often than not. And it is based, too, on a largely spiritualized, "inner" kind of happiness which has little relation to anything that is "outer".

Fromm would reject all of this. With Lynd and with Russel, Fromm affirms the essentially moral evaluation that must be applied in judging happiness: "What matters is the understanding of the meaning and function of any particular activity and of the satisfaction derived from it in terms of the nature of man and the proper conditions of life." Fromm, first of all, makes clear that activity is basic, and not just automaton activity, but active participation in something meaningful. And thus, Fromm contends that "the subjective feeling of being happy, when it is not a quality of the state of well-being of the whole person is nothing more than an illusory thought about a feeling

and is completely unrelated to genuine happiness."[10] Fromm would have us apply no distinction to a "state" of happiness and to the "experience" of happiness. He says that "joy and happiness are not different in quality; they are different only in as much as joy refers to a single act while happiness may be said to be a continuous or integrated experience of joy; we can speak of 'joys' (plural) but only of 'happiness' (singular).[11]

We shall avoid making a choice between Hart and Fromm. While Hart is certainly too naïve, Fromm's use of the word happiness limits the number who can possibly be happy to very, very few people. While we are, it should be evident, more inclined to Fromm's skepticism about reported happiness, if happiness for Fromm "is the indication that man has found the answer to the problem of human existence, the realization of his potentialities and thus, simultaneously, being one with the world and preserving the integrity of his self", perhaps we should not rush in to disparage any report that does not live up to this definition.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER X:

1. Man for Himself, New York, Rinehart and Co., 1947.

2. op. cit., pp. 193-197.

3. What is Happiness, op. cit.

4. op. cit., see the Methodological Note.

5. Ibid.

6. op. cit., pp. 193-197

7. op. cit., p. 189

8. New York, Macmillan Co., 1940

9. Ibid.

10. op. cit., p. 182

11. op. cit., p. 189

CHAPTER XI

IS EVERYBODY REALLY HAPPY?

Much social action, and many a political ideology, is formulated and implemented to increase the people's happiness.

We asked ourselves a third question: Are our letter-writers genuinely happy? How do the criteria applied for judging happiness by our letter-writers measure up against the evaluational criteria which can be brought forward from contemporary philosophy, psychoanalysis and social science?

From the discussion in the preceding chapter and from the Appendix section on "Happiness" several areas of agreement and disagreement can be seen: We have found that the human cravings theory--first expressed in terms of the "four wishes"--has very wide acceptance. We can point to the increase of agreement with the emphasis on the "outer" requisites for happiness--the fundamental relationship of social realities to happiness--in the ages old 'inner-outer' debate about the nature of happiness. We have indicated in terms of the 'state-experience' debate the need to consider carefully the distinction between a "state" of happiness and the happiness resulting from a single "experience". We presented the debate between Fromm and Hart over whether to accept people's self-reports of happiness as "genuine".

From all of this, it is evident that we cannot apply 'scientific' criteria to evaluate the happiness reported by our letter-writers. But if we examine the implications of the different theories of happiness for the reports of the Happiness

Game, some interesting conclusions will emerge.[1]

We find, in our sample of happiest days, a large preponderance of reported events that were happy because something 'happened' to the writer, rather than because the writer 'did' anything. In addition, we have found that there was a somewhat larger number of 'surprise' events than 'expected or anticipated' events that were counted as happy. We found that 22% of the events were "calendar" events and that a number of events that we did not call "calendar"--either because they involved something that was 'done' or some 'surprise'--were based on some recurrent date--a birthday, wedding anniversary, holiday, etc. Psychologically, we showed that the events could mean one or more of several things for the writer: recognition, relief from strain, fulfillment and vicarious identification with recognitions, reliefs, fulfillments of others.

The large number of things that 'happened' and the large number of 'surprises' seem to show that the current cultural concept of happiness is quite close to its linguistic root: 'to hap'. For several British writers (Priestly, Jameson, etc.) for whom happiness "can drop as quickly from a grey sky as any other"[2] the fact that almost 50% of all of the reported events were "surprise happiness" (happened and unanticipated) should not be strange. But for Russell[3] or Lynd[4] the idea of happiness completely unrelated to any activity or to any purposefulness is unthinkable. For Fromm, this statistic would simply be confirmation of the illusory nature of these reports "because the pursuit of happiness is indeed nothing but the pursuit of significance."[5] The mechanical type we called "calendar"

happiness would be further corroboration.

But it is this very paradoxical "calendar" happiness (where nothing is done and yet where what happens is exactly anticipated) which leads us to question the seeming adherence of our letter writers to the "drop-from-a-grey-sky-as-well-as-any-other" theory of happiness. If we examine what the calendar event means for the writer, we see immediately that it means recognition. And if we let our focus change to the psychological meaning of all these events we see that what we have called recognition, relief, fulfillment and identification gives us a new lead in the application of our qualitative, evaluational criteria for happiness.

"Recognition" is almost exclusively the psychological meaning behind the "calendar" events. Now, recognition, it will be recalled, is a highly respectable criterion for happiness. It is one of the "four wishes".

"Relief from strain" appeals to us, in a common sense fashion, as a legitimate reason for happiness. "Anybody", our thinking goes, "who has recovered from tuberculosis, deserves to credit that day of recovery as the happiest in a month."

"Fulfillment", too, has eminent respectability. In terms of the "four wishes", it is closest to the "will to power...capable of being sublimated to laudable ambition."

"Identification" with the happiness or achievements of one's children or of others is a highly debatable concept. Though some may argue that vicarious experience may have some elements of productivity, it seems to us--almost by definition--to be a 'happening' idea, even when the identification is with

one's children.

It is especially interesting that two of the four wishes--"will to power" and "recognition"--are present when we analyze our happiest days in this fashion. But what of the missing "wishes"?

There is no trace of "security" and hardly a recognizable sampling of anything resembling "the desire for new experience[6], for fresh stimulations".

Now the complete absence of "security" gives us an excellent indication of how the concept of happiness has become very detached from "outer" ideas. It would be extremely difficult to maintain that every one of the letter writers was physically and psychologically secure or that not one experienced a happiest day during the month of February 1948 due to receipt of money, betterment of husband's job, re-enactment of price control[7], etc. The absence of "security" tells us clearly that we are dealing with a philosophy of happiness that has become, in great measure, detached from any relationship to the "outer". That there is a total lack of class consciousness among this group of housewives (who are certainly neither Upper-upper or lower-upper) is manifest.

The absence of reports of fulfillment of the "wish for new experience" combined with the large percentage of calendar events and the small role of <u>doing</u> is evidence of a tremendous lack of spontaneity of any sort. For Lynd, "the human personality craves a sense of freedom and diversity in living that gives expression to its many areas of spontaneity without sacrificing unduly its corresponding need for a basic

integration of continuities."[8]

If anything is an indicator of some fundamentally wrong "outer" condition, it is the absence of the wish for new experience. For we should expect, where "outer" conditions provide for the pursuit of happiness that the fulfillment of cravings for new experiences would surely surpass the fulfillment of mechanized, "calendar" anticipations.

The psychological category of "Recognition"[9] makes good sense in terms of all of the "four wishes", Lynd, Russell, etc. But it must be made clear that "recognition" cannot be equated automatically with Russell's "personal relations that are satisfying, and especially a happy family life."[10] Now, it is true that family life--almost a clinging to the family--dominates the Happiness Game, but our data has not been sufficiently refined to reveal (if it can at all) the nature of these family relationships. We cannot learn from a wedding anniversary or Valentine's day greeting card or gift what the relationships between husband and wife and children are. In possibly one fifth of the letters which involve family in some way do we find any indication of cohesiveness ("It was my husband's birthday and we spent it together"; "the family went on an outing"). Friends are mentioned only 60 times throughout the sample of 260 letters and only 17 times in connection with happiest days. This seems to indicate a real absence of genuinely productive and satisfying relations with friends. Some of the happiest days that involve friends seem to point to this: one lady saw an old friend (6055), another's friend phoned (7165), another received three letters from friends in one day

(6049). Chance meeting, in the first, and recognition--and not productive, 'sharing' relationships--are emphasized.

The psychological category we have called "relief from strain" is explicitly challenged by Fromm: "Happiness and joy are not the satisfaction of a need springing from a psychological or physiological lack; they are not the relief from tension but the accomplishment of all productive activity, in thought, feeling and action."

The psychological category of "Fulfillment", of course, comes much closer to our bias. This includes almost all of the categories of "good deeds", "attaining or approaching goal" and "self-fulfillment or self-realization". About 25% of the letters could be classified under "fulfillment". But it must be said, qualitatively, that the number of these that can in any way be considered, in Russell's sense, part of "some central purpose demanding continuous activity and permitting of progressively increasing success... "[11], is infinitesimal. Perhaps, too, the inclusion of "Good Deeds" in this category may be accurate by definition, but may expand the psychological concept of "fulfillment" in quite a misleading way. To say that "fulfillment" equals the "wish for power" sublimated to "laudable ambition" may be stretching the point a bit, in many of the cases here, but almost all are clearly a long way from Russel's "central purpose" and many are quite far from Lynd's "craving to do things involving the felt sense of fairly immediate meaning."

In Hart's sense,[12] therefore, where happiness is equatable with the sincere declaration of being happy, it is almost

impossible to decide whether our writers, generally, are 'really' happy. Where "state" happiness and "experience" happiness cannot be fundamentally related, and where "outer" things are rightly excluded from consideration, it is difficult to pass judgment on the 'real' happiness or unhappiness of people who report "experience" events as happy. We can only point to the nature of the events themselves as they are reported: Happening more than Doing; Surprise more than Anticipation; and the paradoxical category of "calendar happiness".

If one were to ponder the implications of this analysis--in Hart's terms--for social action, the way to 'increase the people's happiness' would be clear: Follow the lead of Ted Malone. Focus on the happiness that is all about, the "little things" that we tend to take for granted; propose new adventures that anybody can embark upon, if only they make their minds up to do so; prescribe recipes for making friends, doing good deeds, etc.; make people think that whatever they're doing <u>is</u> really important; suggest that people set goals for themselves, make plans, and strive to attain the goals.

These are sound ideas--not, perhaps, to be belittled. Their basis is in the idea of self-improvement in an accepted situation, one that must be assumed to be fundamentally unchangeable and/or desirable. We have seen, too, how some of Ted Malone's ideas--being thankful for the happiness all about, conceiving of whatever one is doing as important, enjoying family and good deeds--are accepted more fully than some of his other ideas--such as 'new adventures', 'setting goals', etc.

On February 3, the day after Ted Malone introduced the Happiness Game, Ted described how he spent his first day playing the game. These are the things he did that gave him an added measure of happiness that day:

> In most respects it was just another Monday. Ordinarily I might have felt it a little dull and monotonous...as blue Mondays usually are according to the legend. But I was playing a game; and the game, remember, required me to pay special attention to everything that happened that added to enjoyment of living--happiness...
>
> Yesterday might have been my happiest day if somebody had served my breakfast in bed. But as I said there were no miracles...Monday began about as usual. Oh, there was one little thing: I had a fresh new blade for my razor...a pleasant surprise. The last few mornings I've had to borrow my brother's...In a happier frame of mind I said a little prayer of gratitude for the hot water, too. It may sound petty, but one of the discomforts overseas that rankled most was having to shave in cold water every morning...
>
> I began to notice things which make life good. The morning paper was there on the table...the egg was hardboiled just as I like it...the coffee was not too hot to drink...
>
> The newsboy shoved a paper in my hand as I scambled aboard (the train)--I didn't have any change...he said pay him

tomorrow...I was happy to get a seat--I noticed that. Normally we take a seat on a train for granted...

When the conductor came by, I said "Good morning...the heat's just right in here." He looked at me and smiled warmly. "You're the first passenger that's done anything but complain since the cold spell began a month ago. Thank you." I'll have to admit I was inwardly pleased at his pleasure...One of the surest ways of making yourself happy...is to make others happy...

And after lunch I showed them the colored moving pictures of my trip...You know how you feel when you bake a cake that everybody raves about...Well, they really enjoyed the pictures, so I was very happy.

I was watching for things...I noticed the pencils were sharpened on my desk, the letters were neat. I expect them to be, they usually are, but yesterday I noticed it...

Around four o'clock yesterday, though, I began to feel a little let down. The game was fun, I had noticed many little things, but apparently unconsciously, I had been expecting something a little bigger. So I decided to do something about it. Everybody knows that it's fun to do something for somebody else...so maybe for selfish reasons, I began trying to figure out what I could do that would really make somebody happy...And I had my answer. I went

> down to CARE the organization that sends packages overseas, and bought a box of food and sent it to a family I remembered over there. Well, it wasn't a miracle, but I know what it will mean to that family when it reaches them. It will be much like a miracle to them, it will make them happy...and it made me very happy...!
>
> My brother beat me at chess five times in succession, but even that he enjoyed so much, I rather enjoyed it myself...
>
> It's a simple game...but as you can see it really works...[13]

This, then, is a game that works well in Hart's sense and the implications for application are clear; but what about the other side of the argument?

In Fromm's sense, where we are asked to make a moral judgment--a critical judgment--on reported happiness and where "experience" happiness (joys) are fundamentally related to "state" happiness, the implications for social action towards increasing happiness is much more controversial. From the small number of "Doing" reports; from the absence of any attention to the "outer" requisites; from the focus on "calendar happiness" and calendar events; from the number of letters that report "relief from strain", it seems--that is Fromm's terms--we should infer a certain amount of fundamental unhappiness here. Nor can we attribute the absence of emphasis on creativity, spontaneity, meaningfulness and "others" to anything less than a cultural unhealthiness, in Fromm's terms.

But with or without a judgment, when viewed against the background of philosophical and psychological thinking about happiness, the cultural definition which emerges from our letters stands out sharply. And while the letters do not report "state" happiness and hence prevent us from applying the more exact criteria that we might apply in evaluating "genuineness" (in Fromm) or "Euphor-units" (in Hart), we have an insight into the cultural focus on happiness.

And before we conclude, let the chief limitation of the study be repeated: the fact that our study is of housewives. A major contribution to the further study of social happiness would clearly be the investigation of the degree to which our findings are generalizable to other groups; the degree to which the "success", "production" side of the seesaw is on its way down; and the degree to which the cravings--if indeed they are cravings--for security, spontaneity, new experience, creativity and meaningfulness--are being suppressed.

In Dr. Lowenthal's study[14], we learn how the reader of today's popular magazine biographies is eased away from consideration of "the large confusing issues in the political realm...by narrowing his focus of attention (so that) he can experience the gratifications of being confirmed in his own pleasures and discomforts by participating in the pleasures and discomforts of the great." This diversion of attention has become possible through the change in attention from the "idols of production" the captain of industry, the political leader, to the "idols of consumption, the movie star and baseball hero.

Similarly--we find in our letters an apparent narrowing of

the focus of attention--away from creativity, concern with public affairs, purposefulness, productive human relationships, spontaneity, towards luck, calendar events and psychological gratifications centering on the self and family. The idea that happiness is all about, waiting to be consumed--with little reference to the need to produce--is the parallel finding of this study.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER XI:

1. Our impression that people distinguish between a happy event and happiness must be reiterated here and should--until we obtain further evidence--be considered by the reader as a continuous limitation of this discussion.

2. Storm Jameson, in What is Happiness, op. cit.

3. Ibid.

4. op. cit.

5. In Life Magazine, "Round Table on the Pursuit of Happiness; op. cit.

6. It seems warranted to consider the "Happiness Game" itself and other Malone 'adventures' as expressions of this "wish". But little else of the "wish for new experience" is in evidence.

7. Recorded in World Almanac under events for February, 1948.

8. op. cit., p. 197.

9. For our discussion of the psychological categories referred to in this chapter, see above, Chapter VIII, "The Psychology of Happiness".

10. op. cit.

11. op. cit.

12. op. cit.

13. Broadcast February 3, 1948.

14. op. cit.

CHAPTER XII

A POSTSCRIPT FOR TED MALONE

In an article entitled "Research for Action"[1], Professor Lazarsfeld concludes that daytime radio can attract non-serial listeners in a variety of ways, which are, as yet, largely untried. One of the needs of daytime radio, according to Professor Lazarsfeld, is "for programs which cheer, soothe and in general divert the listeners' attention from their own troubles."

Add the quality of intimacy, and you will have a perfect characterization of Ted Malone. Whether or not more programs modeled on Malone's--perhaps with less intimacy--are a need of daytime radio, we do not know.

What we do know, however, is that for his 'fans', Malone is cheering, and soothing and a friend, quite a good friend. That he diverts his listener's attention from their own troubles, we can have no doubt. An "oasis in the desert of soap operas".

And the letters, as we have hinted, have the tone of confessionals. The writer carefully includes details of her life of a kind that would not be of the slightest interest to anybody who was not genuinely concerned with the writer. Malone is genuinely concerned; there can be no question about that. But, there are other reasons too: Partly, it seems, because the writer feels the desire to respond to Malone, partly because she probably has some need to communicate in general. And perhaps, there is one additional reason why Malone, a particular kind of friend--an unseen friend whose loyalty one need not ever

question--receives these letters. This reason is hinted at, in the following letter:

> Please don't read this over the air for I feel that there are some people I would not want to know that I am not doing well, it would please them too much. I expect if I thought I would ever see you I would not have the nerve to send this....

Perhaps, in this letter, we have hit on the paradoxical effects of this new kind of intimacy: I am telling you a very important secret, Ted, but "I expect if I thought I would ever see you I would not have the nerve to send this." But this letter is little more than a clue, and it does not seem valid to build up an entire theory around it.

What is important--and what is clearly reflected in so many of the letters--is Malone's success in ego-involving his listeners. Perhaps, educational radio, someday, may learn from this technique, although the subject matter of an educational broadcast may not be pliable enough to fit into the Malone pattern.

There has been no attempt throughout this paper to reflect adversely on Malone. "You bring us such entertainment and enlightening and heart searching information--and we feel you speak individually to us" said one lady. It is our contention that Malone reflects the new cultural emphasis--on "inner" things, on "little" things, on good deeds, on discovery of the inner, little, good things that are all about. To a large degree, his philosophy is reflected in the mail.

Malone, too, provides--at least superficially--for human cravings. His "adventures" try to meet the need for new experience, and the need to "do" something; his "plan your life" programs try to meet the need for meaningfulness and self-understanding.

And when we compare Malone's philosophy of soothingness and gentle 'adventure'--what you're doing is important--to the soap opera, is not a genuine sign of respect for humanity visible? "The World of the Daytime Serial", according to Rudolf Arnheim, is impotent day-dream world. Arnheim asks:

> if it is true that the woman in the home has no satisfactory function to fulfill, why not present the problem bluntly, if possible on the basis of factual material? Why not show its causes and developments, and indicate feasible ways out, instead of conjuring up day dreams? If there are problems in growing old, why not interpret them: Show that clinging to the illusion of eternal youth is fruitless; that the solution lies in enjoying the new tasks and satisfactions brought about by maturity and old age?[2]

If this is an unrealistic proposal--and it certainly seems so to us--the problem is nonetheless real. We have encountered it throughout our study, although perhaps we have found some evidence that it is not the problem of housewives alone. But there can be little doubt that Malone at least implicitly is aware of this problem and that he has solutions of his own to meet it whether or not we feel these solutions deal with the

basic problem involved. It is characteristic of Malone's understanding of his audience, for example, to offer a "Seven Day Plan For Winning Friends", or a plan entitled "Adventure in Letter Writing".

But like the "Happiness Game" which served us so well (we hope) all such radio projects have at least one ulterior motive: to see how many people respond; and in Malone's case, to see too, what they're thinking:

> I know your happiness game was just another bid for fan mail but nevertheless I think it was a swell idea. The psychology of looking for happiness instead of gripes is right off the "top shelf"--and I was glad to play it, pleased to rise to your bait for another fan letter. (7107)

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER XII:

1. Lazarsfeld and Stanton (eds.) Communications Research, 1948-49 New York: Harper and Bros. 1949

2. In Lazarsfeld and Stanton (eds.), Radio Research 1942-3, op.cit.

APPENDIX A

I. Fan Mail: Who Writes and Why

In Chapter V, we reported that the largest proportion of letters in our sample was from rural areas. 46%, for example, came from places with under 10,000 population but only 11% came from cities with more than 500,000 population. We indicated, therefore, that the picture of the non-urban housewife--perhaps of the middle or lower middle class--emerges quite clearly from our study.

Similarly, Lumley reports a high representation of lower economic classes and non-urban areas in the many different samples of fan mail which he examined.[1]

We cannot generalize from our study to 'fan mail'; that is evident. Neither does Lumley's chapter on fan mail purport to be a systematic study of who writes, but rather an impressionistic report of other studies. But some data is available in studies of fan mail to different programs that have appeared from time to time[2], and it is reasonable to presume that the networks and the radio advertising agencies have made many studies of their own.

There is a need, now--if it is agreed that the phenomenon of fan mail can help us in the study of radio listening and in the description of the social climate of our time--to examine systematically the different kinds of fan mail and the fan mail to different kinds of programs. It is possible that the answer to the question Who Writes can be advanced for fan mail in

general (as Lumley suggests: lower economic, non urban) and it is equally possible and perhaps more realistic to suppose that different groups write different kinds of letters to different programs.

To study the problem of who writes, systematically, requires initially a categorization of kinds of programs. Sampling representative programs of each kind, an analysis of who writes can be made by the application of several, relatively simple, criteria. The postmark of the letter or the return address is sufficient to indicate community size. Class or socioeconomic status must depend, very largely, on the information supplied by the writer about self and family. One would suppose, for example, that our sample would have been among the most rewarding in this respect, but we found it--perhaps because we were not sufficiently discerning--inadequate. Organizational affiliation, occupation, education and values were the categories we watched for, but the information on each of these points was not supplied fully enough. Perhaps other samples will be more fruitful.

Interviewing, of course, must supplement content analysis to overcome the limitations of inadequate data and the inhibitions that go with letter writing. But Who Writes is certainly a basic area for study.

For simplicity, we delineated the above problem only in terms of available data. That is, we proposed as an important problem for investigation, the problem of who actually writes.

But given the empirical data--for example, in our sample, that non-urban mail predominates--we must ask ourselves what the

meaning of this reported observation is. This involves hypotheses--a priori or post hoc--about our expectations. That is, would we expect rural writers to predominate, in our sample. And assuming for this discussion that a systematic study of fan mail would result in the generalization that non-urban areas and lower economic groups write the largest proportion of fan mail, is that what we would expect? Why do people write fan mail? Consider the following possible hypotheses (or speculations) and the research that might follow from each:

1. Hypothesis: Fan mail is a natural response to interest in a particular program, and reflects that threshold where passive interest is converted into active interest--the desire to respond.

It follows from this hypothesis that if it is demonstrated that a program is equally popular among different groups of people, equal fan mail response is to be expected from each group. Thus, for example, if we assume--and it is possible--that Ted Malone is equally popular in communities of all sizes, we should expect that the mail response from each of the different size communities will be proportional to the number of people in the United States who live in each size community. (Of course, these data would have to be refined for radio ownership on each level.) If we compare the distribution of Malone mail with the distribution of the population of the United States by size of community, this is the way it looks:

Appendix Table A:

DISTRIBUTION OF US POPULATION AND MALONE LETTERS BY SIZE OF

COMMUNITY

Size	% US Population	% Malone Letters
Rural (Under 2500)	43	29
2500 - 10,000	9	17
10,000 - 25,000	8	15
25,000 - 100,000	11	12
100,000 - 500,000	12	16
500,000 - million	5	5
over one million	12	6
	(131,669,000)	(260)

Source: 1940 census[3]

Note the very close correspondence between our sample and the distribution of the population. Communities of 25,000 or more are represented almost as exactly in our sample as they are in the census. We have a higher percentage of the 2500 - 25,000 groups in our sample than in the population, but an under-representation of the rural group.

If we have no reason to expect this sample of mail--and perhaps Lumley's samples match this one--to have originated more in a community of one size than another, our only problem would be to account for the fact that our sample is underweight in mail from the communities of 2500 people or less.

2. Hypothesis: Fan mail is written by people who are

"comparatively limited in other means of self-expression. Instead of praising or condemning a program to their friends, arguing it with other people, or finding some substitute outlet for their emotions, these listeners apparently gain relief and satisfaction only by responding directly to the person or organization that has provoked them. Writing and mailing a letter of praise or protest achieves a rapid emotional 'closure'. The strain thus relieved, the auditor is emotionally free to resume his listening or to turn to other activities."[4]

This post-hoc hypothesis which is advanced by Cantril and Allport for Lumley's findings about who writes articulates a particular point of view about lower economic and non-urban people; they have comparatively limited possibility for self-expression. But it seems that Cantril and Allport do not mean self-expression generally, they mean expression which is a response to a radio program. They imply--quite specifically--that they believe upper economic and more urban people can find expression for their emotional response to the program by "praising or condemning it to their friends, arguing about it with other people, or finding some substitute outlet for their emotions..."

It is not sufficient to test this hypothesis merely by pointing to the presence of a greater proportion of rural mail in samples of fan mail. Several detailed studies must be carried through to prove this. Let us illustrate in terms of Ted Malone. Assume that Ted Malone's program evokes the need to respond emotionally among a certain proportion of his listeners. Assume that an equal proportion of rural and urban listeners feel this

need to respond, to achieve emotional "closure". Then, if two experimental groups could be set up one rural and one urban--and if both could be shown to be equally interested in the subject of a particular program, equally moved to respond emotionally, the rural group must be shown either to have comparatively less opportunity for expression (i.e., fewer friends, fewer conversations, fewer social situations, fewer 'substitute outlets') than the urban group or equal opportunity, but a preference to turn to letter writing as a means for emotional release. Conversely, the urban group must be shown either to have greater opportunity for expression (more friends, more social situations, more 'substitute outlets') or equal opportunity but a marked preference to use the opportunity for this particular purpose.

3. Hypothesis: Fan mail is the expression of an atomized individual who, in the absence of genuine person-to-person relationships or organized community life, attempts to establish a relationship with a radio voice.[5]

The studies of the atomized individual in our industrialized culture point distinctly to this possibility. This is not the Cantril and Allport hypothesis in the sense that it does not focus simply on a need for expressing one's emotional reaction to a program, but on the need for self-expression in general. Unlike Cantril and Allport, this hypothesis would expect the greatest flow of fan mail from the city, and not from the farm or non-urban communities. Studies of anomie and of the atomized individual have focused on the city contrasting it to the more genuine community possible in non-

industrialized, non-urban areas. If indeed, fan mail is heavily weighted by the non-urban areas, this hypothesis would appear much less readily applicable than if the mail is largely from urban, industrialized areas. This is an especially interesting research problem because it has bearing not only on an understanding of fan mail but on the concept of anomie itself, because, ostensibly, the concept is so relevant to the phenomenon of fan mail.

* * *

It can, of course, be maintained that there are various reasons for writing fan mail and that no single reason will be adequate. It is well known that there are different kinds of fan mail--this is a major study area. For example, we suggested several reasons for why people write Malone.[6] While none of our suggestions preclude the possibility of an underlying, basic reason to account generally for this particular form of expression, it is also possible that no single reason would be adequate.

One possibility which we considered--especially in the light of Hypotheses 3--is that the motivation of rural and urban people may be different. As a first step in this direction, we compared the rural and urban writers in our sample on three characteristics: length of letter, mention of other people, mention of organizations. These are the results:

Appendix Table B

LENGTH OF LETTER BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY

No. of words	Size of community		
	To 25,000	25-100,000	over 100,000
under 100 words	42%	42%	40%
101 - 500 words	50	50	50
over 501 words	8	8	10
	(141)	(24)	(60)

Appendix Table C

MENTION OF OTHERS AND SIZE OF COMMUNITY

Mentions	Size of Community		
	to 25,000	25 - 100,000	over 100,000
member of family	71%	88%	82%
friends	24	21	27
people in general	7	8	12
no mention others	13	4	7
	(141)	(24)	(60)

Note: Each figure is a percentage of the total number of letters from each size community. Thus 71% of the total number of letters from communities with less than 25,000 people mentioned member of family. Percentages therefore, do not equal 100.

Appendix Table D

MENTION OF ORGANIZATION AND SIZE OF COMMUNITY

	Size of Community	
	under 100,000	over 100,000

mentions any organization, club, association, etc.	24%	18%
no mention of any organization, club, association, etc.	76	82
	(165)	(60)

These and several other tables that were run did not indicate any fundamental difference between the rural and the urban writers in our sample. The only hint at a difference is in the fact that rural (under 25,000) writers make fewer mentions of members of family, and omit any mention of other people, more frequently than either the 25,000-100,000 group or the over 100,000 group (Table C). Frequency of mention of friends, however, is about the same. While we may speculate that rural people feel the need to mention members of their family and 'others' less than city people, this speculation, too, can be tested only if rural and urban writers of fan mail are intensively compared. Our data, to this point, indicate little difference between them. But our data, it must be remembered, are for this sample only; and this sample is surely quite - unusual fan mail.

In any event, research on this point can make a substantial contribution to sociological theory. It seems to me that it must be carried on not only by content analysis, but by interview

with fan mail writers as well.

While our data did not reveal any substantial difference between rural and urban writers, we noted something else which is of interest. We separated out the 34 letters from communities of up to 100,000 population which were situated in metropolitan areas (of 500,000 or over) and compared them with rural and urban letters, and found them to be fundamentally different. Compare the characteristics which we introduced above:

Appendix Table E

LENGTH OF LETTERS FROM RURAL, URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

	Size of Community		
Number of words	under 25,000	over 100,000	Met. Area
under 100	42%	40%	32%
101-500	50	50	53
501-1000	8	10	15
	(141)	(60)	(34)

Appendix Table F

MENTION OF OTHERS IN LETTERS FROM
RURAL, URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

	Size of Community		
Mentions	under 25,000	over 100,000	Met. Area
member of family	71%	82%	94%
friends	24	27	15
	(141)	(60)	(34)

Note: Each figure is a percentage of the total number of letters from each size community. Thus 71% of the total number of letters from communities with less than 25,000 people mentioned member of family. Percentages, therefore, do not equal 100.

Appendix Table G

MENTION OF ORGANIZATIONS IN LETTERS FROM RURAL, URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

	Population		
	under 100,000	over 100,000	Met. Area
mention of club, organization, association, etc.	24%	18%	15%
no mention	76	82	85
	(165)	(60)	(34)

Note that writers from metropolitan areas write longer letters (Table E), make more mention of members of family and fewer of friends (Table F) and mention a club or organization less frequently (Table G) than either rural or urban writers. The number of cases is, of course, quite small and the data themselves prove nothing, but perhaps we have a lead here that

is profitable for making a wiser choice among hypotheses for further research. If it is found in other samples, that the metropolitan area writers do not differ fundamentally from rural and urban writers except on content of letter, and if the content of their letters shows the same general direction discovered here (a greater absence of community contact, more frequent family mentions, etc.) it will be interesting to study metropolitan areas further. The indication here is that these areas are not midway between rural and urban areas, that they have not solved the problem of 'how to lead a normal life and still not live too far away from the city'. It will be interesting to study, too, whether the volume of fan mail from metropolitan areas is greater than might be expected on the basis of the distribution of population.

* * *

These are some hypotheses about fan mail writers. The possibilities have by no means been exhausted. But fundamental to each of them--and to any others--is the specification of the different kinds of fan mail and the incidence of each, and the different kinds of radio programs and the volume of mail to each and the correspondence between kinds of fan mail and kinds of programs.

Further research must then proceed guided by hypothesis. And content analysis will not suffice. It must be complemented by focused interviews with writers and listeners-but-non-writers as well. It will not be fruitful, for example, to report, in the future, that there is a higher proportion of rural writers in a sample of a particular kind of fan mail without stating whether

and why this higher proportion is to be expected. And does higher mean higher than the urban proportion of mail or higher than the percentage of population in the United States living in rural areas? And why?

Some suggestions concerning the different immediate more-or-less-conscious motivations for writing to Ted Malone are included in Chapter V. That area, for fan mail generally, has been left relatively unexplored in this appendix, as has the area of comparing writers and listeners-but-non-writers.

II. Happiness: A Cultural Definition.

We defined happiness in terms of the reports of our letter writers about what was happy for them. In contrast, we pointed to what seemed to us--both impressionistically and on the basis of other studies--to be a definition that was prevalent in an earlier period in this country. We pointed, too, to the very realistic limitation of our study of the popular definition of happiness; that our sample was a sample of housewives. And we pointed, too, to the possibility that people viewed happiness and a happiest day or event fundamentally different things.

These three areas make fascinating research problems.

1. An investigation of the use of the words 'happy' and 'happiness' in previous generations would be very helpful for the development of a kind of social history of the concept of happiness. Was the importance of "being happy" always so heavily emphasized in America? What kind of things were called happy and which men were popularly considered 'happy' and which men were not?

2. A study of other segments of the population is

fundamental not only to the hypothesis advanced in this study but in many other studies of changing American value patterns, as well. Whether there has been a genuine shift from 'outer' to 'inner' things, from the big things to the 'little things', among other segments of the population must be determined.

It is well known, for example, that American women are far less interested in politics, elections, news broadcasts, etc. than men. Is this also reflected by different appraisals of what makes for happiness among men and women, or doesn't the greater interest of men in public affairs carry over to the area of happiness? Do as many men relate happiness to self and family as do women? And what of other social classes? What of people who are active in social movements, in government, in labor, in cooperative ventures?

3. We differentiated eleven categories among the happiest days reported and then divided these, generally, into the dichotomy; Doing and Happening. Compare the age distribution of these three groups:

Appendix Table H

AGE OF WRITER ACCORDING TO REPORTS OF HAPPIEST DAY IN TERMS OF DOING AND HAPPENING

Age	Doing	Happening
20 - 39	49%	49%
40 - 59	45	37
over 60	6	14
	(47)	(116)

There is a somewhat higher coincidence of Happening among

women 60 and over and somewhat more Doing than Happening on the 40 to 59 level. The data would be much more convincing if this were also the case on the 20 to 39 level.

But the fact that fewer of the oldest women report Doing gives us some validation--however slight--for the meaningfulness of our distinction between Doing and Happening and the added suggestion that future study of this dichotomy be examined on each age level.

It has not been our contention, however, that the Doing people and the Happening people in our sample are different in any more profound way. It is our impression--and we have so reported--that virtually all of the writers would agree that the happiest days reported by every one of the others was genuinely worthy of being called happy. While we would agree with the basic psychological distinction between creativity (Doing) and letting things happen (especially what we have called mechanical happiness), this paper cannot do more than hint at the need for further study of this dichotomy and the personality types involved in each. Even the most trivial kinds of Doing--bearing no resemblance to Russell's or Fromm's or Lynd's concept of meaningful activity--were classified here as Doing. Hence, it cannot be expected that we have separated fundamentally different personality types.

Thus, for example, we find no difference between Doing people and Happening people on such characteristics as length of letter (Table I) and the distribution of letters that mention others among the several categories of "mention others". (Table J)

Appendix Table I

LENGTH OF LETTER ACCORDING TO REPORTS OF HAPPIEST DAY IN TERMS OF DOING AND HAPPENING

No. of words	Doing	Happening
under 100	40%	42%
101 - 500	46	50
over 500	13	8
	(65)	(148)

Appendix Table J

DISTRIBUTION OF MENTION OF OTHERS BY REPORTERS OF DOING AND HAPPENING WHO MADE SUCH MENTIONS

Mention of	Doing	Happening
family member	67%	70%
friend	24	20
people, in general	8	7
public figures	1	3
	(76)	(98)

Note: Percentage of total number of "mention of others".

Similarly, mention of types of problems shows no difference between Doing and Happening people except for the higher incidence of illness reports among Happening People. But this is not strange since, by definition, reports of happiest days because of improvement or recovery from illness was classified as Happening.

Yet there are some examples of differences. One which seems significant--but for which we have no ready hypothesis--is the incidence of mention of others expressed not as a percentage of the total number of "mentions" but as a percentage of the total number of letters.

Appendix Table K

FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF OTHERS BY REPORTERS OF HAPPIEST DAY IN TERMS OF DOING AND IN TERMS OF HAPPENING

Mention of	Doing	Happening
family member	78%	46%
friend	28	14
people, in general	9	5
public figures	2	2

(65)	(148)

Note: Percentages of total number of Doing letters and total number of Happening letters. Thus 78% of those who reported Doing Happiness mentioned a family member.

We do not intend to imply that studies of other samples of fan mail will yield more significant data on this problem. Not at all. Other samples of mail not specifically focused on the question of happiness projects similar to Malone's will be irrelevant to this study. The focused interview, attitude, research, and personality tests are the proper spheres for future research on happiness.

ENDNOTES - APPENDIX A:

1. Measurement in Radio, op.cit., pp. 38-44

2. See the Public Opinion Quarterly.

3. As reported in World Almanac, 1949 edition.

4. Cantril and Allport, op. cit., pp 95-96

5. See John Cresby's discussion of Radioland Mail Service, a fan mail answering organization: "O'Donnell, who personally reads and answers five or six thousand letters a week, thinks that a lot of his correspondents are lonely people who just want someone to write to. They start out asking questions about a radio program and end up telling him the story of their lives." From "The Letter Writing Public", New York Herald Tribune, February 7, 1949.

5. See Chapter V, above, "Why Write Malone".

APPENDIX B

A main purpose of this study was to examine the current cultural, or 'popular' definition of happiness.

Intentionally, we did not begin by discussing definitions of happiness in an attempt to specify, a priori, a scientific definition of happiness. Instead, we proceeded from an examination of the importance placed on 'being happy' in our culture to an examination of the range of things that our letter writers and others reported as happiness.

It will be said by those who hold one or another specific definition of happiness--and by those who mistake the intention of this study--that we have not spent sufficient time defining the nature of happiness. That is, we shall be told that a social scientist cannot accept a word that has been in constant use and has had so many meanings and unquestioningly make it the subject for a study.

Let it be repeated that this is precisely what we have done. We started with the word itself--with the great and repeated emphasis given to the word 'happiness' as an ideal, a goal, for every man, woman and child in our society. We did not then say "Happiness is this and that..." and examine our data to see which letter writers were 'really' talking about happiness and which were 'mistaken'. Instead we asked the data themselves to define the current meaning of happiness in order to discover what were the kinds of things called happy. It was, of course, conceivable that we would not discover uniformities; but the fact is that we did discover quite specific uniformities. We

discovered several kinds of happiness, and in this way, empirically, we were able to specify the popular usage of the word 'happiness' itself.[1]

Our data, then, revealed a range of things called happiness which we could group into kinds of happiness. The implication of our groupings, or categories, is not that one kind of happiness precludes or contradicts the several other kinds. Not at all. It seems absolutely certain to us that the largest proportion of each group of writers who reported one kind of happiness would accept the happiness reports of the other groups as 'genuine' happiness.

The purpose of our analysis was otherwise. Given the distribution of the kinds of happiness reported by our letter writers, it is possible to examine the nature and frequency of each happiness category in terms of its sociological and psychological meaning, in terms of a comparison with popular definitions of happiness in previous generations and among other segments of the population, and in terms of the socio-philosophical literature on happiness. Only then is comparison and valuation--in terms of 'scientific' definitions of happiness--in order.

We have attempted to carry through each of these assignments in the several chapters of this study. For each major area, except in the area of valuation, we were able to submit a conclusion, or at least to indicate one more or less definitely.

For valuation, however, we could not presume to offer one conclusion. In Chapters X and XI, we attempted to delineate the

fundamental difference of opinion in the contemporary literature on happiness. We tried to illustrate this difference by citing Hornell Hart[2], on one side, and Erich Fromm[3] on the other. We did not feel that it was the province of this study to choose one side or the other; or that choice, if made, would be anything more than our personal bias--since the empirical data are, of course, quite neutral in this matter.

In this Appendix, we should like to elaborate, briefly, on this aspect of the socio-philosophical literature on happiness.

As we have already indicated, the primary controversy concerning the nature of happiness--as it bears on our data--is the question of "genuineness". Are people who say that they are happy genuinely happy; are our letter writers really reporting happiness?

This is not a methodological question--that is, we are not asking whether our letter writers--or people who answer questionnaires--are reporting accurately what they feel. We shall assume that they are. For further simplification, too, let us omit what we know to be the American emphasis on the importance of 'pursuing' happiness and the apparent need to reassure yourself that you are happy.

The "genuineness" debate would then go something like this:

The happiness reported by the letter writers is a product of the reflection of each individual about a thing or an event or an incident with which he can associate the statement "I am happy" or "this made me happy", etc. There is no reason to doubt that the happiness reported is genuine and the recurrence of the situation reported would result in a similar feeling. The individual is the judge of what is happy for himself.

> The happiness reported by the letter writers cannot be accepted unquestioningly as genuine. Happiness is defined in terms of self-fulfillment of the human being, creative association with meaningful activity, etc. Reports of happiness may simply be reports of relief from tension, various forms of gratifications (including masochism, for example), pleasure and satisfactions of several sorts, etc. none of which is related to happiness.

In terms of Fromm's definition of happiness, for example, almost none of our letter writers reported anything that could be considered genuine happiness. It is true, of course, that we can dismiss the entire discussion by saying that the introduction into this study of a priori definitions (of happiness, pleasure, gratifications, etc.)[4] employed precisely is mere confusion. That is true to the extent that appraisal of our findings is carried on at a normative level: "this is genuine happiness, "this isn't genuine happiness". But it should be clear that the problem here goes beyond the question of definitions. In Fromm's case for example, even if we omit all mention of the word happiness, we find a valuation of the reports of our letter writers in terms of healthiness. That is, given the activities and events singled out as important by each writer from among the activities and events of an entire month, a judgment of fundamental unhealthiness would be pronounced by this side of the "genuineness" controversy.

The other side proceeds empirically. People are happy when

they say so. This does not mean that the determinant of the subjective feeling of being happy are unfathomable or somehow, untouchable. On the contrary. Distinguishing empirically between those who say "I am happy" and those who say "I am not happy", the researcher can locate those events or situations which are crucial for happiness or unhappiness. It is theoretically possible--if the 'popular' definition turned out to be the same as an a priori definition--that the individual who reported himself happy would be the one whom Fromm, for example, would call 'genuinely' happy. Such, however, is not at all the case. Hart, for one, locates the determinants of happiness among a mixture of attitudinal and situational factors. Attitude toward income, but not actual income is a determinant; religious couples are slightly more happy than non-religious; altruism and friendly attitudes are important; planning and 'building for thrills' is important, etc.

The implications for social action of each of these sides of the 'genuineness' controversy have already been discussed.[5] Here, we shall proceed to focus several of the other discussions on happiness in the literature. While each can be expressed as a unit by itself, it will be helpful to discuss them in terms of the "genuineness" debate.

Inner and Outer[6]

The "inner" side says that the individual is completely capable of the attainment of happiness regardless of environmental conditions. Some of the "inner" people would hold that the environment is almost completely unrelated to happiness--some theologians, perhaps; others would point to

statistics to show that the environment is not basic: income seems to make little difference, for example, as a determinant for the subjective report "I am happy".

The "outer" side postulates the satisfactions of certain psychological and physical requisites before the attainment of happiness is possible. Not all of the "outer" people would equate the fulfillment of these requisites as happiness itself, but without them--by and large--happiness is impossible, they say.

It is clear, then, that the "inner" side--those generally who would spiritualize happiness--are more inclined to accept the verbal report of being happy as "genuine". On the other hand, the "outer" side is much more critical of the "genuineness" of such reports.

Russell[7], for example, postulates four conditions for the happy life: health and a fair degree of economic security; work which is satisfying both because it is felt to be worth doing and because it utilizes whatever skill a man possesses without making impossible demands; personal relations that are satisfying and especially a happy family life; a width of interests which makes many things enjoyable. The similarity of this list to the "four wishes", to Lynd's list of human cravings and to Fromm's emphasis on happiness as an "achievement brought about by man's inner productivity" is evident.

Among the ten British writers[8], J.H. Priestley, Martin Armstrong, Gerald Bullett and Storm Jameson are each advocates of "inner" happiness. Jameson, for example, points to two kinds of happiness; the kind that can be "arranged for, within

limits...and come from satisfaction of a few, very simple desires." But the other kind--the much more important kind for Jameson--cannot be "arranged"; it comes and goes without asking. It is the "feeling which can drop as quickly from a grey sky as from any other..." Bullett, for another example, says that "unhappiness cannot exist in the absence of a cause, whereas happiness always exists in the absence of a cause. The most that can be said is that certain things--sunlight, family well-being, love and so on--provide the conditions in which joy is released and has play. But the joy itself is a native endowment, coincident with life itself, perhaps in some way identical with life itself."

Advocates of the "outer" among these British writers include V.S. Pritchett, Bertrand Russell and Havelock Ellis. Russell says that he does "not much admire those rich men and women who tell the poor that happiness is spiritual and just as easy on a small income as on a large one...I put first the physical conditions: food, shelter, health. Only when these have been secured is it worth while to consider psychological requisites." Ellis negates any "inner" definition which has no reference to an outer world or to 'others': "Lucretius referred to the satisfaction experienced by the man who stands safely on shore and views those who are drowning in the sea. Today, when books pour from the press to describe how the thousands in China and in Spain are dying in torture or else are deprived of all that makes life worth living, the men who from the shores of a cautiously democratic island gloats over his own happiness, scarcely seems a more estimable object." We can say, about

Ellis, that he has made not only security and order in the immediate environment his prerequisite for happiness but security for all men.

State and Experience

The advocates of "outer" prerequisites for happiness focus on happiness not as a specific "experience" but as a continuing "state". This is reasonable enough. It does not mean that these writers cannot conceive of the happiness that results from a specific event, the joy of a particular occasion or "experience". It means, simply, that these writers deal generally with the idea of the "state" of happiness--a more or less continuous situation--in which an individual can live. Many of the "outer" writers would probably agree on the possibility of real difference in kind between, say, a particular experience conceived of as happy and the "state" happiness with which they are concerned. Fromm, on the other hand, persists even here in relating the two: "Joy and happiness are not different in quality; they are different only inasmuch as joy refers to a single act while happiness may be said to be a continuous or integrated experience of joy."

Similarly, the "inner" writers do not agree with each other on the "state-experience" focus. Jameson, for example, emphasizes the suddenness and unpredictability of happiness, whereas Bullett identifies joy as a native endowment, "perhaps is some way identical with life itself."

Essentially, these two concepts are not contradictory, but often they become confused in a discussion of happiness. While

we see that those who are critical of genuineness and who are likely to emphasize "outer" considerations are also more likely to focus on "state" happiness, there is no compelling reason to hold that a necessary continuum exists between a particular "experience" of happiness and the "state" of being happy. That this fact is a major limitation in the scope of this study has already been indicated.[9]

Still, the basic problem is the question of "genuineness". It would be meaningless for us to 'decide' the argument, though our bias, surely, is evident.

ENDNOTES - APPENDIX B

1. Compare the very interesting discussion on sociological study of popular notions in Sprague, Theodore W., "A Note on the Twofold Relevance of Popular Concepts for Sociology", American Sociological Review, August, 1949.

"... The sociologist, then is under the necessity of dealing with two sorts of concepts: his own scientific constructs and popular notions...The former are his "tools", the latter a part of his data. Clear definition, consistently adhered to, is essential for the former; to attempt the same for a popular concept will often be to do violence to its nature, for internal consistency of usage will often not be one of its attributes; rather than defined, it and its content should be described as with any empirical phenomenon...The development of a system of conceptual tools for sociology, and the development of a sound "sociology of concepts" are both important but very different ventures... "

2. Hornell Hart, op. cit., cited above, Chap. X. pp. 79-80, Chap. XI, pp. 88, 90-91.

3. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, op. cit., cited above Chap. X, pp. 80-81, Chap. XI, pp. 87, 90-91.

4. Ibid., see Fromm's chapter on Pleasure and Happiness".

5. Above, Chap. XI, pp. 88-91.

6. This distinction was discussed, in these terms, in "The Round Table on the Pursuit of Happiness", op. cit.

7. In What Is Happiness, op. cit.

8. Ibid.

9. Above, Chap. IX, pp. 72-73.

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