

I could not resist writing on his paper, 'why bother about heating the water?' Thankfully such experiments usually do stop short of killing their subjects, and they do not intentionally inflict physical pain. However, most subjects find the experience very painful psychologically! Subjects may be placed in a darkened, silent and odourless space. In some cases they are loosely clothed, including soft gloves, to avoid any sensation of touch. In such cases subjects usually report vivid images flooding into their minds, soon turning into what we would recognize as hallucinations. Most subjects ask to be released from such awful environments in a remarkably short time, but characteristically they think they have been there for many hours! It seems we are quite simply not meant to exist in such a neutral space, and so we compensate by inventing our own internal mental stimulation, which can quickly get out of control.

By contrast, an environment in which we are bombarded with sensation seems equally disturbing, and sadly this is exploited in many forms of torture. Imagine such a world for a moment. You are in a cell and a blinding light comes on and off at totally unpredictable but generally rather short intervals. There is similarly an unpredictable but sometimes deafening noise, also over which you have no control. A series of quite dreadful smells wafts across the room. Ask yourself how long you would remain calm and at peace in such a place! Thankfully most of us need never endure either of these two extremes, but at times we have all felt bored or over-stimulated. Actually, of course, the level



**2.2** The three important needs of stimulation, security and identity can all be satisfied by the designed environment. Our balance of need at any time will depend on several factors, including personality, physical health and age, and social context