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THE THEORY OF MASS SOCIETY

PREFATORY REMARKS

A specter is haunting sociologists. It is the specter of "mass society." This phantasm is not of the sociologist's own making. The conception of mass society, that had its origin in the Roman historians' idea of the tumultuous populace and its greatest literary expression in *Coriolanus*, is largely a product of the nineteenth century. In this epoch, it is a product of the reaction against the French Revolutions which ran from 1789, through 1830 and 1848, to 1871. Jakob Burckhardt and Friedrich Nietzsche, fearful of the inflammability of the mob in the presence of a heated demagogue—that demagogue was Louis Napoléon—came to envisage modern society, particularly modern democratic society, as tending toward an inert and formless mass, lying in brutish torpor most of the time and occasionally aroused to plebiscitary acclamation by a "great simplifier." Tocqueville's critique of the absolutist *ancien régime*, centered on a vision of a society which has lost its framework of feudal liberty through the destruction of the autonomous corporations and estates on which it rested, is a cornerstone of that construction. The no-man's land between the absolute

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prince and the mass of the population became a field open to passion and manipulation.

This notion of the mob received a certain amount of subsequent embroidery through the work of Le Bon and Sighele. A deeper extension, which was not realized at the time, lay in the work of the German sociologists. They distinguished between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*; the latter, characterized by the evaporation of moral bonds, the shrivelling of kinship and traditional institutions and beliefs, and the isolation of the individual from his fellows, was alleged to be representative of modern Western society.

The synthesis of these elements took place in the quasi-Marxist assessments of the regime of National Socialist Germany: the disintegrative influence of capitalism and urban life had left man alone and helpless. To protect himself, he fled into the arms of the all-absorbing totalitarian party. Thus the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoléon of December, 1851, and the *Machtergreifung* of March, 1933, became the prototypical events of modern society, and the society of the Weimar Republic was declared to be the characteristic pattern of modern society in preparation for its natural culmination.

This is the intellectual background from which the conception of mass society has grown. It has gained new strength from the developments in the technology of communication, which were called "mass communications," before their association with mass society occurred. Yet the accident of similar designation has facilitated the fusion of the criticism of the intellectual and cultural content of press, wireless, and television with the apprehension about the dangers inherent in standardless and defenseless condition of the "masses."

The result is the following image of "mass society:" a territorially extensive society, with a large population, highly urbanized and industrialized. Power is concentrated in this society, and much of the power takes the form of manipulation of the mass through the media of mass communication. Civic spirit is poor, local loyalties are few, primordial solidarity is virtually nonexistent. There is no individuality, only a restless and frustrated egoism. It is like the state of nature described by Thomas Hobbes, except that public disorder is restrained through the manipulation

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of the elite and the apathetic idiocy of the mass. The latter is broken only when, in a state of crisis, the masses rally around some demagogue.

I think that this is an untruthful picture of Western society of recent decades. It is a gross distortion of certain features of the large-scale liberal-democratic societies of the West. It is taken from a standpoint which postulates, as the right ordering of life, an entirely consensual, perfectly integrated, small-scale society, permeated by a set of common theological beliefs which give meaning to every aspect of life. Empirically, this view is blind to the whole range of phenomena indicated in this paper; theoretically, it fails to see that no society could go on reproducing itself and maintaining even a coerced order if it corresponded to the description given by the critics of "mass society." Yet the conception of mass society has the merit of having responded, however erroneously, to a characteristic feature of this recent phase of modern society; namely, the entry of the mass of the population into greater proximity to the center of society. Although I think that most of the analysis contained in the prevailing conception of this form of twentieth-century Western society is incorrect, it has the virtue of having perceived a certain historical uniqueness and of having given it a name.

The name does not appeal to me. I use it with much misgiving because it has cognitive and ethical overtones which are repugnant to me. Yet, since it has the merit of having focussed attention on a historically and sociologically very significant phase of modern society, and since it is the resultant analysis which I wish to correct, I shall go on using the term, while trying not to be a captive of the problems and categories which it carries with it in its overtones. Furthermore, there is no other term which has a comparable evocative power.

I

The term "mass society" points generally and unsteadily at something genuinely novel in the history of human society. It refers to a new order of society which acquired visibility between the two World Wars, and actually came noisily and ponderously into our presence after the end of the Second. In the United States

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above all, but also in Great Britain, France, Germany, Northern Italy, the Low and Northern European Countries, Australia and Japan, this new society has become tangibly established. Less evenly and more partially, some of its features have begun to appear in Eastern and Central Europe and they have here and there begun to show incipient and premonitory signs of existence in Asian and African countries.

The novelty of the "mass society" lies in the relationship of the mass of the population to the center of the society. The relationship is a closer integration into the central institutional and value systems of the society.

An aggregate of individual human beings living over a territory constitutes a society by virtue of their integration into a system in which the parts are interdependent. The types of societies with which we are concerned here are those in which the integration occurs, not through kinship, but through the exercise and acceptance of authority in the major subsystems of the society, in the polity, the economy, and the status and cultural orders, i.e., in educational and religious institutions and their associated norms and beliefs. Integration occurs in two directions—vertically and horizontally. A society is vertically integrated in a hierarchy of power and authority and a status order; it is horizontally integrated by the unity of the elites of the various sectors or subsystems of the society and through the moral consensus of the whole.

The absolutist societies of the European *ancien régime*, and indeed the great monarchies of the Orient and of Western antiquity, were characterized from time to time by a fairly high degree of horizontal integration of the elites at each level of the society, although as one descended in the hierarchy, the territorial radius within which elites were horizontally integrated diminished. There was a close affinity and co-operation between the governmental, political, religious, military, and intellectual elites, although there were often severe struggles within the political elite which spread to the elites of the other spheres. Vertically, however, these societies were very seldom highly integrated. Villages, estates, regions lived their own lives, connected with the center through the payment of taxes, the provision of obligatory labor services, the performance of religious rites in which the central authority had an acknowledged place and the occasional recourse to a more

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or less unitary judiciary. These connections were, on the whole, highly intermittent. The major continuous integration from the center was through the church, where such existed, as in Europe, or through common religious beliefs where there was no formal ecclesiastical body, country-wide in the comprehensiveness of its coverage. The central institutions of government, education, and religion did not reach very far into the life of the mass. The cultural, economic, and administrative autonomy of territorially restricted areas was great, and the center intruded into local life only occasionally. The symbols of the center to which there was a wide-spread, fairly continuous, and common attachment were practically nonexistent. The very meagre coverage of the educational system meant that the culture possessed by the educated classes was scarcely shared at all by the vast majority of the population; and, correspondingly, the conception of the world, and the standards of judgment of the various strata of society, must have had little in common. To a limited extent, this feebleness of the vertical integration from the center was probably offset by the closer contacts between the "big house" and the tenants and laborers on the large estates. Even within this small local radius, however, the amount of vertical integration, although strong through the exercise of authority, must have been consensually slight because of the very steep hierarchy of status and the profound differences in culture among the various strata.

At the lower levels, the regimes of the great states were hardly integrated at all horizontally. Villages and estates, over the country as a whole, were scarcely in contact with each other either directly through exchange or sympathy or even through their links with the center.

Indeed, it might be said that, except at the level of the highest political, ecclesiastical, administrative, military, and cultural elites, there really was scarcely a society covering a large territory. The mass was a part of this society largely in the ecological sense; it was only faintly part of its moral order, or even, for that matter, of its system of authority except on narrow occasions.

When we turn our attention to advanced modern societies, the situation is quite otherwise. Government is more continuously and effectively in contact with much of the population through the variety and comprehensiveness of its legislation, through the conti-

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nuity and intensity of administration, through nearly universal public education until well into adolescence. The capital of a country and its major urban centers are no longer centers only to the notabilities of the society, but for the ordinary people as well. The economy of a mass society is much more integrated both horizontally and vertically than has ever been the case in past epochs of history and outside the advanced industrial societies. Whether by a nation-wide market economy, dominated by large nation-wide corporations and by central governmental regulation, or by a socialistically planned economy, scarcely any part of the economic order of the society lives in isolation from its rulers or competitors.

The higher level of educational attainment, the higher degree of literacy, and the greater availability of cultural products like books, periodicals, gramophone records, television, and wireless programs, spread the culture which was once confined to a narrow circle at the center over a far greater radius. These, and the much greater "politicization" of the population, bring about an historically unique measure of community of culture.

The intensity of vertical integration differs among societies. Federations are less intensely integrated vertically than unitary regimes; regimes with strong local government are less integrated vertically than regimes like France, where local government is largely in the hands of centrally appointed officials; regimes which allow private and parochial schools are less integrated than those which require that everyone receive his education at a state educational institution. The fundamental distinction among societies with a fairly high degree of integration is that between pluralistic and totalitarian regimes. The totalitarian regimes are much more completely integrated vertically.

Their intense vertical integration is reinforced, furthermore, by an almost equally intense horizontal integration. Their horizontal integration is expressed in the unitary structure of their elites. Their elites are, in their functions, as differentiated, as the elites of a pluralistic regime. Only a very small and very simple society could have an elite in which the same persons performed practically all elite tasks. Differentiation of roles and specialization to the roles of the persons who fill them are an unavoidable and monumental fact of any advanced civilization, however much

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overlap there is among roles and however much passage there might be among them. The elites of a pluralistic regime are much less integrated horizontally and vertically, authoritatively and consensually, than the totalitarian elites.

II

The mass society is a new phenomenon, but the elements from which it has arisen are not new. The *polis* was its seed; it was nurtured and developed in the Roman idea of a common citizenship extending over a vast territory. The growth of the sense of nationality, from an occasional expression prior to the French Revolution to an expanding reality in the social life of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, was the course taken by this deepening sense of affinity among the members of diverse strata and regions of modern countries. When the proponents and agents of the modern idea of the nation put forward the view that life on a bounded, continuous, and common territory, beyond the confines of kinship, caste, and religious belief, united the human beings living within that territory into a single collectivity, and made language the evidence of that membership, they committed themselves, not often wittingly, to the mass society. The primordial root of territorial location persists—like other primordial things, it can only become attenuated, but never disappear. Language, and all that is contained in language and transmitted by it, becomes the link through which the members of the mass society are bound to each other and to the center. The sharing of a language is the sharing of the essential quality which confers membership in society.

The sense of the primordial and attachment to it has been transformed and dispersed in mass society. Common existence on a contiguous territory has passed ahead of biological kinship, which obviously has insuperable limitations as a basis for union over a large territory. At the most, it is capable of extension into ethnicity and in this transmutation, it still has very great vitality. Common territoriality is capable of greater extension as a basis of union. It is the rise to prominence of the symbol of territoriality which is one of the main features of the modern sense of nationality, which is, in its turn, a precondition for the emergence of mass

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society. The fact that a man lives in one's own territory however extensive, now confers on him rights to one's consideration which earlier societies did not know on this scale. In modern society, the territory which possesses this capacity to establish communion has become greatly extended.

This shift in the balance within the category of primordiality has been part of a wider sublimation of the sacred from the primordial to the dispositional. In early modern times, it was a disposition of belief—even of specific theological belief— which those most involved in authority thought was necessary for the formation of union over a bounded territory. The dominion of this category of assessment of one's fellow man has been lightened to the advantage of a more tolerant inclination to view another human being in accordance with a conception of him as a bearer of less specific dispositions—either entirely personal or more or less civil. The civil disposition is nothing more than the acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the authority—definitely located in persons or offices or diffuse in the form of the legitimacy of the social order—which prevails over a bounded and extensive territory.

This change has made possible a consensus, fundamental and broad, which includes as fellow men, all those living on a bounded territory responsible by their presence to the legitimacy of the order and the authorities who prevail there. The inclusion of the entire population in the society, or a pronounced tendency towards that inclusion, is what makes the mass society.

III

When we say that this new order of mass society is a consensual society, this does not mean, however, that it is completely consensual, a fabric of seamless harmony. The competition and conflict of corporate bodies resting on diverse class, ethnic, professional, and regional identifications and attachments are vigorous and outspoken in this new order of society. So are the unorganized antagonisms of individuals and families of these diverse classes, ethnic, professional, and regional sectors. Inequalities exist in mass society and they call forth at least as much resentment, if not more, than they ever did. Indeed, there is perhaps more

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awareness of the diversity of situation and the conflict of sectional aspirations in this society than in most societies of the past.

What is specific to this modern "mass society," with all its conflicts, is the establishment of consensually legitimate institutions within which much of this conflict takes place and which impose limits on this conflict. Parliaments, the system of representation of interests through pressure groups, systems of negotiation between employers and employees, are the novel ways of permitting and confining the conflict of interests and ideals characteristic of modern mass societies. These institutions, the very constitution of the mass society, can exist because a widespread consensus, particularly a consensus of the most active members of the society, legitimates them, and, more fundamentally, because a more general and more amorphous consensus of the less active imposes restraint on the more active when they might otherwise infringe on the constitution. This consensus grows in part from an attachment to the center, to the central institutional system and value order of the society. It is also a product of a newly emergent —at least on such a vast scale—feeling of unity with one's fellow men, particularly within the territorial boundaries of the modern societies.

Hence, despite all internal conflicts, bridging and confining them, there are, within the mass society, more of a sense of attachment to the society as a whole, more sense of affinity with one's fellows, more openness to understanding, and more reaching out of understanding among men, than in any earlier society of our Western history or in any of the great Oriental societies of the past. The mass society is not the most peaceful or "orderly" society that has ever existed; but it is the most consensual.

The maintenance of public peace through apathy and coercion in a structure of extremely discontinuous interaction is a rather different thing from its maintenance through consensus in a structure of a more continuous interaction between center and periphery and among various peripheral sectors. The greater activity of the periphery of the society, both in conflict and in consensus—especially in the latter—is what makes this a mass society. The historical uniqueness of the modern society, notably in its latter-day phases, is the incorporation of the mass into the moral order of its society. The mass of the population is no longer merely an

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object which the elite takes into account as a reservoir of military and labor power or as a possible or actual source of public disorder. Nor does it any longer consist of a set of relatively discreet local societies occasionally in contact with the center under the impulsion of coercion and interest.

The center of society—the central institutions governed by the elites and the central value orders which guide and legitimate these institutions—has extended its boundaries. A center still exists and must always exist; and this entails an inevitable unevenness of the participation in the consensus formed around the center. It is, however, now an unevenness which slopes less steeply, so that most of the population—the "mass"—stand in a closer moral affinity and in a more frequent, even though mediated, interaction with the center than has been the case in either pre-modern societies or the earlier phases of modern society. The greater proximity to the center of society consists in a greater attachment to that center—to the institutions which constitute it and the values which are embodied in it. There is, accordingly, a greater feeling within the mass of being continuous with the center, of being part of it, and of its being a part of the same substance of which one is oneself formed.

This consensus has not, however, been unilaterally formed, and it is not sustained merely by the affirmation at the periphery of what emanates from the center, in which the mass has come to share the standards and beliefs of the elites. It consists also in the greater attachment of the center to the peripheral sectors of the society. The elites have changed as well as the masses. One feature of the mass society is that, at least to some extent and in various ways, the elites have come to share many of the objects of attention and fundamental standards which originate, or at least have their main support, in the mass. Of course, elite and mass are not indentical in their outlooks or tastes, but the mass means more to elites now than it did in other great societies. It has come to life in the minds of its rulers more vividly than ever before. This change has been brought about in part by the increased political, and then by the increased purchasing power of the mass; but, ultimately and profoundly, by the change in moral attitudes which has underlain the enhancement of the dignity of ordinary people. The enhanced dignity of the mass, the belief

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that, in one way or another, *vox populi, vox dei,* is the source of the mass society. Both elites and the masses have received this into their judgment of themselves and the world; and, although they believe in much else, and believe in this quite unequally, this maxim which locates the sacred in the mass of the population is the shaping force of the most recent development in society.

The sacredness of authority diminished with the dispersal of the sacred into the mass of the population. It is still an object of awe. Charisma is still attributed to it. The awe-inspiring, charismatic quality of authority can never be completely eradicated. Even in mass society, the charisma of the elite is alive, and not solely as a survival from an earlier epoch. It is simply given in the nature of power. The unique feature of the mass society is, however, the dispersion of charismatic quality more widely throughout the society, so that everyone who is a member of the society, because he is a member, comes to possess some of it.

This diminution in the status of authority is part of the same process which loosens the hold of traditional beliefs, especially those promulgated and espoused by hierarchical institutions. A society entirely without tradition is inconceivable. Traditions continue to exert their influence; but they are less overtly acknowledged, somewhat more ambiguous, and more open to divergent interpretations.

The diminished weight of primordiality, the greater concentration on the disposition of those residing at the moment on the bounded territory, means that the mass society is the society of the living, contemporaneous mass. It is almost as if society possessed a quantum of charisma, which, if it be attributed to the living, leaves little over for attribution to the ancestors. Since, however, no society can ever cut itself off from its past as a source of its own legitimacy, any more than its sensitivity to the primordial can ever evaporate completely, the traditional inheritance is adapted to the necessities of mass society by the diverse interpretations of rights which correspond to the vital heterogeneity of interests within the mass society itself.

The attenuation of traditional belief and of attachment to the past is accentuated by the less authoritative relationship of adults to children—which in itself is an outcome of the same moral shift which has enabled modern society to become a mass society.

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The dispersal of the charisma which confers dignity may be observed in the attitudes towards the working classes, women, youth, and ethnic groups that have hitherto been in a disadvantageous position. It is noticeable within families, in the rights of children, and within corporate bodies like factories, universities, and churches, in the rights of subordinates.

IV

This dispersion of charisma from the center outward has manifested itself in a greater stress on individual dignity and individual rights in all generations, in all strata, in both sexes, and in the whole variety of ethnic groups and peoples. This extension does not always reach equally into all spheres of life; and it does not equally embrace all sectors of the population. Inequalities remain, partly from tradition, partly from functional necessity, and partly from the fact that the movement toward equality is not the only fundamental impulse that moves men and women. Sadism, pride, interest, awe before the creative, still persist and limit the spread of equality.

Nonetheless, this consensus, which leans toward the interpretation of every living human being as a participant in the uniting essence which defines the society, has produced a wide distribution of civility. Civility is the virtue of the citizen, not the virtue of the hero or of the private man. It is the acceptance of the tasks of the management of public affairs in collaboration with others and with a regard to the interests, individual, sectional, and collective, of the entire society. The sense of responsibility for and to the whole, and a general acceptance of the rules which are valid within it, are integral to civility. Civil politics are the politics of effective compromise within an institutional system accepted as of inherent legitimacy. The idea of civility is not a modern creation; but it is in the mass society that it has found a more widely diffused, if still a deeply imperfect, realization. The very idea of a citizenry practically conterminous with the adult population living within far-flung territorial boundaries is a product of this extension of the "center," i. e., of the belief that charisma belongs in the mass as well as in the elite.

The moral equalitarianism which is such a unique trait of the

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West, in real practice, and not just as the dream of philosophers, is another manifestation of this expansion of the "center."[1]

The moral equality which has a tangible reality in mass societies is the equality which is a function of the sharing in membership in a community, by the sharing of the language in which the essence of the society is expressed. Those who share in this membership, as it is evinced by their share in the language, come to be regarded as sharing in the charismatic essence of the society and therewith may legitimately claim an irreducible dignity.

V

The mass society lifted the lid on impulse, hitherto held down by the hierarchy of authority, tradition and ancestry. The relocation of the charisma of the social order into one's ordinary, individual fellow man marches hand in hand with a redirection of sensitivity to disposition, to qualities lying within the individual. The civil disposition is only one such disposition. There is also the personal disposition which has been increasingly discovered in mass society. It is discovered in oneself and in others.

The personal dispositions, those qualities of rationality and impulsiveness, amiability and surliness, kindliness and harshness, lovingness and hatefulness are the constitution of the individual. Felt by himself, acknowledged by himself, coped with by himself, they are formed into his individuality. The perception and appreciation of individuality in others moves in unison with its development in the self.

Personal individuality and the sacredness of the individual in the civil order are not identical. Indeed, they are almost polar

[1] In a society touched by moral equalitarianism, the possibility of a populistic inequalitarianism in which some become "more equal than others" is by no means remote. In American society, and possibly in Australia, which have gone farther in this direction than any other countries, and where populism is not merely a doctrine of the intellectuals but a belief and practice of the populace and its politicians, there is always some danger that a strong gust of populistic sentiment can disrupt the civil order. Such was the situation during the years from 1947 to 1954, when the late Senator McCarthy stirred and was carried by the whirlpool of an extreme populism. But it never spread into the entire society; and, in the end, it broke on the rocks of Republican respectability. It remains a latent possibility, inherent in the ethos of mass society.

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opposites; the latter is in a certain sense a denial of the former. It transcends personal individuality and suspends it. Nonetheless they both have grown from the lightening of pressure of the primordial and from the loosening of the rigor of a sacred order based on common belief, on a shared communion with divinity.

Individuality, personal relationships and love have not been discovered by mass society. They have been known in practically all cultures. It is, however, only in mass society that they have come to be regarded as part of the right order of life, and have come to be striven for and occasionally, however unstably, attained.

The mass society has gone further in the creation of a common culture than any previous society. Regional cultural variations have diminished as well as those of class and profession and even those of generation. Yet this more widely extended uniformity, which for sheer repressive force might be no smaller or greater than the repression of the more local sectional cultures of the past, has been dialectically connected with the emergence of a greater individuality. The high evaluation of contemporaneity in mass society, the heavier stress on present enjoyment rather than on the obligation of respect towards tradition, involves necessarily an opening to experience. The diminished respect for the sacredness of authority has been accompanied by the shift of the center of gravity into the individual. Of course, as the critics of mass society often point out, this can result in a dull acceptance of what is readily available in the most visible models in the culture, and in fact it frequently does so, with the result that individuality in many instances is no better situated in mass society than it was in more hierarchical and traditional societies. Nonetheless, there has been a great change, not too different from that which Burckhardt perceived in the Renaissance. The individual organism has become a seeker after experience, a repository of experience, an imaginative elaborator of experience. To a greater extent than in the past, the experience of the ordinary person, at least in youth, is admitted to consciousness and comes to form part of the core of the individual's outlook. There has come about a greater openness to experience, an efflorescence and intensification of sensibility. There has been a transcendence of the primordially and authoritatively given, a movement outward towards experience, not only towards organic sensation, but towards the experience of

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other minds and personalities. It gives rise to and lives in *personal* attachment, it grows from the expansion of the empathic capacities of the human being.

In a crude, often grotesque way, the mass society has seen the growth, over wide areas of society, of an appreciation of the value of the experience of personal relationships, of the intrinsic value of a personal attachment, nowhere more than in the vicissitudes of love and marriage in modern society, with all its conflict and dissolution. Perhaps too much is demanded of the frail and unstable capacities of the organism for personal attachment, but the sensitivity and the striving are there. The talk about "human relations" in private and public administration might be largely cant and unthinking cliché, but not entirely. This is the age in which man has begun to live, to breathe with less congestion and to open his pores. The pleasures of eye and ear and taste and touch and conviviality have become values in larger sections of the population.

People make many choices in many spheres of life and do not have choices made for them simply by tradition, authority and scarcity. The enjoy some degree of freedom of choice, and they exercise that freedom in more spheres than in societies which are not mass societies. The choices are often unwise, and manifest an unrefined taste. They are often ill considered. But they are choices and not the dumb acceptance of what is given.

Prior to the emergence of modern mass society, the mass of the population lived in a primordial, traditional, hierarchical condition. All of these three properties of a society hamper the formation of individuality and restrict its movement once it is generated. The twin processes of civilization and industrialization have reduced some of these hindrances, and set loose the cognitive, appreciative and moral potential of the mass of the population.

I would not wish to have the foregoing observations interpreted to imply that the individuality which has flowered in mass society has been an unqualified moral and aesthetic success or that it is universally attained within the boundaries of mass society, or that there are not persons to whom it is not a value, nor am I unaware that in Germany the elite of the society went to the opposite extreme and that many of its members enthusiastically and brutally denied the value of individual human existence. A significant

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proportion of the population in every society lives in a nearly vegetative routine, withdrawn and unresponsive except for occasional patches of harsh aggressive expansiveness. In the mass society of the present century, the proportion seems smaller, the period of sensitivity in the individual's course of life longer.

Personal relations, friendship and love, are beset by vicissitudes and frequently culminate in painful disruption; sensibility and curiosity are often perverse and injurious. Privacy is frequently affronted and transgressed and frequently indiscriminately renounced. In certain sections of the population, the discovery of the possibility and pleasures of sensation have been carried to the far reaches of a negative withdrawal from society and of an often active rejection. In others, it releases an egoistic hedonism, an individual expansiveness which leaves nothing available to the civil sphere, and the consensus which it requires.

Some of these are as much the products of man's nature amidst the possibilities of mass society as are the heightened individuality, curiosity and sensibility, the enhanced capacity for experience, conviviality and affection which are its novel contributions. They are the price which is paid for entering into the opening of human potentialities on a massive scale.

VI

The mass society is a welfare society. As a function of a greater attachment to the whole society and the strengthening of the sense of affinity which cuts across class, ethnic and kinship boundaries, there has grown the concern for the well-being of others. Christianity as a body of specific beliefs might have faded from men's minds—although probably not as much as the *laudator temporis acti* insists—but the sentiment embodied in the ideas of Christian charity and Christian love has expanded and spread. These are now a part of the constitution of mass society—in the allegedly "secular state." Material help and emotional sympathy may be claimed without specific payment or counter-performance. Regardless of whether the economic regime is nominally socialistic or capitalistic, and whether the ruling political party regards itself as socialist or "bourgeois," it is commonly acknowledged that at least at the lower levels of the social and economic scale, there

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need not be any commensurate relationship between specific performance and reward. In the corporate bodies which conduct the main industrial and commercial activities of the mass society, trade union principles and the practices of personnel management have eroded the standard that rewards must be precisely correlated to specific performances in a role. This process, like the other processes which characterize mass society, has its limitations. It comes into conflict with the exigencies of operation of any large scale undertaking which require impersonal administration in accordance with reasonably explicit and differentiated rules. The requirement of a modicum of efficiency and of justice too require a measure of specificity in the standards which govern the allocation of opportunity for access to many occupational roles. It requires also a fixation of the rules governing rights and obligations in the society at large and within particular corporate bodies.

VII

Mass society is an industrial society. Without industry, i.e., without the replacement of simple tools by complicated machines, mass society would be intellectually inconceivable and actually impossible. Modern industrial technique through its creation of an elaborate network of transportation and communication has rendered it possible for the various parts of mass society to have a frequency of contact with each other that is unknown to earlier, non-industrial societies. The different social classes and regional sectors of a society can become more aware of each other's modes of life. This heightened mutual awareness, impossible without the modern technology of communication and transportation, has enlarged the internal population which dwells in the minds of men.

Modern industrial technique makes possible and requires the proliferation of the intellectual professions. It has produced the education which, numerous though its deficiencies might be, has, through reading and instruction, opened the mind to the varieties of experience of other human beings. It has liberated men from the burden of physically exhausting labor; it has given him a part of each day and week free from the discipline and strain of labor and it has given him resources through which new ex-

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periences of sensation, expansion into conviviality and interior elaboration have become realities.

Mass society has witnessed a reinterpretation of the value of a human being. Simply by virtue of his quality of membership in the society he acquires a minimal dignity.

The elevation of the *qualities* of humanity and of membership in a wider, territorially circumscribed community to a position in which they markedly determine the status and rights of individuals, groups and classes, has led to a diminution of the importance of individual *achievement* as a standard for the direction of ones' actions and as a criterion of status. The increased value of experience, of pleasurable experience, most easily obtainable in mass society through the cultivation of a style of life, has had a parallel effect. The *quality* of life has tended—the nature of man would never allow it wholly to succeed—to replace occupational role and proficiency as a source of self-esteem and as a criterion for esteeming others.

This produces a grandiose historical paradox. Mass society, which has been made possible by technological and economic progress, which in turn has been impelled by the desire for achievement, for the proficient performance of a role, contributes towards a situation in which occupational role and achievement have become less important in the guidance of action and in the claiming and acknowledgment of status.

A large-scale society requires large-scale bureaucratic administration. Its well-being depends on technological progress. Both of these depend on the wide distribution in the population of individuals capable of acting in the light of impersonal, universalistic standards, capable of performing specific and specialized tasks, capable of discipline. All of these are alien to the characteristic ethos of mass society. The disjunction can only make for an incessant tension of the mass of the population, and in many personalities, towards the value-orientations required by the type of society to which contemporary men are commited by the circumstances of their birth and their own desires.

VIII

The mass society is a large-scale society. It involves populations running into the millions and hundreds of millions and it covers

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large territories. It is therefore inevitably a differentiated society, differentiated in function, outlook and attachments. The complete homogeneity which the critics of mass society perceive is an impossibility. There is, of course, perhaps a greater homogeneity than in the much less loosely integrated societies of the past—this is given in the fact of the greater consensuality, the greater sense of unity, the speaking of a common language. There are, however, real although probably undeterminable, limits to the homogeneity which any large-scale society can sustain. Similar limits are imposed on the consensuality of the society, even if it had not inherited such a variety of cultural traditions, of class-orientations and religious beliefs.

IX

The picture which I have given here will immediately strike any moderately informed person as widely at variance with the image of the mass society which has been set going by the creators and the patrons of that term. They have stressed alienation, belieflessness, atomization, amorality, conformity, rootless homogeneity, moral emptiness, facelessness, egotism, the utter evaporation of any kind of loyalty (except occasionally the passionately zealous attachment to an ideological movement). They point to the indiscipline of youth and the neglect of the aged; they allege a frivolous hedonism and a joyless vulgarity. There is a little truth in these assertions but not very much. All of the phenomena referred to do exist in modern mass societies but a great deal more exists. Some of the features to which the critics of "mass society" point are closely connected with these others which I have emphasized. The alienation so often mentioned is an extreme form of the denial of the sacredness (*Entzauberung*) of authority. The unchecked egotism and frivolous hedonism are associated with the growth of individual sensibility, the indiscipline of youth is a product of the lightening of the force of the primordial and the diminished pressure of hierarchy. The narrowing of the scope of local autonomy is connected with the formation of a more integral society. The apathy, which so many notice, is brought to the forefront of attention as a result of the greatly extended opportunity for judgment and sharing in the exercise of decision which mass

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society offers. The vulgarity is one of the manifestations of the expansion of sensibility which replaces the long prevailing torpor of much of the race.

The consensuality of mass society, the closer approximation of center and periphery, the greater moral equality of the various strata and sectors, the growth of sensibility and individuality are all, as I have said, imperfect. Their imperfection comes from the inherent impossibility for any large-scale society to attain perfection in those categories, or of any society to attain perfection in any category. The imperfections of mass society are in part a result of the distribution of moral qualities in human beings. In part they come from the nature of mass society as such and its inheritance from the past of mankind.

Mass society has arisen from an inegalitarian, pluralistic society,—pluralistic out of the separateness of the classes, the isolation of localities from each other and in modern times, the very principle of organization of society. It has arisen against a background of puritanical authority which, whatever its own practices, viewed with disapproval the pleasures of the mass of the population and of all that seemed to distract them from their twin obligations of labour and obedience. The proletariat of these past societies, except for a few skilled occupations, with elaborate traditions of their own, were a poor besotted lot: the peasantry were clods, sometimes woodenly pious, sometimes simply woodenly dull. In so far as they had loyalties, they were strictly local. There is practically no history of civility in the lower classes of premodern societies and it appears only fitfully, albeit impressively, among the highest level of the artisan stratum in the 19th century.

The emancipation of the hitherto disadvantaged classes from the burdensome moral traditions and the sheer poverty and heavy labor which confined the development of their emotional and moral potentialities let loose, together with the more positive striving for experience and pleasure, a hitherto suppressed anti-authoritarian aggressiveness. The transfer of a certain amount of libido from kinship, class and ethnic groups to the larger community has not been a readily encompassable task. In many cases, the old loyalties have fallen away and the larger loyalty has not replaced them. It is quite possible that many human beings lack the capacity to sustain a loyalty to such remote symbols and they

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are, in consequence, left suspended in apathy and dissatisfaction between narrower loyalties no longer effective—and they probably were never very effective for most,—and broader loyalties not yet effective—and perhaps never to become effective for all.

None of these conditions has been very conducive to the realization of a fully civil, cultivated, consensual, more egalitarian society—quite apart from ineluctable functional constraints.

X

Can it ever be fully realized? Can mass society move forward to the fulfilment of the possibilities which have been opened by technological progress and the moral transmutation arising from the shift in the locus of charisma?

There are very stringent limitations. There are limitations which the trend towards moral equality must encounter because the propensities which impel men to seek and acknowledge some measure of fundamental moral equality are neither deeper nor more enduring than those which demand and produce moral inequality. A large-scale society will necessarily be regionally differentiated and this will entail differences in interests and loyalties. The natural differences in intellectual capacities and in temperament will inevitably make for differences in assimilation of the central value system. Occupational differences will sustain different streams of cultural tradition, different orientations to the principle of achievement and different relationships to the authorities at the heart of the central institutional system. And naturally, the differences of age and the culture of the various generations will also be a source of fissure. These differences are all anchored in "objective" differences, inevitably associated with the human lot in general or with the unavoidable conditions of any large-scale industrial society. They are objective differences on which the dispositions towards evaluative discrimination will always seize. Then, too, there is not only the need for communion. There is the need for separation and distance—collective as well as individual—which will create, in any society, lines of fissure in the surface of union and in the sense of moral equality which attends it.

For the same reasons, the full realization of a common culture is an impossibility. The growth of individuality is another obstacle which stands in the way of an all-comprehending growth of a

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common culture. The growth of individuality too has its limits imposed in part by the other features of mass society and, in part by the wide range of dispersion among human beings of the intensity of need and capacity for individuality.

Finally, the propensities which have been released and cultivated by the mass society are not harmonious with the concurrent necessity of a complex division of labor, with many occupational and professional roles, some of which are highly creative and others quite routine, some of which will be highly remunerated, others less so. Equality of status will not grow from these occupational and income differences. Some of these occupations will call for and nurture dispositions which are contrary to the diffusely equalitarian, consensual, hedonistic, effective, humanitarian tendencies inherent in mass society. The dispositions to primordial attachment will also persist—kinship, and its ethnic sublimation, locality, sexuality—might be further transmuted in mass society but they can never be eradicated. They will continue to be at war with the elements which constitute mass society and with those required for a large-scale society. Thus there is likely always to be tension among these diverse sets of elements, which are so dependent on each other. Each will limit the expansion of the others and contend against them and will prevent the society from ever becoming wholly a mass society. But the tension will never be able to prevent these properties of the mass society from finding a grandiose expression.

The potentiality for the mass society has always lain within the human soul. It could only find its opportunity for realization in the peculiar conjuncture of spiritual, political and technological events which are at the basis of modern society. It comes into realization in an age when the human race is for the first time in its history in considerable prospect of extinction at its own hands, and that, as the result of skills which were essential to the ideals of the Enlightenment and to the genesis of mass society. Yet, even if the race were to end, the philosophers of the Enlightenment, if they could pass judgment, or their heirs who might be born in a new beginning, would have to admit that their ideals had not been vainly espoused and that the human race, on behalf of which their thought, had not ended before many of their deepest ideals had come close to attainment.

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