

THE
SANE SOCIETY

BY
ERICH FROMM

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To

Father Louis Merton

with warm wishes in regard

Yours.

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A quick glance at these tables shows a remarkable phenomenon: Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and the United States are the countries with the highest suicide rate, and the highest combined suicide and homicide rate, while Spain, Italy, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are those with the lowest suicide and homicide rate. The figures for alcoholism show that the same countries—the United States, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark—which have the highest suicide rate, have also the highest alcoholism rate, with the main difference that the United States are leading in this group, and that France has the second place, instead of the sixth place it has with regard to suicide.

These figures are startling and challenging indeed. Even if we should doubt whether the high frequency of suicide alone indicates a lack of mental health in a population, the fact that suicide and alcoholism figures largely coincide, seems to make it plain that we deal here with symptoms of mental unbalance.

We find then that the countries in Europe which are among the most democratic, peaceful and prosperous ones, and the United States, the most prosperous country in the world, show the most severe symptoms of mental disturbance. The aim of the whole socio-economic development of the Western world is that of the materially comfortable life, relatively equal distribution of wealth, stable democracy and peace, and the very countries which have come closest to this aim show the most severe signs of mental unbalance! It is true that these figures in themselves do not *prove* anything, but at least they are startling. Even before we enter into a more thorough discussion of the whole problem, these data raise a question as to whether there is not something fundamentally wrong with our way of life and with the aims toward which we are striving.

Could it be that the middle-class life of prosperity, while satisfying our material needs leaves us with a feeling of intense

boredom, and that suicide and alcoholism are pathological ways of escape from this boredom? Could it be that these figures are a drastic illustration for the truth of the statement that "man lives not by bread alone," and that they show that modern civilization fails to satisfy profound needs in man? If so, what are these needs?

The following chapters are an attempt to answer this question, and to arrive at a critical evaluation of the effect contemporary Western culture has on the mental health and sanity of the people living under our system. However, before we enter into the specific discussion of these questions, it seems that we should take up the general problem of the pathology of normalcy, which is the premise underlying the whole trend of thought expressed in this book.

form it according to its own possibilities. The point of view taken here is neither a "biological" nor a "sociological" one if that would mean separating these two aspects from each other. It is rather one transcending such dichotomy by the assumption that the main passions and drives in man result from the *total existence* of man, that they are definite and ascertainable, some of them conducive to health and happiness, others to sickness and unhappiness. Any given social order does not *create* these fundamental strivings but it determines which of the limited number of potential passions are to become manifest or dominant. Man as he appears in any given culture is always a manifestation of human nature, a manifestation, however, which in its specific outcome is determined by the social arrangements under which he lives. Just as the infant is born with all human potentialities which are to develop under favorable social and cultural conditions, so the human race, in the process of history, develops into what it potentially is.

The approach of *normative humanism* is based on the assumption that, as in any other problem, there are right and wrong, satisfactory and unsatisfactory solutions to the problem of human existence. Mental health is achieved if man develops into full maturity according to the characteristics and laws of human nature. Mental illness consists in the failure of such development. From this premise the criterion of mental health is not one of individual adjustment to a given social order, but a universal one, valid for all men, of giving a satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence.

What is so deceptive about the state of mind of the members of a society is the "consensual validation" of their concepts. It is naïvely assumed that the fact that the majority of people share certain ideas or feelings proves the validity of these ideas and feelings. Nothing is further from the truth. Consensual validation

Can a Society Be Sick?—The Pathology of Normalcy

as such has no bearing whatsoever on reason or mental health. Just as there is a "*folie à deux*" there is a "*folie à millions*." The fact that millions of people share the same vices does not make these vices virtues, the fact that they share so many errors does not make the errors to be truths, and the fact that millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane.

There is, however, an important difference between individual and social mental illness, which suggests a differentiation between two concepts: that of *defect*, and that of *neurosis*. If a person fails to attain freedom, spontaneity, a genuine expression of self, he may be considered to have a severe defect, provided we assume that freedom and spontaneity are the objective goals to be attained by every human being. If such a goal is not attained by the majority of members of any given society, we deal with the phenomenon of *socially patterned defect*. The individual shares it with many others; he is not aware of it as a defect, and his security is not threatened by the experience of being different, of being an outcast, as it were. What he may have lost in richness and in a genuine feeling of happiness, is made up by the security of fitting in with the rest of mankind—as he knows them. As a matter of fact, his very defect may have been raised to a virtue by his culture, and thus may give him an enhanced feeling of achievement.

An illustration is the feeling of guilt and anxiety which Calvin's doctrines aroused in men. It may be said that the person who is overwhelmed by a feeling of his own powerlessness and unworthiness, by unceasing doubt as to whether he is saved or condemned to eternal punishment, who is hardly capable of genuine joy, suffers from a severe defect. Yet this very defect was culturally patterned; it was looked upon as particularly valuable, and the individual was thus protected from the neurosis

which he would have acquired in a culture where the same defect gave him a feeling of profound inadequacy and isolation.

Spinoza formulated the problem of the socially patterned defect very clearly. He says: "Many people are seized by one and the same affect with great consistency. All his senses are so strongly affected by one object that he believes this object to be present even if it is not. If this happens while the person is awake, the person is believed to be insane. . . . But if the *greedy* person thinks only of money and possessions, the *ambitious* one only of fame, one does not think of them as being insane, but only as annoying; generally one has contempt for them. But *factually* greediness, ambition, and so forth are forms of insanity, although usually one does not think of them as 'illness.'"¹

These words were written a few hundred years ago; they still hold true, although the defects have been culturally patterned to *such* an extent now that they are not even generally thought any more to be annoying or contemptible. Today we come across a person who acts and feels like an automaton; who never experiences anything which is really his; who experiences himself entirely as the person he thinks he is supposed to be; whose artificial smile has replaced genuine laughter; whose meaningless chatter has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain. Two statements can be made about this person. One is that he suffers from a defect of spontaneity and individuality which may seem incurable. At the same time, it may be said that he does not differ essentially from millions of others who are in the same position. For most of them, the culture provides patterns which enable them *to live with a defect without becoming ill*. It is as if each culture provided the remedy against the outbreak of manifest neurotic symptoms which would result from the defect produced by it.

¹ cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, IV Prop. 44 Schol.

Suppose that in our Western culture movies, radios, television, sports events and newspapers ceased to function for only four weeks. With these main avenues of escape closed, what would be the consequences for people thrown back upon their own resources? I have no doubt that even in this short time thousands of nervous breakdowns would occur, and many more thousands of people would be thrown into a state of acute anxiety, not different from the picture which is diagnosed clinically as "neurosis."¹ If the opiate against the socially patterned defect were withdrawn, the manifest illness would make its appearance.

For a minority, the pattern provided by the culture does not work. They are often those whose individual defect is more severe than that of the average person, so that the culturally offered remedies are not sufficient to prevent the outbreak of manifest illness. (A case in point is the person whose aim in life is to attain power and fame. While this aim is, in itself, a pathological one, there is nevertheless a difference between the person who uses his powers to attain this aim realistically, and the more severely sick one who has so little emerged from his infantile grandiosity that he does not do anything toward the attainment of his goal but waits for a miracle to happen and, thus feeling more and more powerless, ends up in a feeling of futility and bitterness.) But there are also those whose character structure, and hence whose conflicts, differ from those of the majority, so that the remedies which are effective for most of their fellow men are of no help to them. Among this group we sometimes find

¹ I have made the following experiment with various classes of undergraduate college students: they were told to imagine that they were to stay for three days alone in their rooms, without a radio, or escapist literature, although provided with "good" literature, normal food and all other physical comforts. They were asked to imagine what their reaction to this experience would be. The response of about 90 per cent in each group ranged from a feeling of acute panic, to that of an exceedingly trying experience, which they might overcome by sleeping long, doing all kinds of little chores, eagerly awaiting the end of this period. Only a small minority felt that they would be at ease and enjoy the time when they were with themselves.

people of greater integrity and sensitivity than the majority, who for this very reason are incapable of accepting the cultural opiate, while at the same time they are not strong and healthy enough to live soundly "against the stream."

The foregoing discussion on the difference between neurosis and the socially patterned defect may give the impression that if society only provides the remedies against the outbreak of manifest symptoms, all goes well, and it can continue to function smoothly, however great the defects created by it. History shows us, however, that this is not the case.

It is true indeed, that man, in contrast to the animal, shows an almost infinite malleability; just as he can eat almost anything, live under practically any kind of climate and adjust himself to it, there is hardly any psychic condition which he cannot endure, and under which he cannot carry on. He can live free, and as a slave. Rich and in luxury, and under conditions of half-starvation. He can live as a warrior, and peaceably; as an exploiter and robber, and as a member of a co-operating and loving fellowship. There is hardly a psychic state in which man cannot live, and hardly anything which cannot be done with him, and for which he cannot be used. All these considerations seem to justify the assumption that there is no such thing as a nature common to all men, and that would mean in fact that there is no such thing as a species "man," except in a physiological and anatomical sense.

Yet, in spite of all this evidence, the history of man shows that we have omitted one fact. Despots and ruling cliques can succeed in dominating and exploiting their fellow man, but they cannot prevent *reactions* to this inhuman treatment. Their subjects become frightened, suspicious, lonely and, if not due to external reasons, their systems collapse at some point because fears, suspicions and loneliness eventually incapacitate the majority to function effectively and intelligently. Whole nations, or

social groups within them, can be subjugated and exploited for a long time, but *they react*. They react with apathy or such impairment of intelligence, initiative and skills that they gradually fail to perform the functions which should serve their rulers. Or they react by the accumulation of such hate and destructiveness as to bring about an end to themselves, their rulers and their system. Again their reaction may create such independence and longing for freedom that a better society is built upon their creative impulses. Which reaction occurs, depends on many factors: on economic and political ones, and on the spiritual climate in which people live. But whatever the reactions are, the statement that man can live under almost any condition is only half true; it must be supplemented by the other statement, that if he lives under conditions which are contrary to his nature and to the basic requirements for human growth and sanity, he cannot help reacting; he must either deteriorate and perish, or bring about conditions which are more in accordance with his needs.

That human nature and society can have conflicting demands, and hence that a whole society can be sick, is an assumption which was made very explicitly by Freud, most extensively in his *Civilization and Its Discontent*.

He starts out with the premise of a human nature common to the human race, throughout all cultures and ages, and of certain ascertainable needs and strivings inherent in that nature. He believes that culture and civilization develop in an ever-increasing contrast to the needs of man, and thus he arrives at the concept of the "social neurosis." "If the evolution of civilization," he writes, "has such a far-reaching similarity with the development of an individual, and if the same methods are employed in both, would not the diagnosis be justified that many systems of civilization—or epochs of it—possibly even the whole of humanity—have become 'neurotic' under the pressure of the civilizing trends?"

To analytic dissection of these neuroses, therapeutic recommendations might follow which could claim a great practical interest. I would not say that such an attempt to apply psychoanalysis to civilized society would be fanciful or doomed to fruitlessness. But it behooves us to be very careful, not to forget that after all we are dealing only with analogies, and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to drag them out of the region where they originated and have matured. The diagnosis of *collective neuroses*, moreover, will be confronted by a special difficulty. In the neurosis of an individual we can use as a starting point the contrast presented to us between the patient and his environment which we assume to be 'normal.' No such background as this would be available for any society similarly affected; it would have to be supplied in some other way. And with regard to any therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most acute analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses the power to compel the community to adopt the therapy? In spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture upon this *research into the pathology of civilized communities*."¹

This book *does* venture upon this research. It is based on the idea that a sane society is that which corresponds to the needs of man—not necessarily to what he *feels* to be his needs, because even the most pathological aims can be felt subjectively as that which the person wants most; but to what his needs are *objectively*, as they can be ascertained by the study of man. It is our first task then, to ascertain what is the nature of man, and what are the needs which stem from this nature. We then must proceed to examine the role of society in the evolution of man and to study

¹ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, translated from the German by J. Riviere, The Hogarth Press, Ltd., London, 1953, pp. 141-142. (Italics mine.)

All passions and strivings of man are attempts to find an answer to his existence or, as we may also say, they are an attempt to avoid insanity. (It may be said in passing that the real problem of mental life is not why some people become insane, but rather why most avoid insanity.) Both the mentally healthy and the neurotic are driven by the need to find an answer, the only difference being that one answer corresponds more to the total needs of man, and hence is more conducive to the unfolding of his powers and to his happiness than the other. All cultures provide for a patterned system in which certain solutions are predominant, hence certain strivings and satisfactions. Whether we deal with primitive religions, with theistic or non-theistic religions, they are all attempts to give an answer to man's existential problem. The finest, as well as the most barbaric cultures have the same function—the difference is only whether the answer given is better or worse. The deviate from the cultural pattern is just as much in search of an answer as his more well-adjusted brother. His answer may be better or worse than the one given by his culture—it is always another answer to the same fundamental question raised by human existence. In this sense all cultures are religious and every neurosis is a private form of religion, provided we mean by religion an attempt to answer the problem of human existence. Indeed, the tremendous energy in the forces producing mental illness, as well as those behind art and religion could never be understood as an outcome of frustrated or sublimated physiological needs; they are attempts to solve the problem of being born human. All men are idealists and cannot help being idealists, provided we mean by idealism the striving for the satisfaction of needs which are specifically human and transcend the physiological needs of the organism. The difference is only that one idealism is a good and adequate solution, the other

a bad and destructive one. The decision as to what is good and bad has to be made on the basis of our knowledge of man's nature and the laws which govern its growth.

What are these needs and passions stemming from the existence of man?

A. RELATEDNESS VS. NARCISSISM

Man is torn away from the primary union with nature, which characterizes animal existence. Having at the same time reason and imagination, he is aware of his aloneness and separateness; of his powerlessness and ignorance; of the accidentalness of his birth and of his death. He could not face this state of being for a second if he could not find new ties with his fellow man which replace the old ones, regulated by instincts. Even if all his physiological needs were satisfied, he would experience his state of aloneness and individuation as a prison from which he had to break out in order to retain his sanity. In fact, the insane person is the one who has completely failed to establish any kind of union, and is imprisoned, even if he is not behind barred windows. The necessity to unite with other living beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends. This need is behind all phenomena which constitute the whole gamut of intimate human relations, of all passions which are called love in the broadest sense of the word.

There are several ways in which this union can be sought and achieved. Man can attempt to become one with the world by *submission* to a person, to a group, to an institution, to God. In this way he transcends the separateness of his individual existence by becoming part of somebody or something bigger than himself, and experiences his identity in connection with the power to which he has submitted. Another possibility of overcoming separateness lies in the opposite direction: man can try to unite him-

self with the world by having power over it, by making others a part of himself, and thus transcending his individual existence by domination. The common element in both submission and domination is the symbiotic nature of relatedness. Both persons involved have lost their integrity and freedom; they live on each other and from each other, satisfying their craving for closeness, yet suffering from the lack of inner strength and self-reliance which would require freedom and independence, and furthermore constantly threatened by the conscious or unconscious hostility which is bound to arise from the symbiotic relationship.¹ The realization of the submissive (masochistic) or the domineering (sadistic) passion never leads to satisfaction. They have a self-propelling dynamism, and because no amount of submission, or domination (or possession, or fame) is enough to give a sense of identity and union, more and more of it is sought. The ultimate result of these passions is defeat. It cannot be otherwise; while these passions aim at the establishment of a sense of union, they destroy the sense of integrity. The person driven by any one of these passions actually becomes dependent on others; instead of developing his own individual being, he is dependent on those to whom he submits, or whom he dominates.

There is only one passion which satisfies man's need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is *love*. *Love is union* with somebody, or something, outside oneself, *under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self*. It is an experience of sharing, of communion, which permits the full unfolding of one's own inner activity. The experience of love does away with the necessity of illusions. There is no need to inflate the image of the other person, or of myself, since the reality of

¹ cf. the more detailed analysis of the symbiotic relatedness in E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York, 1941, p. 141 ff.

active sharing and loving permits me to transcend my individualized existence, and at the same time to experience myself as the bearer of the active powers which constitute the act of loving. What matters is the particular *quality* of loving, not the object. Love is in the experience of human solidarity with our fellow creatures, it is in the erotic love of man and woman, in the love of the mother for the child, and also in the love for oneself, as a human being; it is in the mystical experience of union. In the act of loving, I am one with All, and yet I am myself, a unique, separate, limited, mortal human being. Indeed out of the very polarity between separateness and union, love is born and reborn.

Love is one aspect of what I have called the productive orientation: the active and creative relatedness of man to his fellow man, to himself and to nature. In the realm of *thought*, this productive orientation is expressed in the proper grasp of the world by reason. In the realm of *action*, the productive orientation is expressed in productive work, the prototype of which is art and craftsmanship. In the realm of *feeling*, the productive orientation is expressed in love, which is the experience of union with another person, with all men, and with nature, under the condition of retaining one's sense of integrity and independence. In the experience of love the paradox happens that two people become one, and remain two at the same time. Love in this sense is never restricted to one person. If I can love only one person, and nobody else, if my love for one person makes me more alienated and distant from my fellow man, I may be attached to this person in any number of ways, yet I do not love. If I can say, "I love you," I say, "I love in you all of humanity, all that is alive; I love in you also myself." Self-love, in this sense, is the opposite of selfishness. The latter is actually a greedy concern with oneself which springs from and compensates for the lack of genuine love for oneself.

love her child before this process of separation has begun—but it is the task in which most fail, to love the child and at the same time to let it go—and to *want* to let it go.

In *erotic love* (Gr. *eros*; Hebrew: *ahawa*, from the root "to glow"), another drive is involved: that for fusion and union with another person. While brotherly love refers to all men and motherly love to the child and all those who are in need of our help, erotic love is directed to one person, normally of the opposite sex, with whom fusion and oneness is desired. Erotic love begins with separateness, and ends in oneness. Motherly love begins with oneness, and leads to separateness. If the need for fusion were realized in motherly love, it would mean destruction of the child as an independent being, since the child needs to emerge from his mother, rather than to remain tied to her. If erotic love lacks brotherly love and is *only* motivated by the wish for fusion, it is sexual desire without love, or the perversion of love as we find it in the sadistic and masochistic forms of "love."

narcissism
One understands fully man's need to be related only if one considers the outcome of the failure of any kind of relatedness, if one appreciates the meaning of *narcissism*. The only reality the infant can experience is his own body and his needs, physiological needs and the need for warmth and affection. He has not yet the experience of "I" as separate from "thou." He is still in a state of oneness with the world, but a oneness before the awakening of his sense of individuality and reality. The world outside exists only as so much food, or so much warmth to be used for the satisfaction of his own needs, but not as something or somebody who is recognized realistically and objectively. This orientation has been named by Freud that of "primary narcissism." In normal development, this state of narcissism is slowly overcome by a growing awareness of reality outside, and by a correspondingly growing sense of "I" as differentiated from "thou." This change

occurs at first on the level of sensory perception, when things and people are perceived as different and specific entities, a recognition which lays the foundation for the possibility of speech; to name things pre-supposes recognizing them as individual and separate entities.¹ It takes much longer until the narcissistic state is overcome emotionally; for the child up to the age of seven or eight years, other people still exist mainly as means for the satisfaction of his needs. They are exchangeable inasmuch as they fulfill the function of satisfying these needs, and it is only around the ages of between eight and nine years that another person is experienced in such a way that the child can begin to love, that is to say, in H. S. Sullivan's formulation, to feel that the needs of another person are as important as his own.^{2 3}

Primary narcissism is a normal phenomenon, conforming with the normal physiological and mental development of the child. But narcissism exists also in later stages of life ("secondary narcissism," according to Freud), if the growing child fails to develop the capacity for love, or loses it again. Narcissism is the essence of all severe psychic pathology. For the narcissistically involved person, there is only one reality, that of his own thought

¹ cf. Jean Piaget's discussion of this point in *The Child's Conception of the World*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, p. 151.

² cf. H. S. Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*, Norton Co., New York, 1953, p. 49 ff.

³ This love is usually felt at first toward the child's contemporaries, and not toward the parents. The pleasing idea that children "love" their parents before they love anybody else must be considered as one of the many illusions which stem from wishful thinking. For the child, at this age, father and mother are more objects of dependency or fear than of love, which by its very nature is based on equality and independence. Love for parents, if we differentiate it from affectionate but passive attachment, incestuous fixation, conventional or fearful submission, develops—if at all—at a later age rather than in childhood, although its beginnings can be found—under fortunate circumstances—at an earlier age. (The same point has been made, somewhat more sharply, by H. S. Sullivan in his *Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*.) Many parents, however, are not willing to accept this reality and react to it by resenting the child's first real love attachments either overtly or in the even more effective form of making fun of them. Their conscious or unconscious jealousy is one of the most powerful obstacles to the child's development of the capacity to love.

Man can create life. This is the miraculous quality which he indeed shares with all living beings, but with the difference that he alone is aware of being created and of being a creator. Man can create life, or rather, woman can create life, by giving birth to a child, and by caring for the child until it is sufficiently grown to take care of his own needs. Man—man and woman—can create by planting seeds, by producing material objects, by creating art, by creating ideas, by loving one another. In the act of creation man transcends himself as a creature, raises himself beyond the passivity and accidentalness of his existence into the realm of purposefulness and freedom. In man's need for transcendence lies one of the roots for love, as well as for art, religion and material production.

To create presupposes activity and care. It presupposes love for that which one creates. How then does man solve the problem of transcending himself, if he is not capable of creating, if he cannot love? *There is another answer to this need for transcendence: if I cannot create life, I can destroy it. To destroy life makes me also transcend it.* Indeed, that man can destroy life is just as miraculous a feat as that he can create it, for life is *the* miracle, the inexplicable. In the act of destruction, man sets himself above life; he transcends himself as a creature. Thus, the ultimate choice for man, inasmuch as he is driven to transcend himself, is to create or to destroy, to love or to hate. The enormous power of the will for destruction which we see in the history of man, and which we have witnessed so frightfully in our own time, is rooted in the nature of man, just as the drive to create is rooted in it. To say that man is capable of developing his primary potentiality for love and reason does not imply the naïve belief in man's goodness. Destructiveness is a secondary potentiality, rooted in the very existence of man, and having the same intensity and power

as any passion can have.¹ But—and this is the essential point of my argument—it is only the *alternative* to creativeness. Creation and destruction, love and hate, are not two instincts which exist independently. They are both answers to the same need for transcendence, and the will to destroy must rise when the will to create cannot be satisfied. However, the satisfaction of the need to create leads to happiness; destructiveness to suffering, most of all, for the destroyer himself.

C. ROOTEDNESS—BROTHERLINESS VS. INCEST

Man's birth as man means the beginning of his emergence from his natural home, the beginning of the severance of his natural ties. Yet, this very severance is frightening; if man loses his natural roots, where is he and who is he? He would stand alone, without a home; without roots; he could not bear the isolation and helplessness of this position. He would become insane. He can dispense with the *natural* roots only insofar as he finds new *human* roots and only after he has found them can he feel at home again in this world. Is it surprising, then, to find a deep craving in man not to sever the natural ties, to fight against being torn away from nature, from mother, blood and soil?

The most elementary of the natural ties is the tie of the child to the mother. The child begins life in the mother's womb, and exists there for a much longer time than is the case with most animals; even after birth, the child remains physically helpless, and completely dependent on the mother; this period of helplessness and dependence again is much more protracted than with any animal. In the first years of life no full separation between child and mother has occurred. The satisfaction of all his physio-

¹ The formulation given here does not contradict the one given in *Man for Himself*, loc. cit., where I wrote that: "destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life." In the concept of transcendence presented here, I try to show more specifically what aspect of unlived life leads to destructiveness.

logical needs, of his vital need for warmth and affection depend on her; she has not only given birth to him, but she continues to give life to him. Her care is not dependent on anything the child does for her, on any obligation which the child has to fulfill; it is unconditional. She cares because the new creature is her child. The child, in these decisive first years of his life, has the experience of his mother as the fountain of life, as an all-enveloping, protective, nourishing power. Mother is food; she is love; she is warmth; she is earth. To be loved by her means to be alive, to be rooted, to be at home.

Just as birth means to leave the enveloping protection of the womb, growing up means to leave the protective orbit of the mother. Yet even in the mature adult, the longing for this situation as it once existed never ceases completely, in spite of the fact that there is, indeed, a great difference between the adult and the child. The adult has the means to stand on his own feet, to take care of himself, to be responsible for himself and even for others, while the child is not yet capable of doing all this. But considering the increased perplexities of life, the fragmentary nature of our knowledge, the accidentalness of adult existence, the unavoidable errors we make, the situation of the adult is by no means as different from that of the child as it is generally assumed. Every adult is in need of help, of warmth, of protection, in many ways differing and yet in many ways similar to the needs of the child. Is it surprising to find in the average adult a deep longing for the security and rootedness which the relationship to his mother once gave him? Is it not to be expected that he cannot give up this intense longing unless he finds other ways of being rooted?

In psychopathology we find ample evidence for this phenomenon of the refusal to leave the all-enveloping orbit of the mother. In the most extreme form we find the craving to return to the mother's womb. A person completely obsessed by this desire may

return to womb

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offer the picture of schizophrenia. He feels and acts like the foetus in the mother's womb, incapable of assuming even the most elementary functions of a small child. In many of the more severe neuroses we find the same craving, but as a repressed desire, manifested only in dreams, symptoms and neurotic behavior, which results from the conflict between the deep desire to stay in the mother's womb and the adult part of the personality which tends to live a normal life. In dreams this craving appears in symbols like being in a dark cave, in a one-man submarine, diving into deep water, etc. In the behavior of such a person, we find a fear of life, and a deep fascination for death (death, in phantasy, being the return to the womb, to mother earth).

The less severe form of the fixation to mother is to be found in those cases where a person has permitted himself to be born, as it were, but where he is afraid to take the next step of birth, to be weaned from mother's breasts. People who have become stuck at this stage of birth, have a deep craving to be mothered, nursed, protected by a motherly figure; they are the eternally dependent ones, who are frightened and insecure when motherly protection is withdrawn, but optimistic and active when a loving mother or mother-substitute is provided, either realistically or in phantasy.

These pathological phenomena in individual life have their parallel in the evolution of the human race. The clearest expression of this lies in the fact of the universality of the incest tabu, which we find even in the most primitive societies. The incest tabu is the necessary condition for all human development, not because of its sexual, but because of its affective aspect. Man, in order to be born, in order to progress, has to sever the umbilical cord; he has to overcome the deep craving to remain tied to mother. The incestuous desire has its strength not from the sexual attraction to mother, but from the deep-seated craving to remain

in, or to return to the all-enveloping womb, or to the all-nourishing breasts. The incest tabu is nothing else but the two cherubim with fiery swords, guarding the entrance to paradise and preventing man from returning to the pre-individual existence of oneness with nature.

The problem of incest, however, is not restricted to fixation to the mother. The tie to her is only the most elementary form of all natural ties of blood which give man a sense of rootedness and belonging. The ties of blood are extended to those who are blood relatives, whatever the system is according to which such relationships are established. The *family* and the *clan*, and later on the state, nation or church, assume the same function which the individual mother had originally for the child. The individual leans on them, feels rooted in them, has his sense of identity as a part of them, and not as an individual apart from them. The person who does not belong to the same clan is considered as alien and dangerous—as not sharing in the same human qualities which only the own clan possesses.

The fixation to the mother was recognized by Freud as the crucial problem of human development, both of the race and of the individual. In accordance with his system, he explained the intensity of the fixation to the mother as derived from the little boy's *sexual* attraction to her, as the expression of the incestuous striving inherent in man's nature. He assumed that the fixation's perpetuation in later life resulted from the continuing sexual desire. By relating this assumption to his observations of the son's opposition to the father, he reconciled assumption and observation into a most ingenious explanation, that of the "Oedipus complex." He explained hostility to the father as a result of sexual rivalry with him.

But while Freud saw the tremendous importance of the fixation to the mother, he emasculated his discovery by the peculiar in-

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terpretation he gave to it. He projects into the little boy the sexual feeling of the adult man; the little boy having, as Freud recognized, sexual desires, was supposed to be sexually attracted to the woman closest to him, and only by the superior power of the rival in this triangle, is he forced to give up his desire, without ever recovering fully from this frustration. Freud's theory is a curiously rationalistic interpretation of the observable facts. In putting the emphasis on the *sexual* aspect of the incestuous desire, Freud explains the boy's desire as something rational in itself and evades the real problem: the depth and intensity of the irrational affective tie to the mother, the wish to return into her orbit, to remain a part of her, the fear of emerging fully from her. In Freud's explanation the incestuous wish cannot be fulfilled because of the presence of the father-rival, while in reality the incestuous wish is in contrast to all requirements of adult life.

Thus, the theory of the Oedipus complex is at the same time the acknowledgment *and* the denial of the crucial phenomenon: man's longing for mother's love. In giving the incestuous striving paramount significance, the importance of the tie with mother is recognized; by explaining it as sexual the emotional—and true—meaning of the tie is denied.

Whenever fixation to the mother is also sexual—and this undoubtedly happens—it is because the affective fixation is so strong that it also influences the sexual desire, but not because the sexual desire is at the root of the fixation. On the contrary, sexual desire as such is notoriously fickle with regard to its objects, and generally sexual desire is precisely the force which helps the adolescent in his *separation* from mother, and not the one which binds him to her. Where we find that the intense attachment to mother has changed this normal function of the sexual drive, two possibilities must be considered. One is that the sexual desire for mother is a defense against the desire to return to the womb; the latter leads

object of sexual lust. The goddess is transformed into the prostitute, the father elevated to the central figure of the universe.¹

There was another genius, living a generation before Freud, who saw the central role of the tie to the mother in the development of man: Johann Jacob Bachofen.² Because he was not narrowed down by the rationalistic, sexual interpretation of the fixation to the mother, he could see the facts more profoundly and more objectively. In his theory of the matriarchal society he assumed that mankind went through a stage, preceding that of the patriarchate, where the ties to the mother, as well as those to blood and soil, were the paramount form of relatedness, both individually and socially. In this form of social organization, as was pointed out above, the mother was the central figure in the family, in social life and in religion. Even though many of Bachofen's historical constructions are not tenable, there can be no doubt that he uncovered a form of social organization and a psychological structure which had been ignored by psychologists and anthropologists because, from their patriarchal orientation, the idea of a society ruled by women rather than by men was just absurd. Yet, there is a great deal of evidence that Greece and India, before the invasion from the north, had cultures of a matriarchal structure. The great number and the significance of mother goddesses points in the same direction. (Venus of Willendorf, Mother Goddess at Mohengo-Daro, Isis, Istar, Rhea, Cybele, Hathor, the Serpent Goddess at Nippur, the Akkadian Water Goddess Ai, Demeter and the Indian Goddess Kali, the giver and destroyer of life, are only a few examples.) Even in many contemporary primitive societies, we can see remnants of the matriarchal structure in matrilineal forms of consanguinity, or matrilocal forms of mar-

¹ In this elimination of the mother figure, Freud does for psychology what Luther did for religion. Properly speaking, Freud is the psychologist of Protestantism.

² cf. J. J. Bachofen, *Mutterrecht und Ur Religion*, ed. R. Marx, A. Kroener Verl. Stuttgart, 1954.

lectual development of the Western world. They laid down the "first principles" of scientific thought, were the first to build "theory" as a foundation of science, to develop a systematic philosophy as it had not existed in any culture before. They created a theory of the state and of society based on their experience of the Greek polis, to be continued in Rome, on the social basis of a vast unified empire.

On account of the incapacity of the Roman Empire to continue a progressive social and political evolution, the development came to a standstill around the fourth century, but not before a new powerful institution had been built, the Catholic Church. While earlier Christianity had been a spiritually revolutionary movement of the poor and disinherited, who questioned the moral legitimacy of the existing state, the faith of a minority which accepted persecution and death as God's witnesses, it was to change in an incredibly short time into the official religion of the Roman State. While the Roman Empire's social structure was slowly freezing into a feudal order that was to survive in Europe for a thousand years, the Catholic religion's social structure began to change, too. The prophetic attitude that encouraged the questioning and criticizing of secular power's violation of the principles of love and justice receded in importance. The new attitude called for indiscriminating support of the Church's power as an institution. Such psychological satisfaction was given to the masses, that they accepted their dependency and poverty with resignation, making little effort to improve their social condition.¹

¹ The change in the social role and function of Christianity was connected with profound changes in its spirit; the church became a hierarchical organization. The emphasis shifted increasingly from expectation of Christ's second coming and the establishment of a new order of love and justice, to the fact of the original coming—and the apostolic message of man's salvation from his inherent sinfulness. Connected with this was another change. The original concept of Christ was contained in the adoptionist dogma which said that God had adopted the man Jesus as

The most important change from the standpoint of this discussion is that of a shifting of emphasis from a purely patriarchal to a blending between matriarchal and patriarchal elements. The Jewish God of the Old Testament had been a strictly patriarchal god; in the Catholic development, the idea of the all-loving and all-forgiving mother is re-introduced. The Catholic Church herself—the all-embracing mother—and the Virgin Mother, symbolize the maternal spirit of forgiveness and love, while God, the father, represented in the hierarchical principle the authority to which man had to submit without complaining or rebelling. No doubt this blending of fatherly and motherly elements was one of the main factors to which the church owed its tremendous attraction and influence over the minds of the people. The masses, oppressed by patriarchal authorities, could turn to the loving mother who would comfort them and intercede for them.

The historical function of the church was by no means only that of helping to establish a feudal order. Its most important achievement, greatly helped by the Arabs and Jews, was to transmit the essential elements of Jewish and Greek thought to the primitive culture of Europe. It is as if Western history had stood still for about a thousand years to wait for the moment when Northern Europe had been brought to the point of development at which the Mediterranean world had arrived at the beginning of the dark ages. When the spiritual heritage of Athens and Jerusalem had been transmitted to, and had saturated the Northern European peoples, the frozen social structure began to

his son, that is to say, that a man, a suffering and poor one, had become a god. In this dogma the revolutionary hopes and longings of the poor and downtrodden had found a religious expression. One year after Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire, the dogma was officially accepted that God and Jesus were identical, of the same essence, and that God had only manifested himself in the flesh of a man. In this new view, the revolutionary idea of the elevation of man to God had been substituted by God's act of love to come down to man, as it were, and thus save him from his corruption. (cf. E. Fromm, *Die Entwicklung des Christus Dogmas*, Psychoanalytischer Verlag, Vienna, 1931.)

disappeared from the modern Western scene. Its positive aspect, the idea of human equality, of the sacredness of life, of all men's right to share in the fruits of nature, found expression in the ideas of natural law, humanism, enlightenment philosophy and the objectives of democratic socialism. Common to all these ideas is the concept that all men are children of Mother Earth and have a right to be nourished by her, and to enjoy happiness without having to prove this right by the achievement of any particular status. The brotherhood of all men implies that they are all the sons of the same mother, who have an inalienable right to love and happiness. In this concept, the incestuous tie to the mother is eliminated. By the mastery over nature as it manifests itself in industrial production, man frees himself from his fixation to the bonds of blood and soil, he humanizes nature and naturalizes himself.

But side by side with the development of the positive aspects of the matriarchal complex we find, in the European development, the persistence of, or even further, regression to its negative aspects—the fixation to blood and soil. Man—freed from the traditional bonds of the medieval community, afraid of the new freedom which transformed him into an isolated atom—escaped into a new idolatry of blood and soil, of which nationalism and racism are the two most evident expressions. Along with the progressive development, which is a blending of the positive aspect of both patriarchal and matriarchal spirit, went the development of the negative aspects of both principles: the worship of the state, blended with the idolatry of the race or nation. Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, are the most drastic manifestations of this blend of state and clan worship, both principles embodied in the figure of a "Fuehrer."

But the new totalitarianisms are by no means the only manifestations of incestuous fixation in our time. The breakdown of

recognized as such, and are covered by the illusion of individuality, does not alter the facts.

The problem of the sense of identity is not, as it is usually understood, merely a philosophical problem, or a problem only concerning our mind and thought. The need to feel a sense of identity stems from the very condition of human existence, and it is the source of the most intense strivings. Since I cannot remain sane without the sense of "I," I am driven to do almost anything to acquire this sense. Behind the intense passion for status and conformity is this very need, and it is sometimes even stronger than the need for physical survival. What could be more obvious than the fact that people are willing to risk their lives, to give up their love, to surrender their freedom, to sacrifice their own thoughts, for the sake of being one of the herd, of conforming, and thus of acquiring a sense of identity, even though it is an illusory one.

E. THE NEED FOR A FRAME OF ORIENTATION AND
DEVOTION—REASON VS. IRRATIONALITY

The fact that man has reason and imagination leads not only to the necessity for having a sense of his own identity, but also for orienting himself in the world intellectually. This need can be compared with the process of physical orientation which develops in the first years of life, and which is completed when the child can walk by himself, touch and handle things, knowing what they are. But when the ability to walk and to speak has been acquired, only the first step in the direction of orientation has been taken. Man finds himself surrounded by many puzzling phenomena and, having reason, he has to make sense of them, has to put them in some context which he can understand and which permits him to deal with them in his thoughts. The further his reason develops, the more adequate becomes his

The need for a frame of orientation exists on two levels; the first and the more fundamental need is to have *some* frame of orientation, regardless of whether it is true or false. Unless man has such a subjectively satisfactory frame of orientation, he cannot live sanely. On the second level the need is to be in touch with reality by reason, to grasp the world objectively. But the necessity to develop his reason is not as immediate as that to develop some frame of orientation, since what is at stake for man in the latter case is his happiness and serenity, and not his sanity. This becomes very clear if we study the function of *rationalization*. However unreasonable or immoral an action may be, man has an insuperable urge to rationalize it, that is, to prove to himself and to others that his action is determined by reason, common sense, or at least conventional morality. He has little difficulty in acting irrationally, but it is almost impossible for him not to give his action the appearance of reasonable motivation.

If man were only a disembodied intellect, his aim would be achieved by a comprehensive thought system. But since he is an entity endowed with a body as well as a mind, he has to react to the dichotomy of his existence not only in thinking but in the total process of living, in his feelings and actions. Hence any satisfying system of orientation contains not only intellectual elements but elements of feeling and sensing which are expressed in the relationship to an object of devotion.

The answers given to man's need for a system of orientation and an object of devotion differ widely both in content and in form. There are primitive systems such as animism and totemism in which natural objects or ancestors represent answers to man's quest for meaning. There are non-theistic systems like Buddhism, which are usually called religions although in their original form there is no concept of God. There are purely philosophical systems, like Stoicism, and there are the monotheistic religious sys-

MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIETY

The concept of mental health depends on our concept of the nature of man. In the previous chapter the attempt was made to show that the needs and passions of man stem from the peculiar condition of his existence. Those needs which he shares with the animal—hunger, thirst, need for sleep and sexual satisfaction—are important, being rooted in the inner chemistry of the body, and they can become all powerful when they remain unsatisfied. (This holds true, of course, more of the need for food and sleep than of sex, which if not satisfied never assumes the power of the other needs, at least not for physiological reasons.) But even their complete satisfaction is not a sufficient condition for sanity and mental health. These depend on the satisfaction of those needs and passions which are specifically human, and which stem from the conditions of the human situation: the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion. The great passions of man, his lust for power, his vanity, his search for truth, his passion for love and brotherliness, his destructiveness as well as his creativeness, every powerful desire which motivates man's actions, is rooted in this specific human source, not in the

various stages of his libido as Freud's construction postulated.

Man's solution to his physiological needs is, psychologically speaking, utterly simple; the difficulty here is a purely sociological and economic one. Man's solution to his human needs is exceedingly complex, it depends on many factors and last, not least, on the way his society is organized and how this organization determines the human relations within it.

The basic psychic needs stemming from the peculiarities of human existence must be satisfied in one form or other, unless man is to become insane, just as his physiological needs must be satisfied lest he die. But *the way* in which the psychic needs can be satisfied are manifold, and the difference between various ways of satisfaction is tantamount to the difference between various degrees of mental health. If one of the basic necessities has found no fulfillment, insanity is the result; if it is satisfied but in an unsatisfactory way—considering the nature of human existence—neurosis (either manifest or in the form of a socially patterned defect) is the consequence. Man has to relate himself to others; but if he does it in a symbiotic or alienated way, he loses his independence and integrity; he is weak, suffers, becomes hostile, or apathetic; only if he can relate himself to others in a loving way does he feel one with them and at the same time preserve his integrity. Only by productive work does he relate himself to nature, becoming one with her, and yet not submerging in her. As long as man remains rooted incestuously in nature, mother, clan, he is blocked from developing his individuality, his reason; he remains the helpless prey of nature, and yet he can never feel one with her. Only if he develops his reason and his love, if he can experience the natural and the social world in a human way, can he feel at home, secure in himself, and the master of his life. It is hardly necessary to point out that of two possible forms of transcendence, destructiveness is conducive

to suffering, creativeness to happiness. It is also easy to see that only a sense of identity based on the experience of his own powers can give strength, while all forms of identity experience based on the group, leave man dependent, hence weak. Eventually, only to the extent to which he grasps reality, can he make this world *his*; if he lives in illusions, he never changes the conditions which necessitate these illusions.

Summing up, it can be said that the concept of mental health follows from the very conditions of human existence, and it is the same for man in all ages and all cultures. *Mental health is characterized by the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from incestuous ties to clan and soil, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason.*

This concept of mental health coincides essentially with the norms postulated by the great spiritual teachers of the human race. This coincidence appears to some modern psychologists to be a proof that our psychological premises are not "scientific" but philosophic or religious "ideals." They find it difficult, apparently, to draw the conclusion that the great teachings of all cultures were based on rational insight into the nature of man, on the conditions for his full development. This latter conclusion seems also to be more in line with the fact that in the most diverse places of this globe, at different periods of history, the "awakened ones" have preached the same norms, with none, or with little influence from one upon the other. Ikhnaton, Moses, Kung Futsi, Lao-tse, Buddha, Jesaja, Socrates, Jesus have postulated the same norms for human life, with only small and insignificant differences.

There is one particular difficulty which many psychiatrists and psychologists have to overcome in order to accept the ideas

Key
of *humanistic psychoanalysis*. They still think in the philosophic premises of the nineteenth-century materialism which assumed that all important psychic phenomena must be rooted in (and caused by) corresponding *physiological*, somatic processes. Thus Freud, whose basic philosophical orientation was molded by this type of materialism, believed that he had found this physiological substratum of human passion in the "libido." In the theory presented here, there are no corresponding *physiological* substrata to the needs for relatedness, transcendence, etc. The substratum is not a physical one, but the total human personality in its interaction with the world, nature and man; *it is the human practice of life as it results from the conditions of human existence*. Our philosophic premise is not that of the nineteenth-century materialism, but one which takes the action of man and his interaction with his fellow man and with nature as the basic empirical datum for the study of man.

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Our concept of mental health leads into a theoretical difficulty if we consider the concept of human evolution. There is reason to assume that the history of man, hundreds of thousands of years ago, starts out with a truly "primitive" culture, where man's reason has not developed beyond the most rudimentary beginnings, where his frame of orientation has little relation to reality and truth. Should we speak of this primitive man as lacking in mental health, when he is simply lacking in qualities which only further evolution could give him? Indeed, one answer could be given to this question which would open up an easy solution; this answer lies in the obvious analogy between the evolution of the human race, and the evolution of the individual. If an adult had the attitude and orientation of a one-month-old child, we certainly would classify him as severely sick, probably as schizophrenic. For the one-month-old baby, however, the same attitude is normal and healthy, because it corresponds to the stage

of his psychic development. The mental sickness of the adult, then, can be characterized, as Freud has shown, as a fixation or regression to an orientation which belongs to a former evolutionary state, and which is not adequate any more, considering the state of development the person should have reached. In the same way one could say that the human race, like the infant, starts out with a primitive orientation, and one would call healthy all forms of human orientation, which correspond to the adequate state of human evolution; while one would call "sick" those "fixations" or "regressions" which represent earlier states of development after the human race has already passed through them. Attractive as such a solution is, it does not take into account one fact. The one-month-old child has not yet the organic basis for a mature attitude. He could under no circumstances think, feel or act like a mature adult. Man, on the contrary, for hundreds of thousands of years, has had all the organic equipment for maturity; his brain, bodily co-ordination, physical strength have not changed in all that time. His evolution depended entirely on his ability to transmit knowledge to future generations, and thus to accumulate it. Human evolution is the result of cultural development, and not of an organic change. The infant of the most primitive culture, put into a highly developed culture, would develop like all other children in this culture, because the only factor determining his development is the cultural factor. In other words, while the one-month-old child could never have the spiritual maturity of an adult—whatever the cultural conditions are—any man from the primitive stage on, could have the perfection of man at the peak of his evolution provided he were given the cultural conditions for such maturity. It follows that to speak of primitive, incestuous, unreasonable man, as being in a normal evolutionary phase is different from making the same statement about the infant. Yet, on the other hand, the develop-

ment of culture is a necessary condition for human development. Thus, there does not seem to be a completely satisfactory answer to the problem; from one standpoint we may speak of a lack in mental health; from another standpoint we may speak of an early phase in development. But the difficulty is great only if we deal with the problem in its most general form; as soon as we come to the more concrete problems of our time, we find the problem much less complicated. We have reached a state of individuation in which only the fully developed mature personality can make fruitful use of freedom; if the individual has not developed his reason and his capacity for love, he is incapable of bearing the burden of freedom and individuality, and tries to escape into artificial ties which give him a sense of belonging and rootedness. Any regression today from freedom into artificial rootedness in state or race is a sign of mental illness, since such regression does not correspond to the state of evolution already reached and results in unquestionably pathological phenomena.

Regardless of whether we speak of "mental health" or of the "mature development" of the human race, the concept of mental health or of maturity is an objective one, arrived at by the examination of the "human situation" and the human necessities and needs stemming from it. It follows, as I pointed out in Chapter II, that mental health cannot be defined in terms of the "adjustment" of the individual to his society, but, on the contrary, *that it must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man*, of its role in furthering or hindering the development of mental health. Whether or not the individual is healthy, is primarily not an individual matter, but depends on the structure of his society. A healthy society furthers man's capacity to love his fellow men, to work creatively, to develop his reason and objectivity, to have a sense of self which is based on the experience of his own productive powers. An unhealthy

In the american way / life is more
the society.

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society is one which creates mutual hostility, distrust, which transforms man into an instrument of use and exploitation for others, which deprives him of a sense of self, except inasmuch as he submits to others or becomes an automaton. Society can have both functions; it can further man's healthy development, and it can hinder it; in fact most societies do both, and the question is only to what degree and in what directions their positive and negative influence is exercised.

This view that mental health is to be determined *objectively* and that society has both a furthering *and* a distorting influence on man, contradicts not only the relativistic view, discussed above, but two other views which I want to discuss now. One, decidedly the most popular one today, wants to make us believe that contemporary Western society and more especially, the "American way of life" corresponds to the deepest needs of human nature and that adjustment to this way of life means mental health and maturity. Social psychology, instead of being a tool for the criticism of society, thus becomes the apologist for the status quo. The concept of "maturity" and "mental health" in this view, corresponds to the desirable attitude of a worker or employee in industry or business. To give one example for this adjustment concept, I take a definition by Dr. Strecker, on emotional maturity. "I define maturity," he says, "as the ability to stick to a job, the capacity to give more on any job than is asked for, reliability, persistence to carry out a plan regardless of the difficulties, the ability to work with other people under organization and authority, the ability to make decisions, a will to life, flexibility, independence, and tolerance."¹ It is quite clear that what Strecker here describes as maturity are the virtues of a good worker, employee or soldier in the big social organizations of our time; they are the qualities

¹ E. A. Strecker, *Their Mothers' Sons*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1951, p. 211.

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Civilized man has exchanged some part of his chances of happiness for a measure of 'security.' " ¹

While Freud follows Rousseau in the idea of the "happy savage," he follows Hobbes in his assumption of the basic hostility between men. "*Homo homini lupus*; who has the courage to dispute it in the face of all the evidence in his own life and in history?" ² Freud asks. Man's aggressiveness, Freud thinks, has two sources: one, the innate striving for destruction (death instinct) and the other the frustration of his instinctual desires, imposed upon him by civilization. While man may channel part of his aggression against himself, through the Super-Ego, and while a minority can sublimate their sexual desire into brotherly love, aggressiveness remains ineradicable. Men will always compete with, and attack each other, if not for material things, then for the "prerogatives in sexual relationships, which must arouse the strongest rancour and most violent enmity among men and women who are otherwise equal. Let us suppose this were also to be removed by instituting complete liberty in sexual life, so that the family, the germ-cell of culture, ceased to exist; one could not, it is true, foresee the new paths on which cultural development might then proceed, but one thing one would be bound to expect, and that is that the ineffaceable feature of human nature would follow wherever it led." ³ Since for Freud love is in its essence sexual desire, he is compelled to assume a contradiction between love and social cohesion. Love, according to him, is by its very nature egotistical and antisocial, and the sense of solidarity and brotherly love are not primary feelings rooted in man's nature, but aim-inhibited sexual desires.

On the basis of his concept of man, that of his inherent wish

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 92.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

for unlimited sexual satisfaction, and of his destructiveness, Freud must arrive at a picture of the necessary *conflict* between civilization and mental health and happiness. Primitive man is healthy and happy because he is not frustrated in his basic instincts, but he lacks the blessings of culture. Civilized man is more secure, enjoys art and science, but he is bound to be neurotic because of the continued frustration of his instincts, enforced by civilization.

For Freud, social life and civilization are essentially in contrast to the needs of human nature as he sees it, and man is confronted with the tragic alternative between happiness based on the unrestricted satisfaction of his instincts, and security and cultural achievements based on instinctual frustration, hence conducive to neurosis and all other forms of mental sickness. Civilization, to Freud, is the product of instinctual frustration and thus the cause of mental illness.

Freud's conclusion | Freud's concept of human nature as being essentially competitive (and asocial) is the same as we find it in most authors who believe that the characteristics of man in modern Capitalism are his natural characteristics. Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex is based on the assumption of the "natural" antagonism and competitiveness between father and sons for the love of the mother. This competition is said to be unavoidable because of the natural incestuous strivings in the sons. Freud only follows the same trend of thought in his assumption that the instincts of each man make him desire to have the prerogative in sexual relationships, and thus create violent enmity among themselves. We cannot fail to see that Freud's whole theory of sex is conceived on the anthropological premise that competition and mutual hostility are inherent in human nature.

Darwin gave expression to this principle in the sphere of *biology* with his theory of a competitive "struggle for survival." Economists like Ricardo and the Manchester school translated it into

the sphere of *economy*. Later, Freud, under the influence of the same anthropological premises, was to claim it for the sphere of *sexual desires*. His basic concept is that of a "homo sexualis" as that of the economists was that of the "homo economicus." Both the "economic" man and the "sexual" man are convenient fabrications whose alleged nature—isolated, asocial, greedy and competitive—makes Capitalism appear as the system which corresponds perfectly to human nature, and places it beyond the reach of criticism.

Both positions, the "adjustment view" and the Hobbes-Freudian view of the necessary conflict between human nature and society, imply the defense of contemporary society and they both are one-sided distortions. Furthermore, they both ignore the fact that society is not only in conflict with the *asocial* aspects of man, partly produced by itself, but often also with his most valuable human qualities, which it suppresses rather than furthers.

An objective examination of the relation between society and human nature must consider both the furthering and the inhibiting impact of society on man, taking into account the nature of man and the needs stemming from it. Since most authors have emphasized the positive influence of modern society on man, I shall in this book pay less attention to this aspect and more to the somewhat neglected pathogenic function of modern society.

MAN IN CAPITALISTIC SOCIETY

THE SOCIAL CHARACTER

Mental health cannot be discussed meaningfully as an abstract quality of abstract people. If we are to discuss now the state of mental health in contemporary Western man, and if we are to consider what factors in his mode of life make for in-sanity and what others are conducive to sanity, we have to study the influence of the specific conditions of our mode of production and of our social and political organization on the nature of man; we have to arrive at a picture of the personality of the average man living and working under these conditions. Only if we can arrive at such a picture of the "*social character*," tentative and incomplete as it may be, do we have a basis on which to judge the mental health and sanity of modern man.

What is meant by social character? I refer in this concept to *the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture* in contradistinction to the *individual character in which people belonging to the same culture differ from each other*. The concept of social character is not a statistical concept in the sense that it is simply the sum total of character traits to be found in the majority of people in a given culture.

It can be understood only in reference to the *function* of the social character which we shall now proceed to discuss.¹

Each society is structuralized and operates in certain ways which are necessitated by a number of objective conditions. These conditions include methods of production and distribution which in turn depend on raw materials, industrial techniques, climate, size of population, and political and geographical factors, cultural traditions and influences to which society is exposed. There is no "society" in general, but only specific social structures which operate in different and ascertainable ways. Although these social structures do change in the course of historical development, they are relatively fixed at any given historical period, and society can exist only by operating within the framework of its particular structure. The members of the society and/or the various classes or status groups within it have to behave in such a way as to be able to function in the sense required by the social system. It is the function of the social character to shape the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behavior is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of wanting to act as they have to act and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture. In other words, it is the social character's function to mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society.

Modern, industrial society, for instance, could not have attained its ends had it not harnessed the energy of free men for work in an

¹ In the following pages I have drawn on my paper, "Psychoanalytic Characterology and Its Application to the Understanding of Culture," in *Culture and Personality*, ed. by G. S. Sargent and M. Smith, Viking Fund, 1949, pp. 1-12. The concept of the social character was developed originally in my "Die psychoanalytische Charakterologie in ihrer Anwendung für die Soziologie" in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, I, Hirschfeld, Leipzig, 1931.

unprecedented degree. Man had to be molded into a person who was eager to spend most of his energy for the purpose of work, who acquired discipline, particularly orderliness and punctuality, to a degree unknown in most other cultures. It would not have sufficed if each individual had to make up his mind consciously every day that he wanted to work, to be on time, etcetera, since any such conscious deliberation would lead to many more exceptions than the smooth functioning of society can afford. Nor would threat and force have sufficed as a motive, since the highly differentiated tasks in modern industrial society can in the long run only be the work of free men and not of forced labor. The necessity for work, for punctuality and orderliness had to be transformed into an inner *drive* for these aims. This means that society had to produce a social character in which these strivings were inherent.

The *genesis* of the social character cannot be understood by referring to one single cause but by understanding the interaction of sociological and ideological factors. Inasmuch as economic factors are less easily changeable, they have a certain predominance in this interplay. This does not mean that the drive for material gain is the only or even the most powerful motivating force in man. It does mean that the individual and society are primarily concerned with the task of survival, and that only when survival is secured can they proceed to the satisfaction of other imperative human needs. The task of survival implies that man has to produce, that is, he has to secure the minimum of food and shelter necessary for survival, and the tools needed for even the most rudimentary processes of production. The method of production in turn determines the social relations existing in a given society. It determines the mode and practice of life. However, religious, political and philosophical ideas are not purely secondary projective systems. While they are rooted in the social

character, they in turn also determine, systematize and stabilize the social character.

Let me state again, in speaking of the socio-economic structure of society as molding man's character, we speak only of one pole in the interconnection between social organization and man. The other pole to be considered is man's nature, molding in turn the social conditions in which he lives. The social process can be understood only if we start out with the knowledge of the reality of man, his psychic properties as well as his physiological ones, and if we examine the interaction between the nature of man and the nature of the external conditions under which he lives and which he has to master if he is to survive.

While it is true that man can adapt himself to almost any conditions, he is not a blank sheet of paper on which culture writes its text. Needs like the striving for happiness, harmony, love and freedom are inherent in his nature. They are also dynamic factors in the historical process which, if frustrated, tend to arouse psychic reactions, ultimately creating the very conditions suited to the original strivings. As long as the objective conditions of the society and the culture remain stable, the social character has a predominantly stabilizing function. If the external conditions change in such a way that they do not fit any more with the traditional social character, a *lag* arises which often changes the function of character into an element of disintegration instead of stabilization, into dynamite instead of a social mortar, as it were. lag

Provided this concept of the genesis and function of the social character is correct, we are confronted with a puzzling problem. Is not the assumption that the character structure is molded by the role which the individual has to play in his culture contradicted by the assumption that a person's character is molded in his childhood? Can both views pretend to be true in view of the fact that the child in his early years of life has comparatively little

family information ?
social character

contact with society as such? This question is not as difficult to answer as it may seem at first glance. We must differentiate between the factors which are responsible for the particular *contents* of the social character and the *methods* by which the social character is produced. The structure of society and the function of the individual in the social structure may be considered to determine the content of the social character. The family on the other hand may be considered to be the *psychic agency of society*, the institution which has the function of transmitting the requirements of society to the growing child. The family fulfills this function in two ways. First, and this is the most important factor, by the influence the character of the parents has on the character formation of the growing child. Since the character of most parents is an expression of the social character, they transmit in this way the essential features of the socially desirable character structure to the child. The parents' love and happiness are communicated to the child as well as their anxiety or hostility. In addition to the character of the parents, the methods of childhood training which are customary in a culture also have the function of molding the character of the child in a socially desirable direction. There are various methods and techniques of child training which can fulfill the same end, and on the other hand there can be methods which seem identical but which nevertheless are different because of the character structure of those who practice these methods. By focusing on methods of child training, we can never explain the social character. Methods of child training are significant only as a mechanism of *transmission*, and they can be understood correctly only if we understand first what kinds of personalities are desirable and necessary in any given culture.¹

¹ In the assumption that methods of child training in themselves are the cause for the particular formation of a culture lies the weakness of the approach by Kardiner,

starvation. The owner of capital was supposed to be morally right if, in the pursuit of profit, he exploited to the maximum the labor he hired. There was hardly any sense of human solidarity between the owner of capital and his workers. The law of the economic jungle was supreme. All the restrictive ideas of previous centuries were left behind. One seeks out the customer, tries to undersell one's competitor, and the competitive fight against equals is as ruthless and unrestricted as the exploitation of the worker. With the use of the steam engine, division of labor grows, and so does the size of enterprises. The capitalistic principle that each one seeks his own profit and thus contributes to the happiness of all becomes the guiding principle of human behavior.

The market as the prime regulator is freed from all traditional restrictive elements and comes fully into its own in the nineteenth century. While everybody believes himself to act according to his own interest, he is actually determined by the anonymous laws of the market and of the economic machine. The individual capitalist expands his enterprise not primarily because he *wants* to, but because he *has* to, because—as Carnegie said in his autobiography—postponement of further expansion would mean regression. Actually as a business grows, one has to continue making it bigger, whether one wants to or not. In this function of the economic law which operates behind the back of man and forces him to do things without giving him the freedom to decide, we see the beginning of a constellation which comes to its fruition only in the twentieth century.

In our time it is not only the law of the market which has its own life and rules over man, but also the development of science and technique. For a number of reasons, the problems and organization of science today are such that a scientist does not choose his problems; the problems force themselves upon the scientist. He solves one problem, and the result is not that he is more

secure or certain, but that ten other new problems open up in place of the single solved one. They force him to solve them; he has to go ahead at an ever-quicken pace. The same holds true for industrial techniques. The pace of science forces the pace of technique. Theoretical physics forces atomic energy on us; the successful production of the fission bomb forces upon us the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. *We* do not choose our problems, we do not choose our products; we are pushed, we are forced—by what? By a system which has no purpose and goal transcending it, and which makes man its appendix.

We shall say a great deal more about this aspect of man's powerlessness in the analysis of contemporary Capitalism. At this point, however, we ought to dwell a little longer on the importance of the modern market as the central mechanism of distributing the social product, since the market is the basis for the formation of human relations in capitalistic society.

If the wealth of society corresponded to the actual needs of all its members, there would be no problem of distributing it; each member could take from the social product as much as he likes, or needs, and there would be no need of regulation, except in the purely *technical* sense of distribution. But aside from primitive societies, this condition has never existed up to now in human history. The needs were always greater than the sum total of the social product, and therefore a regulation had to be made on how to distribute it, how many and who should have the optimal satisfaction of their needs, and which classes had to be satisfied with less than they wanted. In most highly developed societies of the past, this decision was made essentially by force. Certain classes had the power to appropriate the best of the social product for themselves, and to assign to other classes the heavier and dirtier work and a smaller share of the product. Force was often implemented by social and religious tradition, which constituted such

a strong psychic force within people that it often made the threat of physical force unnecessary.

The modern market is a self-regulating mechanism of distribution, which makes it unnecessary to divide the social product according to an intended or traditional plan, and thus does away with the necessity of the use of force within society. Of course, the absence of force is more apparent than real. The worker who has to accept the wage rate offered him on the labor market is forced to accept the market condition because he could not survive otherwise. Thus the "freedom" of the individual is largely illusory. He is aware of the fact that there is no *outer* force which compels him to enter into certain contracts; he is less aware of the laws of the market which operate behind his back, as it were; hence he believes that he is free, when he actually is not. But while this is so, the capitalist method of distribution by the market mechanism is better than any other method devised so far in a class society, because it is a basis for the relative political freedom of the individual, which characterizes capitalistic democracy.

The economic functioning of the market rests upon *competition* of many individuals who want to sell their commodities on the commodity market, as they want to sell their labor or services on the labor and personality market. This economic necessity for competition led, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, to an increasingly competitive attitude, characterologically speaking. Man was driven by the desire to surpass his competitor, thus reversing completely the attitude characteristic of the feudal age—that each one had in the social order his traditional place with which he should be satisfied. As opposed to the social stability in the medieval system, an unheard of social mobility developed, in which everybody was struggling for the best places, even though only a few were chosen to attain them. In this

scramble for success, the social and moral rules of human solidarity broke down; the importance of life was in being first in a competitive race.

Another factor which constitutes the capitalistic mode of production is that in this system the aim of all economic activity is *profit*. Now around this "profit motive" of Capitalism, a great deal of calculated and uncalculated confusion has been created. We have been told—and rightly so—that all economic activity is meaningful only if it results in a profit, that is to say, if we gain more than we have spent in the act of production. To make a living, even the pre-capitalist artisan had to spend on raw material and his apprentice's wage less than the price he charged for his product. In any society that supports industry, simple or complex, the value of the salable product must exceed the cost of production in order to provide capital needed for the replacement of machinery or other instruments for the development and increase of production. But the question of the profitability of production is not the issue. Our problem is that our motive for production is not social usefulness, not satisfaction in the work process, but the profit derived from investment. The usefulness of his product to the consumer need not interest the individual capitalist at all. This does not mean that the capitalist, psychologically speaking, is driven by an insatiable greed for money. This may or may not be so, but it is not essential for the capitalistic mode of production. In fact, greed was much more frequently the capitalist's motive in an earlier phase than it is now, when ownership and management are largely separated, and when the aim of obtaining higher profits is subordinate to the wish for the ever-growing expansion and smooth running of an enterprise.

Income can, under the present system, be quite apart from personal effort or service. The owner of capital can earn without working. The essential human function of exchange of effort for

income can become the abstracted manipulation of money for more money. This is most obvious in the case of the absentee owner of an industrial enterprise. It does not make any difference whether he owns the whole enterprise, or only a share of it. In each case he makes a profit from his capital and from the work of others without having to make any effort himself. There have been many pious justifications for this state of affairs. It has been said that the profits were a payment for the risk he takes in his investment, or for his self-depriving effort to save, which enabled him to accumulate the capital he can invest. But it is hardly necessary to prove that these marginal factors do not alter the elementary fact that Capitalism permits the making of profits without personal effort and productive function. But even as far as those who do work and perform services, their income is not in any reasonable correlation to the effort they make. A school-teacher's earnings are but a fraction of those of a physician, in spite of the fact that her social function is of equal importance and her personal effort hardly less. The miner earns a fraction of the income of the manager of the mine, though his personal effort is greater if we consider the dangers and discomforts connected with his work.

What characterizes income distribution in Capitalism is the lack of balanced proportion between an individual's effort and work and the social recognition accorded them—financial compensation. This disproportion would, in a poorer society than ours, result in greater extremes of luxury and poverty than our standards of morals would tolerate. I am not stressing, however, the material effects of this disproportion, but its moral and psychological effects. One lies in the underevaluation of work, of human effort and skill. The other lies in the fact that as long as my gain is limited by the effort I make, my desire is limited. If, on the other hand, my income is not in proportion to my effort, there

are no limitations to my desires, since their fulfillment is a matter of opportunities offered by certain market situations, and not dependent on my own capacities.¹

Nineteenth-century Capitalism was truly *private* Capitalism. Individuals saw and seized new opportunities, acted economically, sensed new methods, acquired property, both for production and consumption—and enjoyed their property. This pleasure in property, aside from competitiveness and profit seeking, is one of the fundamental aspects of the character of the middle and upper classes of the nineteenth century. It is all the more important to note this trait because with regard to the pleasure in property and in saving, man today is so markedly different from his grandfathers. The mania for saving and for possession, in fact, has become the characteristic feature of the most backward class, the lower middle class, and is much more readily found in Europe than in America. We have here one of the examples where a trait of the social character which was once that of the most advanced class became, in the process of economic development, obsolete as it were, and is retained by the very groups which have developed the least.

Characterologically, the pleasure in possession and property has been described by Freud as an important aspect of the "anal character." From a different theoretical premise, I have described the same clinical picture in terms of the "hoarding orientation." Like all other character orientations, the hoarding one has positive and negative aspects, and whether the positive or the negative aspects are dominant depends on the relative strength of the productive

¹ We find here the same difference that exists with regard to physical desires in contrast to those which are not rooted in bodily needs; my desire to eat, for instance, is self-regulated by my physiological organization, and only in pathological cases is this desire not regulated by a physiological saturation point. Ambition, lust for power, and so on, which are not rooted in physiological needs of the organism have no such self-regulating mechanisms, and that is the reason why they are ever increasing and so dangerous.

changed. Exploitation was not personal any more, but it had become anonymous, as it were. It was the law of the market that condemned a man to work for starvation wages, rather than the intention or greed of any one individual. Nobody was responsible or guilty, nobody could change conditions either. One was dealing with the iron laws of society, or so it seemed.

In the twentieth century, such capitalistic exploitation as was customary in the nineteenth century has largely disappeared. This must not, however, becloud the insight into the fact that twentieth-century as well as nineteenth-century Capitalism is based on the principle that is to be found in all class societies: *the use of man by man*.

Since the modern capitalist "employs" labor, the social and political form of this exploitation has changed; what has not changed is that the owner of capital uses other men for the purpose of his own profit. The basic concept of *use* has nothing to do with cruel, or not cruel, ways of human treatment, but with the fundamental fact that one man serves another for purposes which are not his own but those of the employer. The concept of use of man by man has nothing to do even with the question whether one man uses another, or uses himself. The fact remains the same, that a man, a living human being, ceases to be an end in himself, and becomes the means for the economic interests of another man, or himself, or of an impersonal giant, the economic machine.

There are two obvious objections to the foregoing statements. One is that modern man is free to accept or to decline a contract, and therefore he is a voluntary participant in his social relation to the employer, and not a "thing." But this objection ignores the fact that in the first place he has no choice but to accept the existing conditions, and secondly, that even if he were not forced to accept these conditions, he would still be "employed," that is,

inhibitions and principles were thrown overboard. The idea of not satisfying a sexual wish was supposed to be old-fashioned or unhealthy. Even though there was a certain reaction against this attitude, on the whole the nineteenth-century system of tabus and repressions has almost disappeared.

Looked upon from the standards of the nineteenth century, we have achieved almost everything which seemed to be necessary for a saner society, and indeed, many people who still think in terms of the past century are convinced that we continue to progress. Consequently they also believe that the only threat to further progress lies in authoritarian societies, like the Soviet Union which, with its ruthless economic exploitation of workers for the sake of quicker accumulation of capital and the ruthless political authority necessary for the continuation of exploitation, resembles in many ways the earlier phase of Capitalism. For those, however, who do not look at our present society with the eyes of the nineteenth century, it is obvious that the fulfillment of the nineteenth-century hopes has by no means led to the expected results. In fact, it seems that in spite of material prosperity, political and sexual freedom, the world in the middle of the twentieth century is mentally sicker than it was in the nineteenth century. Indeed, "we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more, but of becoming robots," as Adlai Stevenson said so succinctly.¹ There is no overt authority which intimidates us, but we are governed by the fear of the anonymous authority of conformity. We do not submit to anyone personally; we do not go through conflicts with authority, but we have also no convictions of our own, almost no individuality, almost no sense of self. Quite obviously, the diagnosis of our pathology cannot follow the lines of the nineteenth century. We have to recognize the specific pathological problems of our time in order to arrive at a vision of that which

¹ In his speech at Columbia University, 1954.

thousand giant firms, constituting only 1 per cent of all the firms in the United States, employ over 50 per cent of all people engaged in business today, while on the other hand 1,500,000 one-man enterprises (nonfarming) employ only 6 per cent of all people employed in business.¹

As these figures already indicate, with the concentration of enterprises goes an enormous increase of employees in these big enterprises. While the old middle class, composed of farmers, independent businessmen and professionals, formerly constituted 85 per cent of the middle class, it is now only 44 per cent; the new middle classes have increased from 15 per cent to 56 per cent in the same period. This new middle class is composed of managers, who have risen from 2 per cent to 6 per cent; salaried professionals, from 4 per cent to 14 per cent; sales people from 7 per cent to 14 per cent, and office workers from 2 per cent to 22 per cent. Altogether the new middle class has risen from 6 per cent to 25 per cent of the total labor force between 1870 and 1940, while the wage workers have declined from 61 per cent to 55 per cent of the labor force within the same period. As Mills puts it very succinctly "*. . . fewer individuals manipulate things; more handle people and symbols.*"²

With the increase in the importance of the giant enterprises, another development of utmost importance has occurred: the increasing separation of management from ownership. This point is illustrated by revealing figures in the classic work of Berle and Means. Of 144 companies for which information could be obtained among the 200 largest companies (in 1930) only 20 had under 5,000 stockholders, while 71 had between 20,000 and 500,000 stockholders.³ Only in small companies did the manage-

¹ These figures are quoted from C. W. Mills, *White Collar*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1951, p. 63 ff.

² *Loc. cit.*, p. 63.

³ These and the following figures are quoted from Berle and Means.

temporary Capitalism is the increase in significance of the domestic market. Our whole economic machine rests upon the principle of mass production and mass consumption. While in the nineteenth century the general tendency was to save, and not to indulge in expenses which could not be paid for immediately, the contemporary system is exactly the opposite. Everybody is coaxed into buying as much as he can, and before he has saved enough to pay for his purchases. The need for more consumption is strongly stimulated by advertising and all other methods of psychological pressure. This development goes hand in hand with the rise of the economic and social status of the working class. Especially in the United States, but also all over Europe, the working class has participated in the increased production of the whole economic system. The salary of the worker, and his social benefits, permit him a level of consumption which would have seemed fantastic one hundred years ago. His social and economic power has increased to the same degree and this not only with regard to salary and social benefits, but also to his human and social role in the factory.

summary
Let us take another look at the most important elements in twentieth-century Capitalism: the disappearance of feudal traits, the revolutionary increase in industrial production, the increasing concentration of capital and bigness of business and government, the increasing number of people who manipulate figures and people, the separation of ownership from management, the rise of the working class economically and politically, the new methods of work in factory and office—and let us describe these changes from a slightly different aspect. The disappearance of feudal factors means the disappearance of irrational authority. Nobody is supposed to be higher than his neighbor by birth, God's will, natural law. Everybody is equal and free. Nobody may be exploited or commanded by virtue of a natural right. If one person is commanded by another, it is because the commanding one

bought the labor or the services of the commanded one, on the labor market; he commands because they are both free and equal and thus could enter into a contractual relationship. However, with irrational authority—rational authority became obsolete, too. If the market and the contract regulates relationships, there is no need to know what is right and what is wrong and good and evil. All that is necessary is to know that things are *fair*—that the exchange is fair, and that things “work”—that they function.

Another decisive fact which the twentieth-century man experiences is the miracle of production. He commands forces thousands of times stronger than the ones nature had given him before; steam, oil, electricity, have become his servants and beasts of burden. He crosses the oceans, the continents—first in weeks, then in days, now in hours. He seemingly overcomes the law of gravity, and flies through the air; he converts deserts into fertile land, makes rain instead of praying for it. The miracle of production leads to the miracle of consumption. No more traditional barriers keep anyone from buying anything he takes a fancy to. He only needs to have the money. But more and more people have the money—not for the genuine pearls perhaps, but for the synthetic ones; for Fords which look like Cadillacs, for the cheap dresses which look like the expensive ones, for cigarettes which are the same for millionaires and for the workingman. Everything is within reach, can be bought, can be consumed. Where was there ever a society where this miracle happened?

Men work together. Thousands stream into the industrial plants and the offices—they come in cars, in subways, in buses, in trains—they work together, according to a rhythm measured by the experts, with methods worked out by the experts, not too fast, not too slow, but together; each a part of the whole. The evening stream flows back: they read the same newspaper, they listen to the radio, they see the movies, the same for those on the top and

for those at the bottom of the ladder, for the intelligent and the stupid, for the educated and the uneducated. Produce, consume, enjoy together, in step, without asking questions. That is the rhythm of their lives.

What kind of men, then, does our society need? What is the "social character" suited to twentieth-century Capitalism?

It needs men who co-operate smoothly in large groups; who want to consume more and more, and whose tastes are standardized and can be easily influenced and anticipated.

It needs men who feel free and independent, not subject to any authority, or principle, or conscience—yet willing to be commanded, to do what is expected, to fit into the social machine without friction. How can man be guided without force, led without leaders, be prompted without any aim—except the one to be on the move, to function, to go ahead . . . ?

2. *Characterological Changes*

a. Quantification, Abstractification

In analyzing and describing the social character of contemporary man, one can choose any number of approaches, just as one does in describing the character structure of an individual. These approaches can differ either in the depth to which the analysis penetrates, or they can be centered around different aspects which are equally "deep," yet chosen according to the particular interest of the investigator.

In the following analysis I have chosen the concept of *alienation* as the central point from which I am going to develop the analysis of the contemporary social character. For one reason, because this concept seems to me to touch upon the deepest level of the modern personality; for another, because it is the most appropriate if one is concerned with the interaction between the contemporary socio-

economic structure and the character structure of the average individual.¹

We must introduce the discussion of alienation by speaking of one of the fundamental economic features of Capitalism, the process of *quantification* and *abstractification*.

The medieval artisan produced goods for a relatively small and known group of customers. His prices were determined by the need to make a profit which permitted him to live in a style traditionally commensurate with his social status. He knew from experience the costs of production, and even if he employed a few journeymen and apprentices, no elaborate system of bookkeeping or balance sheets was required for the operation of his business. The same held true for the production of the peasant, which required even less quantifying abstract methods. In contrast, the modern business enterprise rests upon its balance sheet. It cannot rest upon such concrete and direct observation as the artisan used to figure out his profits. Raw material, machinery, labor costs, as well as the product can be expressed in the same money value, and thus made comparable and fit to appear in the balance equation. All economic occurrences have to be strictly quantifiable, and only the balance sheets, the exact comparison of economic processes quantified in figures, tell the manager whether and to what degree he is engaged in a profitable, that is to say, a meaningful business activity.

This transformation of the concrete into the abstract has developed far beyond the balance sheet and the quantification of the economic occurrences in the sphere of production. The modern businessman not only deals with millions of dollars, but also with millions of customers, thousands of stockholders, and thousands

¹ As the reader familiar with the concept of the marketing orientation developed in *Man for Himself* will see, the phenomenon of alienation is the more general and underlies the more specific concept of the "marketing orientation."

whole chair or the whole table, and even if some preparatory work was done by his apprentices, he was in control of the production, overseeing it in its entirety. In the modern industrial enterprise, the worker is not in touch with the whole product at any point. He is engaged in the performance of one specialized function, and while he might shift in the course of time from one function to another, he is still not related to the concrete product *as a whole*. He develops a specialized function, and the tendency is such, that the function of the modern industrial worker can be defined as working in a machinelike fashion in activities for which machine work has not yet been devised or which would be costlier than human work. The only person who is in touch with the whole product is the manager, but to him the product is an abstraction, whose essence is exchange value, while the worker, for whom it is concrete, never works on it as a whole.

Undoubtedly without quantification and abstractification modern mass production would be unthinkable. But in a society in which economic activities have become the main preoccupation of man, this process of quantification and abstractification has transcended the realm of economic production, and spread to the attitude of man to things, to people, and to himself.

In order to understand the abstractification process in modern man, we must first consider the ambiguous function of abstraction in general. It is obvious that abstractions in themselves are not a modern phenomenon. In fact, an increasing ability to form abstractions is characteristic of the cultural development of the human race. If I speak of "a table," I am using an abstraction; I am referring, not to a specific table in its full concreteness, but to the genus "table" which comprises all possible concrete tables. If I speak of "a man" I am not speaking of this or that person, in his concreteness and uniqueness, but of the genus "man," which comprises all individual persons. In other words, I make an ab-

straction. The development of philosophical or scientific thought is based on an increasing ability for such abstractification, and to give it up would mean to fall back into the most primitive way of thinking.

However, there are *two* ways of relating oneself to an object: one can relate oneself to it in its full concreteness; then the object appears with all its specific qualities, and there is no other object which is identical with it. And one can relate oneself to the object in an abstract way, that is, emphasizing only those qualities which it has in common with all other objects of the same genus, and thus accentuating some and ignoring other qualities. The full and productive relatedness to an object comprises this polarity of perceiving it in its uniqueness, and at the same time in its generality; in its concreteness, and at the same time in its abstractness.

relatedness | In contemporary Western culture this polarity has given way to an almost exclusive reference to the abstract qualities of things and people, and to a neglect of relating oneself to their concreteness and uniqueness. Instead of forming abstract concepts where it is necessary and useful, everything, including ourselves, is being abstractified; the concrete reality of people and things to which we can relate with the reality of our own person, is replaced by abstractions, by ghosts that embody different quantities, but not different qualities.

It is quite customary to talk about a "three-million-dollar bridge," a "twenty-cent cigar," a "five-dollar watch," and this not only from the standpoint of the manufacturer or the consumer in the process of buying it, but as the essential point in the description. When one speaks of the "three-million-dollar bridge," one is not primarily concerned with its usefulness or beauty, that is, with its concrete qualities, but one speaks of it as of a commodity, the main quality of which is its exchange value, expressed in a quantity, that of money. This does not mean, of course, that

market speculation. How drastically commercial categories have entered even religious thinking is shown in the following passage by Bishop Sheen, in an article on the birth of Christ. "Our reason tells us," so writes the author, "that if anyone of the claimants (for the role of God's son) came from God, the least that God could do to support His Representative's claim would be to preannounce His coming. Automobile manufacturers tell us when to expect a new model."¹ Or, even more drastically, Billy Graham, the evangelist, says: "I am selling the greatest product in the world; why shouldn't it be promoted as well as soap?"²

The process of abstractification, however, has still deeper roots and manifestations than the ones described so far, roots which go back to the very beginning of the modern era; to the *dissolution of any concrete frame of reference* in the process of life.

In a primitive society, the "world" is identical with the tribe. The tribe is in the center of the Universe, as it were; everything outside is shadowy and has no independent existence. In the medieval world, the Universe was much wider; it comprised this globe, the sky and the stars above it; but it was seen with the earth as the center and man as the purpose of Creation. Everything had its fixed place, just as everybody had his fixed position in feudal society. With the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, new vistas opened up. The earth lost its central place, and became one of the satellites of the sun; new continents were found, new sea lanes discovered; the static social system was more and more loosened up; everything and everybody was moving. Yet, until the end of the twentieth century, nature and society had not lost their concreteness and definiteness. Man's natural and social world was still manageable, still had definite contours. But with the progress

¹ From *Colliers'* magazine, 1953.

² *Time* magazine, October 25, 1954.

slapping, not to speak of killing, a helpless person. In the latter case, the concrete situation arouses in him a conscience reaction common to all normal men; in the former, there is no such reaction, because the act and his object are alienated from the doer, his act is not *his* any more, but has, so to speak, a life and a responsibility of its own.

Science, business, politics, have lost all foundations and proportions which make sense humanly. We live in figures and abstractions; since nothing is concrete, nothing is real. Everything is possible, factually and morally. Science fiction is not different from science fact, nightmares and dreams from the events of next year. Man has been thrown out from any definite place whence he can overlook and manage his life and the life of society. He is driven faster and faster by the forces which originally were created by him. In this wild whirl he thinks, figures, busy with abstractions, more and more remote from concrete life.

b. Alienation

The foregoing discussion of the process of abstractification leads to the central issue of the effects of Capitalism on personality: the phenomenon of alienation.

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts—but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time

without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively.

The older meaning in which "alienation" was used was to denote an insane person; *aliéné* in French, *alienado* in Spanish are older words for the psychotic, the thoroughly and absolutely alienated person. ("Alienist," in English, is still used for the doctor who cares for the insane.)

In the last century the word "alienation" was used by Hegel and Marx, referring not to a state of insanity, but to a less drastic form of self-estrangement, which permits the person to act reasonably in practical matters, yet which constitutes one of the most severe socially patterned defects. In Marx's system alienation is called that condition of man where his "own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him."¹

But while the use of the word "alienation" in this general sense is a recent one, the concept is a much older one; it is the same to which the prophets of the Old Testament referred as *idolatry*. It will help us to a better understanding of "alienation" if we begin by considering the meaning of "idolatry."

The prophets of monotheism did not denounce heathen religions as idolatrous primarily because they worshiped several gods instead of one. The essential difference between monotheism and polytheism is not one of the *number* of gods, but lies in the fact of self-alienation. Man spends his energy, his artistic capacities on building an idol, and then he worships this idol, which is nothing but the result of his own human effort. His life forces have flown into a "thing," and this thing, having become an idol,

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*. cf. also Marx-Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie* (1845/6), in K. Marx, *Der Historische Materialismus, Die Frühschriften*, S. Landshut and D. P. Mayer, Leipzig, 1932, II, p. 25.

is not experienced as a result of his own productive effort, but as something apart from himself, over and against him, which he worships and to which he submits. As the prophet Hosea says (XIV, 8): "Assur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; *neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, you are our gods; for in thee the fatherless finds love.*" Idolatrous man bows down to the work of his own hands. *The idol represents his own life-forces in an alienated form.*

The principle of monotheism, in contrast, is that man is infinite, that there is no partial quality in him which can be hypostatized into the whole. God, in the monotheistic concept, is unrecognizable and indefinable; God is not a "thing." If man is created in the likeness of God, he is created as the bearer of infinite qualities. In idolatry man bows down and submits to the projection of one partial quality in himself. He does not experience himself as the center from which living acts of love and reason radiate. He becomes a thing, his neighbor becomes a thing, just as his gods are things. "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like them; so is everyone that trusts in them." (Psalm 135).

Monotheistic religions themselves have, to a large extent, regressed into idolatry. Man projects his power of love and of reason unto God; he does not feel them any more as his own powers, and then he prays to God to give him back some of what he, man, has projected unto God. In early Protestantism and Calvinism, the required religious attitude is that man *should* feel himself empty and impoverished, and put his trust in the grace of God, that is, into the hope that God may return to him part of his own qualities, which he has put into God.

Every act of submissive worship is an act of alienation and idolatry in this sense. What is frequently called "love" is often nothing but this idolatrous phenomenon of alienation; only that not God or an idol, but another person is worshiped in this way. The "loving" person in this type of submissive relationship, projects all his or her love, strength, thought, into the other person, and experiences the loved person as a superior being, finding satisfaction in complete submission and worship. This does not only mean that he fails to experience the loved person as a human being in his or her reality, but that he does not experience *himself* in his full reality, as the bearer of productive human powers. Just as in the case of religious idolatry, he has projected all his richness into the other person, and experiences this richness not any more as something which is his, but as something alien from himself, deposited in somebody else, with which he can get in touch only by submission to, or submergence in the other person. The same phenomenon exists in the worshipping submission to a political leader, or to the state. The leader and the state actually are what they are by the consent of the governed. But they become idols when the individual projects all his powers into them and worships them, hoping to regain some of his powers by submission and worship.

In Rousseau's theory of the state, as in contemporary totalitarianism, the individual is supposed to abdicate his own rights and to project them unto the state as the only arbiter. In Fascism and Stalinism the absolutely alienated individual worships at the altar of an idol, and it makes little difference by what names this idol is known: state, class, collective, or what else.

We can speak of idolatry or alienation not only in relationship to other people, but also in relationship to oneself, when the person is subject to irrational passions. The person who is mainly motivated by his lust for power, does not experience himself any more

in the richness and limitlessness of a human being, but he becomes a slave to one partial striving in him, which is projected into external aims, by which he is "possessed." The person who is given to the exclusive pursuit of his passion for money is possessed by his striving for it; money is the idol which he worships as the projection of one isolated power in himself, his greed for it. In this sense, the neurotic person is an alienated person. His actions are not his own; while he is under the illusion of doing what *he* wants, he is driven by forces which are separated from his self, which work behind his back; he is a stranger to himself, just as his fellow man is a stranger to him. He experiences the other and himself not as what they really are, but distorted by the unconscious forces which operate in them. The insane person is the *absolutely alienated* person; he has completely lost himself as the center of his own experience; he has lost the sense of self.

What is common to all these phenomena—the worship of idols, the idolatrous worship of God, the idolatrous love for a person, the worship of a political leader or the state, and the idolatrous worship of the externalizations of irrational passions—is the process of alienation. It is the fact that *man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished "thing," dependent on powers outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance.*

As the reference to idolatry indicates, alienation is by no means a modern phenomenon. It would go far beyond the scope of this book to attempt a sketch on the history of alienation. Suffice it to say that it seems alienation differs from culture to culture, both in the specific spheres which are alienated, and in the thoroughness and completeness of the process.

Alienation as we find it in modern society is almost total; it pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to the state, to his fellow man, and to himself. Man has

created a world of man-made things as it never existed before. He has constructed a complicated social machine to administer the technical machine he built. Yet this whole creation of his stands over and above him. He does not feel himself as a creator and center, but as the servant of a Golem, which his hands have built. The more powerful and gigantic the forces are which he unleashes, the more powerless he feels himself as a human being. He confronts himself with his own forces embodied in things he has created, alienated from himself. He is owned by his own creation, and has lost ownership of himself. He has built a golden calf, and says "these are your gods who have brought you out of Egypt."

What happens to the *worker*? To put it in the words of a thoughtful and thorough observer of the industrial scene: "In industry the person becomes an economic atom that dances to the tune of atomistic management. Your place is just here, you will sit in this fashion, your arms will move x inches in a course of y radius and the time of movement will be .000 minutes.

"Work is becoming more repetitive and thoughtless as the planners, the micromotionists, and the scientific managers further strip the worker of his right to think and move freely. Life is being denied; need to control, creativeness, curiosity, and independent thought are being balked, and the result, the inevitable result, is flight or fight on the part of the worker, apathy or destructiveness, psychic regression."¹

The role of the *manager* is also one of alienation. It is true, he manages the whole and not a part, but he too is alienated from his product as something concrete and useful. His aim is to employ profitably the capital invested by others, although in comparison with the older type of owner-manager, modern management is much less interested in the amount of profit to be paid

¹ J. J. Gillespie, *Free Expression in Industry*, The Pilot Press Ltd., London, 1948.

out as dividend to the stockholder than it is in the efficient operation and expansion of the enterprise. Characteristically, within management those in charge of labor relations and of sales—that is, of human manipulation—gain, relatively speaking, an increasing importance in comparison with those in charge of the technical aspects of production.

The manager, like the worker, like everybody, deals with impersonal giants: with the giant competitive enterprise; with the giant national and world market; with the giant consumer, who has to be coaxed and manipulated; with the giant unions, and the giant government. All these giants have their own lives, as it were. They determine the activity of the manager and they direct the activity of the worker and clerk.

The problem of the manager opens up one of the most significant phenomena in an alienated culture, that of *bureaucratization*. Both big business and government administrations are conducted by a bureaucracy. Bureaucrats are specialists in the administration of things *and of men*. Due to the bigness of the apparatus to be administered, and the resulting abstractification, the bureaucrats' relationship to the people is one of complete alienation. They, the people to be administered, are objects whom the bureaucrats consider neither with love nor with hate, but completely impersonally; the manager-bureaucrat must not feel, as far as his professional activity is concerned; he must manipulate people as though they were figures, or things. Since the vastness of the organization and the extreme division of labor prevents any single individual from seeing the whole, since there is no organic, spontaneous co-operation between the various individuals or groups within the industry, the managing bureaucrats are necessary; without them the enterprise would collapse in a short time, since nobody would know the secret which makes it function. Bureaucrats are as indispensable as the tons of paper consumed under

which Big Business is organized in a free-enterprise economy—which has emerged as the representative and determining socio-economic institution which sets the pattern and determines the behavior even of the owner of the corner cigar store who never owned a share of stock, and of his errand boy who never set foot in a mill. And thus the character of our society is determined and patterned by the structural organization of Big Business, the technology of the mass-production plant, and the degree to which our social beliefs and promises are realized in and by the large corporations.”¹

What then is the attitude of the “owner” of the big corporation to “his” property? It is one of almost complete alienation. His ownership consists in a piece of paper, representing a certain fluctuating amount of money; he has no responsibility for the enterprise and no concrete relationship to it in any way. This attitude of alienation has been most clearly expressed in Berle’s and Means’ description of the attitude of the stockholder to the enterprise which follows here: “(1) The position of ownership has changed from that of an active to that of a passive agent. In place of actual physical properties over which the owner could exercise direction and for which he was responsible, the owner now holds a piece of paper representing a set of rights and expectations with respect to an enterprise. But over the enterprise and over the physical property—the instruments of production—in which he has an interest, the owner has little control. At the same time he bears no responsibility with respect to the enterprise or its physical property. It has often been said that the owner of a horse is responsible. If the horse lives he must feed it. If the horse dies he must bury it. No such responsibility attaches to a share

¹ cf. Peter F. Drucker, *Concept of the Corporation*, The John Day Company, New York, 1946, pp. 8, 9.

of stock. The owner is practically powerless through his own efforts to affect the underlying property.

"(2) The spiritual values that formerly went with ownership have been separated from it. Physical property capable of being shaped by its owner could bring to him direct satisfaction apart from the income it yielded in more concrete form. It represented an extension of his own personality. With the corporate revolution, this quality has been lost to the property owner much as it has been lost to the worker through the industrial revolution.

"(3) The value of an individual's wealth is coming to depend on forces entirely outside himself and his own efforts. Instead, its value is determined on the one hand by the actions of the individuals in command of the enterprise—individuals over whom the typical owner has no control, and on the other hand, by the actions of others in a sensitive and often capricious market. The value is thus subject to the vagaries and manipulations characteristic of the market place. It is further subject to the great swings in society's appraisal of its own immediate future as reflected in the general level of values in the organized market.

"(4) The value of the individual's wealth not only fluctuates constantly—the same may be said of most wealth—but it is subject to a constant appraisal. The individual can see the change in the appraised value of his estate from moment to moment, a fact which may markedly affect both the expenditure of his income and his enjoyment of that income.

"(5) Individual wealth has become extremely liquid through the organized markets. The individual owner can convert it into other forms of wealth at a moment's notice and, provided the market machinery is in working order, he may do so without serious loss due to forced sales.

"(6) Wealth is less and less in a form which can be employed

directly by its owner. When wealth is in the form of land, for instance, it is capable of being used by the owner even though the value of land in the market is negligible. The physical quality of such wealth makes possible a subjective value to the owner quite apart from any market value it may have. The newer form of wealth is quite incapable of this direct use. Only through sale in the market can the owner obtain its direct use. He is thus tied to the market as never before.

"(7) Finally, in the corporate system, the 'owner' of industrial wealth is left with a mere symbol of ownership while the power, the responsibility and the substance which have been an integral part of ownership in the past are being transferred to a separate group in whose hands lies control."¹

Another important aspect of the alienated position of the stockholder is his control over his enterprise. Legally, the stockholders control the enterprise, that is, they elect the management much as the people in a democracy elect their representatives. Factually, however, they exercise very little control, due to the fact that each individual's share is so exceedingly small, that he is not interested in coming to the meetings and participating actively. Berle and Means differentiate among five major types of control: "These include (1) control through almost complete ownership, (2) majority control, (3) control through a legal device without majority ownership, (4) minority control, and (5) management control."² Among the five types of control the first two—private ownership or majority ownership—exercise control in only 6 per cent (according to wealth) of the two hundred largest companies (around 1930), while in the remaining 94 per cent control is exercised either by the management, or by a legal device in col-

¹ cf. A. A. Berle and G. C. Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940, pp. 66-68.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

laring a small proportion of the ownership or by a minority of the stockholders.¹ How this miracle is accomplished without force, deception or any violation of the law is most interestingly described in Berle's and Means' classic work.

The process of *consumption* is as alienated as the process of production. In the first place, we acquire things with money; we are accustomed to this and take it for granted. But actually, this is a most peculiar way of acquiring things. Money represents labor and effort in an abstract form; not necessarily *my* labor and *my* effort, since I can have acquired it by inheritance, by fraud, by luck, or any number of ways. But even if I have acquired it by *my* effort (forgetting for the moment that *my* effort might not have brought me the money were it not for the fact that I employed men), I have acquired it in a specific way, by a specific kind of effort, corresponding to my skills and capacities, while, in spending, the money is transformed into an abstract form of labor and can be exchanged against anything else. Provided I am in the possession of money, no effort or interest of mine is necessary to acquire something. If I have the money, I can acquire an exquisite painting, even though I may not have any appreciation for art; I can buy the best phonograph, even though I have no musical taste; I can buy a library, although I use it only for the purpose of ostentation. I can buy an education, even though I have no use for it except as an additional social asset. I can even destroy the painting or the books I bought, and aside from a loss of money, I suffer no damage. Mere possession of money gives me the right to acquire and to do with my acquisition whatever I like. The *human* way of acquiring would be to make an effort qualitatively commensurate with what I acquire. The acquisition of bread and clothing would depend on no other premise than that of being alive; the acquisition of books and paintings, on my effort

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94 and 114-117.

to understand them and my ability to use them. How this principle could be applied practically is not the point to be discussed here. What matters is that the way we acquire things is separated from the way in which we use them.

The alienating function of money in the process of acquisition and consumption has been beautifully described by Marx in the following words: "Money . . . transforms the real human and natural powers into merely abstract ideas, and hence imperfections, and on the other hand it transforms the real imperfections and imaginings, the powers which only exist in the imagination of the individual into real powers. . . . It transforms loyalty into vice, vices into virtue, the slave into the master, the master into the slave, ignorance into reason, and reason into ignorance. . . . He who can buy valour is valiant although he be cowardly. . . . Assume *man* as *man*, and his relation to the world as a human one, and you can exchange love only for love, confidence for confidence, etc. If you wish to enjoy art, you must be an artistically trained person; if you wish to have influence on other people, you must be a person who has a really stimulating and furthering influence on other people. Every one of your relationships to man and to nature must be a definite expression of your *real, individual* life corresponding to the object of your will. If you love without calling forth love, that is, if your love as such does not produce love, if by means of an *expression of life* as a loving person you do not make of yourself a *loved person*, then your love is impotent, a misfortune."¹

But beyond the method of acquisition, how do we use things, once we have acquired them? With regard to many things, there is not even the pretense of use. We acquire them to *have* them. We are satisfied with useless possession. The expensive dining set or

¹ "Nationalökonomie und Philosophie," 1844, published in Karl Marx' *Die Frühschriften*, Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1953, pp. 300, 301. (My translation, E.F.)

stimulation is use

crystal vase which we never use for fear they might break, the mansion with many unused rooms, the unnecessary cars and servants, like the ugly bric-à-brac of the lower-middle-class family, are so many examples of pleasure in possession instead of in use. However, this satisfaction in possessing per se was more prominent in the nineteenth century; today most of the satisfaction is derived from possession of things-to-be-used rather than of things-to-be-kept. This does not alter the fact, however, that even in the pleasure of things-to-be-used the satisfaction of prestige is a paramount factor. The car, the refrigerator, the television set are for real, but also for conspicuous use. They confer status on the owner.

How do we use the things we acquire? Let us begin with food and drink. We eat a bread which is tasteless and not nourishing because it appeals to our phantasy of wealth and distinction—being so white and “fresh.” Actually, we “eat” a phantasy and have lost contact with the real thing we eat. Our palate, our body, are excluded from an act of consumption which primarily concerns them. We drink labels. With a bottle of Coca-Cola we drink the picture of the pretty boy and girl who drink it in the advertisement, we drink the slogan of “the pause that refreshes,” we drink the great American habit; least of all do we drink with our palate. All this is even worse when it comes to the consumption of things whose whole reality is mainly the fiction the advertising campaign has created, like the “healthy” soap or dental paste.

I could go on giving examples ad infinitum. But it is unnecessary to belabor the point, since everybody can think of as many illustrations as I could give. I only want to stress the principle involved: the act of consumption should be a concrete human act, in which our senses, bodily needs, our aesthetic taste—that is to say, in which *we* as concrete, sensing, feeling, judging human beings—are involved; the act of consumption should be a mean-

ingful, human, productive experience. In our culture, there is little of that. Consuming is essentially the satisfaction of artificially stimulated phantasies, a phantasy performance alienated from our concrete, real selves.

There is another aspect of alienation from the things we consume which needs to be mentioned. We are surrounded by things of whose nature and origin we know nothing. The telephone, radio, phonograph, and all other complicated machines are almost as mysterious to us as they would be to a man from a primitive culture; we know how to use them, that is, we know which button to turn, but we do not know on what principle they function, except in the vaguest terms of something we once learned at school. And things which do not rest upon difficult scientific principles are almost equally alien to us. We do not know how bread is made, how cloth is woven, how a table is manufactured, how glass is made. We consume, as we produce, without any concrete relatedness to the objects with which we deal; we live in a world of things, and our only connection with them is that we know how to manipulate or to consume them.

Our way of consumption necessarily results in the fact that we are never satisfied, since it is not our real concrete person which consumes a real and concrete thing. We thus develop an ever-increasing need for more things, for more consumption. It is true that as long as the living standard of the population is below a dignified level of subsistence, there is a natural need for more consumption. It is also true that there is a legitimate need for more consumption as man develops culturally and has more refined needs for better food, objects of artistic pleasure, books, etc. But our craving for consumption has lost all connection with the real needs of man. Originally, the idea of consuming more and better things was meant to give man a happier, more satisfied life. Consumption was a means to an end, that of happiness. It now has become an aim in itself. The constant increase of needs forces

us to an ever-increasing effort, it makes us dependent on these needs and on the people and institutions by whose help we attain them. "Each person speculates to create a new need in the other person, in order to force him into a new dependency, to a new form of pleasure, hence to his economic ruin. . . . With a multitude of commodities grows the realm of alien things which enslave man."¹

Man today is fascinated by the possibility of buying more, better, and especially, new things. He is consumption-hungry. The act of buying and consuming has become a compulsive, irrational aim, because it is an end in itself, with little relation to the use of, or pleasure in the things bought and consumed. To buy the latest gadget, the latest model of anything that is on the market, is the dream of everybody, in comparison to which the real pleasure in use is quite secondary. Modern man, if he dared to be articulate about his concept of heaven, would describe a vision which would look like the biggest department store in the world, showing new things and gadgets, and himself having plenty of money with which to buy them. He would wander around open-mouthed in this heaven of gadgets and commodities, provided only that there were ever more and newer things to buy, and perhaps that his neighbors were just a little less privileged than he.

Significantly enough, one of the older traits of middle-class society, the attachment to possessions and property, has undergone a profound change. In the older attitude, a certain sense of loving possession existed between a man and his property. It grew on him. He was proud of it. He took good care of it, and it was painful when eventually he had to part from it because it could not be used any more. There is very little left of this sense of property today. One loves the newness of the thing bought, and is ready to betray it when something newer has appeared.

¹ K. Marx, *ibid.*, p. 254.

Expressing the same change in characterological terms, I can refer to what has been stated above with regard to the *hoarding* orientation as dominant in the picture of the nineteenth century. In the middle of the twentieth century the hoarding orientation has given way to the *receptive* orientation, in which the aim is to receive, to "drink in," to have something new all the time, to live with a continuously open mouth, as it were. This receptive orientation is blended with the marketing orientation, while in the nineteenth century the hoarding was blended with the exploitative orientation.

use of leisure

The alienated attitude toward consumption not only exists in our acquisition and consumption of commodities, but it determines far beyond this the employment of leisure time. What are we to expect? If a man works without genuine relatedness to what he is doing, if he buys and consumes commodities in an abstractified and alienated way, how can he make use of his leisure time in an active and meaningful way? He always remains the passive and alienated consumer. He "consumes" ball games, moving pictures, newspapers and magazines, books, lectures, natural scenery, social gatherings, in the same alienated and abstractified way in which he consumes the commodities he has bought. He does not participate actively, he wants to "take in" all there is to be had, and to have as much as possible of pleasure, culture and what not. Actually, he is not free to enjoy "his" leisure; his leisure-time consumption is determined by industry, as are the commodities he buys; his taste is manipulated, he wants to see and to hear what he is conditioned to want to see and to hear; entertainment is an industry like any other, the customer is made to buy fun as he is made to buy dresses and shoes. The value of the fun is determined by its success on the market, not by anything which could be measured in human terms.

In any productive and spontaneous activity, something happens

within myself while I am reading, looking at scenery, talking to friends, etcetera. I am not the same after the experience as I was before. In the alienated form of pleasure nothing happens within me; I have consumed this or that; nothing is changed within myself, and all that is left are memories of what I have done. One of the most striking examples for this kind of pleasure consumption is the taking of snapshots, which has become one of the most significant leisure activities. The Kodak slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest," which since 1889 has helped so much to popularize photography all over the world, is symbolic. It is one of the earliest appeals to push-button power-feeling; you do nothing, you do not have to know anything, everything is done for you; all you have to do is to press the button. Indeed, the taking of snapshots has become one of the most significant expressions of alienated visual perception, of sheer consumption. The "tourist" with his camera is an outstanding symbol of an alienated relationship to the world. Being constantly occupied with taking pictures, actually *he* does not see anything at all, except through the intermediary of the camera. The camera sees for him, and the outcome of his "pleasure" trip is a collection of snapshots, which are the substitute for an experience which he could have had, but did not have.

Man is not only alienated from the work he does, and the things and pleasures he consumes, but also from the *social forces* which determine our society and the life of everybody living in it.

Our actual helplessness before the forces which govern us appears more drastically in those social catastrophes which, even though they are denounced as regrettable accidents each time, so far have never failed to happen: economic depressions and wars. These social phenomena appear as if they were natural catastrophes, rather than what they really are, occurrences made by man, but without intention and awareness.

This anonymity of the social forces is inherent in the structure of the capitalist mode of production.

In contrast to most other societies in which social laws are explicit and fixed on the basis of political power or tradition—Capitalism does not have such explicit laws. It is based on the principle that if only everybody strives for himself on the market, the common good will come of it, order and not anarchy will be the result. There are, of course, economic laws which govern the market, but these laws operate behind the back of the acting individual, who is concerned only with his private interests. You try to guess these laws of the market as a Calvinist in Geneva tried to guess whether God had predestined him for salvation or not. But the laws of the market, like God's will, are beyond the reach of your will and influence.

To a large extent the development of Capitalism has proven that this principle works; and it is indeed a miracle that the antagonistic co-operation of self-contained economic entities should result in a blossoming and ever-expanding society. It is true that the capitalistic mode of production is conducive to political freedom, while any centrally planned social order is in danger of leading to political regimentation and eventually to dictatorship. While this is not the place to discuss the question of whether there are other alternatives than the choice between "free enterprise" and political regimentation, it needs to be said in this context that the very fact that we are governed by laws which we do not control, and do not even want to control, is one of the most outstanding manifestations of alienation. We are the producers of our economic and social arrangements, and at the same time we decline responsibility, intentionally and enthusiastically, and await hopefully or anxiously—as the case may be—what "the future" will bring. Our own actions are embodied in the laws which govern us, but these laws are above us, and we are their slaves.

The giant state and economic system are not any more controlled by man. They run wild, and their leaders are like a person on a runaway horse, who is proud of managing to keep in the saddle, even though he is powerless to direct the horse.

What is modern man's *relationship to his fellow man*? It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other. The employer uses the ones whom he employs; the salesman uses his customers. Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later. There is not much love or hate to be found in human relations of our day. There is, rather, a superficial friendliness, and a more than superficial fairness, but behind that surface is distance and indifference. There is also a good deal of subtle distrust. When one man says to another, "You speak to John Smith; he is all right," it is an expression of reassurance against a general distrust. Even love and the relationship between sexes have assumed this character. The great sexual emancipation, as it occurred after the First World War, was a desperate attempt to substitute mutual sexual pleasure for a deeper feeling of love. When this turned out to be a disappointment the erotic polarity between the sexes was reduced to a minimum and replaced by a friendly partnership, a small combine which has amalgamated its forces to hold out better in the daily battle of life, and to relieve the feeling of isolation and aloneness which everybody has.

The alienation between man and man results in the loss of those general and social bonds which characterize medieval as well as most other precapitalist societies.¹ Modern society consists of "atoms" (if we use the Greek equivalent of "individual"), little particles estranged from each other but held together by selfish

¹ cf. the concept of "Gemeinschaft" (community) as against "Gesellschaft" (society) in Toennies' usage.

per cent about the danger of Communism or the threat to civil liberties. But, on the other hand, almost half of the population of the sample thinks that Communism is a serious danger, and that war is likely to occur within two years. These social concerns, however, are not felt to be a personal reality, hence are no cause for worry, although for a good deal of intolerance. It is also interesting to note that in spite of the fact that almost the whole population believes in God, there seems to be hardly anyone who is worried about his soul, salvation, his spiritual development. God is as alienated as the world as a whole. What causes concern and worry is the private, separate sector of life, not the social, universal one which connects us with our fellow men.

The division between the community and the political state has led to the projection of all social feelings into the state, which thus becomes an idol, a power standing over and above man. Man submits to the state as to the embodiment of his own social feelings, which he worships as powers alienated from himself; in his private life as an individual he suffers from the isolation and aloneness which are the necessary result of this separation. The worship of the state can only disappear if man takes back the social powers into himself, and builds a community in which his social feelings are not something added to his private existence, but in which his private and social existence are one and the same.

What is the relationship of *man toward himself*? I have described elsewhere this relationship as "marketing orientation."¹ In this orientation, man experiences himself as a thing to be em-

¹ cf. my description of the marketing orientation in *Man for Himself*, p. 67 ff. The concept of alienation is not the same as one of the character orientations in terms of the receptive, exploitative, hoarding, marketing and productive orientations. Alienation can be found in any of these non-productive orientations, but it has a particular affinity to the marketing orientation. To the same extent it is also related to Riesman's "other-directed" personality which, however, though "developed from the marketing orientation," is a different concept in essential points. Cf. D. Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1950, p. 23.

ployed successfully on the market. He does not experience himself as an active agent, as the bearer of human powers. He is alienated from these powers. His aim is to sell himself successfully on the market. His sense of self does not stem from his activity as a loving and thinking individual, but from his socio-economic role. If things could speak, a typewriter would answer the question "Who are you?" by saying "I am a typewriter," and an automobile, by saying "I am an automobile," or more specifically by saying, "I am a Ford," or "a Buick," or "a Cadillac." If you ask a man "Who are you?", he answers "I am a manufacturer," "I am a clerk," "I am a doctor"—or "I am a married man," "I am the father of two kids," and his answer has pretty much the same meaning as that of the speaking *thing* would have. That is the way he experiences himself, not as a man, with love, fear, convictions, doubts, but as that abstraction, alienated from his real nature, which fulfills a certain function in the social system. His sense of value depends on his success: on whether he can sell himself favorably, whether he can make more of himself than he started out with, whether he is a success. His body, his mind and his soul are his capital, and his task in life is to invest it favorably, to make a profit of himself. Human qualities like friendliness, courtesy, kindness, are transformed into commodities, into assets of the "personality package," conducive to a higher price on the personality market. If the individual fails in a profitable investment of himself, he feels that *he* is a failure; if he succeeds, *he* is a success. Clearly, his sense of his own value always depends on factors extraneous to himself, on the fickle judgment of the market, which decides about his value as it decides about the value of commodities. He, like all commodities that cannot be sold profitably on the market, is worthless as far as his exchange value is concerned, even though his use value may be considerable.

The alienated personality who is for sale must lose a good deal

of the sense of dignity which is so characteristic of man even in most primitive cultures. He must lose almost all sense of self, of himself as a unique and induplicable entity. The sense of self stems from the experience of myself as the subject of my experiences, my thought, my feeling, my decision, my judgment, my action. It presupposes that my experience is my own, and not an alienated one. Things have no self and men who have become things can have no self.

This selflessness of modern man has appeared to one of the most gifted and original contemporary psychiatrists, the late H. S. Sullivan, as being a natural phenomenon. He spoke of those psychologists who, like myself, assume that the lack of the sense of self is a pathological phenomenon, as of people who suffer from a "delusion." The self for him is nothing but the many roles we play in relations to others, roles which have the function of eliciting approval and avoiding the anxiety which is produced by disapproval. What a remarkably fast deterioration of the concept of self since the nineteenth century, when Ibsen made the loss of self the main theme of his criticism of modern man in his Peer Gynt! Peer Gynt is described as a man who, chasing after material gain, discovers eventually that he has lost his self, that he is like an onion with layer after layer, and without a kernel. Ibsen describes the dread of nothingness by which Peer Gynt is seized when he makes this discovery, a panic which makes him desire to land in hell, rather than to be thrown back into the "casting ladle" of nothingness. Indeed, with the experience of self disappears the experience of identity—and when this happens, man could become insane if he did not save himself by acquiring a *secondary sense of self*; he does that by experiencing himself as being approved of, worth while, successful, useful—briefly, as a salable commodity which is *he* because he is looked upon by others as an entity, not unique but fitting into one of the current patterns.

Peer Gynt

Routine

The Sane Society

One cannot fully appreciate the nature of alienation without considering one specific aspect of modern life: its *routinization*, and the *repression of the awareness of the basic problems of human existence*. We touch here upon a universal problem of life. Man has to earn his daily bread, and this is always a more or less absorbing task. He has to take care of the many time- and energy-consuming tasks of daily life, and he is enmeshed in a certain routine necessary for the fulfillment of these tasks. He builds a social order, conventions, habits and ideas, which help him to perform what is necessary, and to live with his fellow man with a minimum of friction. It is characteristic of all culture that it builds a man-made, artificial world, superimposed on the natural world in which man lives. But man can fulfill himself only if he remains in touch with the fundamental facts of his existence, if he can experience the exaltation of love and solidarity, as well as the tragic fact of his aloneness and of the fragmentary character of his existence. If he is completely enmeshed in the routine and in the artefacts of life, if he cannot see anything but the man-made, common-sense appearance of the world, he loses his touch with and the grasp of himself and the world. We find in every culture the conflict between routine and the attempt to get back to the fundamental realities of existence. To help in this attempt has been one of the functions of art and of religion, even though religion itself has eventually become a new form of routine.

Even the most primitive history of man shows us an attempt to get in touch with the essence of reality by artistic creation. Primitive man is not satisfied with the practical function of his tools and weapons, but strives to adorn and beautify them, transcending their utilitarian function. Aside from art, the most significant way of breaking through the surface of routine and of getting in touch with the ultimate realities of life is to be found in what may be called by the general term of "ritual." I am referring

here to ritual in the broad sense of the word, as we find it in the performance of a Greek drama, for instance, and not only to rituals in the narrower religious sense. What was the function of the Greek drama? Fundamental problems of human existence were presented in an artistic and dramatic form, and participating in the dramatic performance, the spectator—though not as a spectator in our modern sense of the consumer—was carried away from the sphere of daily routine and brought in touch with himself as a human being, with the roots of his existence. He touched the ground with his feet, and in this process gained strength by which he was brought back to himself. Whether we think of the Greek drama, the medieval passion play, or an Indian dance, whether we think of Hindu, Jewish or Christian religious rituals, we are dealing with various forms of dramatization of the fundamental problems of human existence, with an *acting out* of the very same problems which are *thought out* in philosophy and theology.

What is left of such dramatization of life in modern culture? Almost nothing. Man hardly ever gets out of the realm of man-made conventions and things, and hardly ever breaks through the surface of his routine, aside from grotesque attempts to satisfy the need for a ritual as we see it practiced in lodges and fraternities. The only phenomenon approaching the meaning of a ritual, is the participation of the spectator in competitive sports; here at least, one fundamental problem of human existence is dealt with: the fight between men and the vicarious experience of victory and defeat. But what a primitive and restricted aspect of human existence, reducing the richness of human life to one partial aspect!

If there is a fire, or a car collision in a big city, scores of people will gather and watch. Millions of people are fascinated daily by reportings of crimes and by detective stories. They religiously go to movies in which crime and passion are the two central themes.

All this interest and fascination is not simply an expression of bad taste and sensationalism, but of a deep longing for a dramatization of ultimate phenomena of human existence, life and death, crime and punishment, the battle between man and nature. But while Greek drama dealt with these problems on a high artistic and metaphysical level, our modern "drama" and "ritual" are crude and do not produce any cathartic effect. All this fascination with competitive sports, crime and passion, shows the need for breaking through the routine surface, but the way of its satisfaction shows the extreme poverty of our solution.

The marketing orientation is closely related to the fact that the *need to exchange* has become a paramount drive in modern man. It is, of course, true that even in a primitive economy based on a rudimentary form of division of labor, men exchange goods with each other within the tribe or among neighboring tribes. The man who produces cloth exchanges it for grain which his neighbor may have produced, or for sickles or knives made by the blacksmith. With increasing division of labor, there is increasing exchange of goods, but normally the exchange of goods is nothing but a means to an economic end. In capitalistic society *exchanging has become an end in itself*.

None other than Adam Smith saw the fundamental role of the need to exchange, and explained it as a basic drive in man. "This division of labour," he says, "from which so many advantages are derived, is not originally the effect of any human wisdom, which foresees and intends that general opulence to which it gives occasion. It is the necessary, though very slow and gradual, consequence of a certain *propensity in human nature* which has in view no such extensive utility; the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another. Whether this propensity be one of those original principles in human nature, of which no further account can be given; or whether, as seems more probable, it be

the necessary consequence of the faculties of reason and speech, it belongs not to our present subject to enquire. *It is common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals*, which seem to know neither this nor any other species of contracts. . . . Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog." ¹

The principle of exchange on an ever-increasing scale on the national and world market is indeed one of the fundamental economic principles on which the capitalistic system rests, but Adam Smith foresaw here that this principle was also to become one of the deepest psychic needs of the modern, alienated personality. Exchanging has lost its rational function as a mere means for economic purposes, and has become an end in itself, extended to the noneconomic realms. Quite unwittingly, Adam Smith himself indicates the irrational nature of this need to exchange in his example of the exchange between the two dogs. There could be no possible realistic purpose in this exchange; either the two bones are alike, and then there is no reason to exchange them, or the one is better than the other, and then the dog who has the better one would not voluntarily exchange it. The example makes sense only if we assume that to exchange is a need in itself, even if it does not serve any practical purpose—and this is indeed what Adam Smith does assume.

As I have already mentioned in another context, the love of exchange has replaced the love of possession. One buys a car, or a house, intending to sell it at the first opportunity. But more important is the fact that the drive for exchange operates in the realm of interpersonal relations. Love is often nothing but a favorable exchange between two people who get the most of what they can expect, considering their value on the personality market.

¹ Adam Smith, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, The Modern Library, New York, 1937, p. 13. (Italics mine, E.F.)

correspondingly, the feeling that one's life "is a failure," or is "a success." This idea is based on the concept of life as an enterprise which should show a profit. The failure is like the bankruptcy of a business in which the losses are greater than the gains. This concept is nonsensical. We may be happy or unhappy, achieve some aims, and not achieve others; yet there is no sensible balance which could show whether life is worth while living. Maybe from the standpoint of a balance life is never worth while living. It ends necessarily with death; many of our hopes are disappointed; it involves suffering and effort; from a standpoint of the balance, it would seem to make more sense not to have been born at all, or to die in infancy. On the other hand, who will tell whether one happy moment of love, or the joy of breathing or walking on a bright morning and smelling the fresh air, is not worth all the suffering and effort which life implies? Life is a unique gift and challenge, not to be measured in terms of anything else, and no sensible answer can be given to the question whether it is "worth while" living, because the question does not make any sense.

This interpretation of life as an enterprise seems to be the basis for a typical modern phenomenon, about which a great deal of speculation exists: the *increase of suicide* in modern Western society. Between 1836 and 1890 suicide increased 140 per cent in Prussia, 355 per cent in France. England had 62 cases of suicide per million inhabitants in 1836 to 1845, and 110 between 1906 and 1910. Sweden 66, as against 150 respectively.¹ How can we explain this increase in suicide, accompanying the increasing prosperity in the nineteenth century?

No doubt that the motives for suicide are highly complex, and that there is not a single motivation which we can assume to be

¹ Quoted from *Les Causes du Suicide* by Maurice Halbwachs, Felix Alcan, Paris, 1930, pp. 92 and 481.

does, thinks, feels. The laws of anonymous authority are as invisible as the laws of the market—and just as unassailable. Who can attack the invisible? Who can rebel against Nobody?

The disappearance of overt authority is clearly visible in all spheres of life. Parents do not give commands any more; they suggest that the child "will want to do this." Since they have no principles or convictions themselves, they try to guide the children do what the law of conformity expects, and often, being older and hence less in touch with "the latest," they learn from the children what attitude is required. The same holds true in business and in industry; you do not give orders, you "suggest"; you do not command, you coax and manipulate. Even the American army has accepted much of the new form of authority. The army is propagandized as if it were an attractive business enterprise; the soldier should feel like a member of a "team," even though the hard fact remains that he must be trained to kill and be killed.

As long as there was overt authority, there was conflict, and there was rebellion—against irrational authority. In the conflict with the commands of one's conscience, in the fight against irrational authority, the personality developed—specifically the sense of self developed. I experience myself as "I" because I doubt, I protest, I rebel. Even if I submit and sense defeat, I experience myself as "I"—I, the defeated one. But if I am not aware of submitting or rebelling, if I am ruled by an anonymous authority, I lose the sense of self, I become a "one," a part of the "It."

The mechanism through which the anonymous authority operates is *conformity*. I ought to do what everybody does, hence, I must conform, not be different, not "stick out"; I must be ready and willing to change according to the changes in the pattern; I must not ask whether I am right or wrong, but whether I am adjusted, whether I am not "peculiar," not different. The only thing

anyone be so grateful for acceptance unless he doubts that he is acceptable, and why should a young, educated, successful couple have such doubts, if not due to the fact that they cannot accept themselves—because they *are not* themselves. The only haven for having a sense of identity is conformity. Being acceptable really means not being different from anybody else. Feeling inferior stems from feeling different, and no question is asked whether the difference is for the better or the worse.

Adjustment begins early. One parent expresses the concept of anonymous authority quite succinctly: "The adjustment to the group does not seem to involve so many problems for them [the children]. I have noticed that they seem to get the feeling that nobody is the boss—there is a feeling of complete co-operation. Partly this comes from early exposure to court play." The ideological concept in which this phenomenon is expressed here is that of absence of authority, a positive value in terms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century freedom. The reality behind this concept of freedom is the presence of anonymous authority and the absence of individuality. What could be clearer for this concept of conformity than the statement made by one mother: "Johnny has not been doing so well at school. The teacher told me he was doing fine in some respects but *that his social adjustment was not as good as it might be*. He would *pick one or two friends to play with—and sometimes he was happy to remain by himself*." (Italics mine.) Indeed, the alienated person finds it almost impossible to remain by himself, because he is seized by the panic of experiencing nothingness. That it should be formulated so frankly is nevertheless surprising, and shows that we have even ceased to be ashamed of our herdlike inclinations.

The parents sometimes complain that the school might be a bit too "permissive," and that the children lack discipline, but "whatever the faults of Park Forest parents may be, harshness and

authoritarianism are not among them." Indeed not, but why would you need authoritarianism in its overt forms if the anonymous authority of conformism makes your children submit completely to the It, even if they do not submit to their individual parents? The complaint of the parents, however, about lack of discipline is not meant too seriously, for "What we have in Park Forest, it is becoming evident, is the apotheosis of pragmatism. It would be an exaggeration, perhaps, to say that the transients have come to deify society—and the job of adjusting to it—but certainly they have remarkably little yen to quarrel with society. They are, as one puts it, the practical generation."

Another aspect of alienated conformity is the leveling-out process of taste and judgment which the author describes under the heading "The Melting Pot." "When I first came here I was pretty rarefied," a self-styled 'egghead' explained to a recent visitor. 'I remember how shocked I was one day when I told the girls in the court how much I had enjoyed listening to 'The Magic Flute' the night before. They didn't know what I was talking about. I began to learn that diaper talk is a lot more important to them. I still listen to 'The Magic Flute' but now I realize that for most people other things in life seem as important.' " Another woman reports that she was discovered reading Plato when one of the girls made a surprise visit. The visitor "almost fell over from surprise. Now all of them are sure I'm strange." Actually, the author tells us, the poor woman overestimates the damage. The others do not think her overly odd, "for her deviance is accompanied by enough tact, enough observance of the little customs that oil court life, so that equilibrium is maintained." What matters is to transform value judgment into matters of opinion, whether it is listening to "The Magic Flute" as against diaper talk, or whether it is being a Republican as against being a Democrat. All that matters is that nothing is too serious, that one exchanges views, and that

one is ready to accept any opinion or conviction (if there is such a thing) as being as good as the other. On the market of opinions everybody is supposed to have a commodity of the same value, and it is indecent and not fair to doubt it.

The word which is used for alienated conformity and sociability is of course one which expresses the phenomenon in terms of a very positive value. Indiscriminating sociability and lack of individuality is called being *outgoing*. The language here becomes psychiatrically tinged with the philosophy of Dewey thrown in for good measure. " 'You can really help make a lot of people happy here,' says one social activist. 'I've brought out two couples myself; I saw potentialities in them they didn't realize they had. Whenever we see someone who is shy and withdrawn, we make a special effort with them.' "

Another aspect of social "adjustment" is the complete lack of privacy, and the indiscriminate talking about one's "problems." Here again, one sees the influence of modern psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Even the thin walls are greeted as a help from feeling alone. " 'I never feel lonely, even when Jim's away,' goes a typical comment. 'You know friends are nearby, because at night you hear the neighbors through the walls.' " Marriages which might break up otherwise are saved, depressed moods are kept from becoming worse, by talking, talking, talking. " 'It's wonderful,' says one young wife. 'You find yourself discussing all your problems with your neighbors—things that back in South Dakota we would have kept to ourselves.' As time goes on, this capacity for self-revelation grows; and on the most intimate details of family life, court people become amazingly frank with each other. No one, they point out, ever need face a problem alone." We may add that it would be more correct to say that never do they face a problem.

Even the architecture becomes functional in the battle against loneliness. "Just as doors inside houses—which are sometimes said

to have marked the birth of the middle class—are disappearing, so are the barriers against neighbors. The picture in the picture window, for example, is what is going on *inside*—or, what is going on inside other people's picture windows."

|| The conformity pattern develops a new morality, a new kind of super-ego. But the new morality is not the conscience of the humanistic tradition nor is the new super-ego made in the image of an authoritarian father. Virtue is to be adjusted and to be like the rest. Vice, to be different. Often this is expressed in psychiatric terms, where "virtuous" means being healthy, and "evil," being neurotic. "From the eye of the court there is no escape." Love affairs are rare for that reason, rather than for moral reasons or the fact that the marriages are so satisfactory. There are feeble attempts at privacy. While the rule is that you walk into the house without knocking, or making any other sign, some people gain a little privacy by moving the chair to the front, rather than the court side of the apartment, to show that they do not want to be disturbed. "But there is an important corollary of such efforts at privacy—*people feel a little guilty about making them.* Except very occasionally, to shut oneself off from others like this is regarded as either a childish prank or, more likely, an indication of some inner neurosis. The individual, not the group has erred. So, at any rate, many errants seem to feel, and they are often penitent about what elsewhere would be regarded as one's own business, and rather normal business at that. 'I've promised myself to make it up to them,' one court resident recently told a confidant. 'I was feeling bad and just plain didn't make the effort to ask the others in later. I don't blame them, really, for reacting the way they did. I'll make it up to them somehow.' "

Indeed, "privacy has become clandestine." Again the terms which are used are taken from the progressive political and philo-

sophic tradition; what could sound finer than the sentence "Not in solitary and selfish contemplation but in doing things with other people does one fulfill oneself." What it really means, however, is giving up oneself, becoming part and parcel of the herd, and liking it. This state is often called by another pleasant word, "togetherness." The favorite way of expressing the same state of mind is that of putting it in psychiatric terms: "'We have learned not to be so introverted,' one junior executive, and a very thoughtful and successful one, describes the lesson. 'Before we came here we used to live pretty much to ourselves. On Sundays, for instance, we used to stay in bed until around maybe two o'clock, reading the paper and listening to the symphony on the radio. Now we stop around and visit with people, or they visit with us. I really think Park Forest has broadened us.'"

Lack of conformity is not only punished by disapproving words like "neurotic," but sometimes by cruel sanctions. "Estelle is a case," says one resident of a highly active block. 'She was dying to get in with the gang when she moved in. She is a very warm-hearted gal and is always trying to help people, but she's well—sort of elaborate about it. One day she decided to win over everybody by giving an afternoon party for the gals. Poor thing, she did it all wrong. The girls turned up in their bathing suits and slacks, as usual, and here she had little doilies and silver and everything spread around. Ever since then it's been almost like a planned campaign to keep her out of things. It's really pitiful. She sits there in her beach chair out front just dying for someone to come and kaffeeklatsch with her, and right across the street four or five of the girls will be yakking away. Every time they suddenly all laugh at some jokes she thinks they are laughing at her. She came over here yesterday and cried all afternoon. She told me she and her husband are thinking about moving somewhere else so they can make a fresh start.' " Other cultures have pun-

ished deviants from the prescribed political or religious creed by prison or the stake. Here the punishment is only ostracism which drives a poor woman into despair and an intense feeling of guilt. What is the crime? One act of error, one single sin toward the god of conformity.

It is only another aspect of the alienated kind of interpersonal relationship that friendships are not formed on the basis of individual liking or attraction, but that they are determined by the location of one's own house or apartment in relation to the others. This is the way it works. "It begins with the children. The new suburbs are matriarchies, yet the children are in effect so dictatorial that a term like *filiarchy* would not be entirely facetious. It is the children who set the basic design; their friendships are translated into the mother's friendships, and these, in turn, to the family's. Fathers just tag along.

"It is the flow of wheeled juvenile traffic, . . . that determines which is to be the functional door; i.e., in the homes, the front door; in the courts, the back door. It determines, further, the route one takes from the functional door; for when wives go visiting with neighbors they gravitate toward the houses within sight and hearing of their children and the telephone. This crystallizes into the court 'checkerboard movement' (i.e., the regular kaffeeklatsch route) and this forms the basis of adult friendships." Actually, this determination of friendship goes so far that the reader of the article is invited by the author to pick out the clusters of friendship in one sector of the settlement, just from the picture of the location of the houses, their entrance and exit doors in this sector.

What is important in this picture is not only the fact of alienated friendships, and automaton conformity, but the reaction of people to this fact. Consciously it seems people fully accept the new form of adjustment. "Once people hated to concede that

sense that they are "frustrating other urges." They feel that "responding to the group mores is akin to a moral duty—and so they continue, hesitant and unsure, *imprisoned in brotherhood*. (My italics) 'Every once in a while I wonder,' says one transient in an almost furtive moment of contemplation. 'I don't want to do anything to offend the people here: they're kind and decent, and I'm proud we've been able to get along with each other—with all our differences—so well. But then, once in a while, I *think of myself and my husband and what we are not doing, and I get depressed. Is it just enough not to be bad?*'" (Italics mine.) Indeed, this life of compromise, this "outgoing" life, is the life of imprisonment, selflessness and depression. They are all "in the same boat," but, as the author says very pointedly, "*where is the boat going? No one seems to have the faintest idea;* nor, for that matter, do they see much point in even raising the question."

The picture of conformity as we have illustrated it with the "outgoing" inhabitants of Park Forest is certainly not the same all over America. The reasons are obvious. These people are young, they are middle class and they move upwards, they are mostly people who in their work career manipulate symbols and men, and whose advancement depends on whether they permit themselves to be manipulated. There are undoubtedly many older people of the same occupational group, and many equally young people of different occupational groups who are less "advanced," as for instance those engineers, chemists and physicists, more interested in their work than in the hope of jumping into an executive career as soon as possible; furthermore, there are millions of farmers and farm-hands, whose style of life has only been changed partly by the conditions of the twentieth century; eventually the industrial workers, whose income is not too different from the white-collar workers, but whose work

ii. *The Principle of Nonfrustration*

As I have pointed out before, anonymous authority and automaton conformity are largely the result of our mode of production, which requires quick adaptation to the machine, disciplined mass behavior, common taste and obedience without the use of force. Another facet of our economic system, the need for mass consumption, has been instrumental in creating a feature in the social character of modern man which constitutes one of the most striking contrasts to the social character of the nineteenth century. I am referring to *the principle that every desire must be satisfied immediately, no wish must be frustrated*. The most obvious illustration of this principle is to be found in our system of buying on the installment plan. In the nineteenth century you bought what you needed, when you had saved the money for it; today you buy what you need, or do not need, on credit, and the function of advertising is largely to coax you into buying and to whet your appetite for things, so that you can be coaxed. You live in a circle. You buy on the installment plan, and about the time you have finished paying, you sell and you buy again—the latest model.

The principle that desires must be satisfied without much delay has also determined sexual behavior, especially since the end of the First World War. A crude form of misunderstood Freudianism used to furnish the appropriate rationalizations; the idea being that neuroses result from "repressed" sexual strivings, that frustrations were "traumatic," and the less you repressed the healthier you were. Even parents anxious to give their children everything they wanted lest they be frustrated, acquired a "complex." Unfortunately, many of these children as well as their parents landed on the analyst's couch, provided they could afford it.

The greed for things and the inability to postpone the satisfaction of wishes as characteristic of modern man has been stressed by thoughtful observers, such as Max Scheler and Bergson. It has been given its most poignant expression by Aldous Huxley in the *Brave New World*. Among the slogans by which the adolescents in the Brave New World are conditioned, one of the most important ones is "*Never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today.*" It is hammered into them, "two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half." This instant realization of wishes is felt as happiness. "Everybody's happy nowadays" is another of the Brave New World slogans; people "get what they want and they never want what they can't get." This need for the immediate consumption of commodities and the immediate consummation of sexual desires is coupled in the Brave New World, as in our own. It is considered immoral to keep one "love" partner beyond a relatively short time. "Love" is short-lived sexual desire, which must be satisfied immediately. "The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving anyone too much. There's no such thing as a divided allegiance; you're so conditioned that you can't help doing what you ought to do. And what you ought to do is on the whole so pleasant, so many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren't any temptations to resist."¹

This lack of inhibition of desires leads to the same result as the lack of overt authority—the paralysis and eventually the destruction of the self. If I do not postpone the satisfaction of my wish (and am conditioned only to wish for what I can get), I have no conflicts, no doubts; no decision has to be made; I am never alone with myself, because I am always busy—either working, or having fun. I have no need to be aware of myself as myself because I am constantly absorbed having pleasure. *I am—a system*

¹ cf. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, The Vanguard Library, p. 196.

of desires and satisfactions; I have to work in order to fulfill my desires—and these very desires are constantly stimulated and directed by the economic machine. Most of these appetites are synthetic; even sexual appetite is by far not as “natural” as it is made out to be. It is to some extent stimulated artificially. And it needs to be if we want to have people as the contemporary system needs them—people who feel “happy,” who have no doubts, who have no conflicts, who are guided without the use of force.

Having fun consists mainly in the satisfaction of consuming and “taking in”; commodities, sights, food, drinks, cigarettes, people, lectures, books, movies—all are consumed, swallowed. The world is one great object for our appetite, a big apple, a big bottle, a big breast; we are the sucklers, the eternally expectant ones, the hopeful ones—and the eternally disappointed ones. How can we help being disappointed if our birth stops at the breast of the mother, if we are never weaned, if we remain overgrown babes, if we never go beyond the receptive orientation?

So people do worry, feel inferior, inadequate, guilty. They sense that they live without living, that life runs through their hands like sand. How do they deal with their troubles, which stem from the passivity of constant taking in? By another form of passivity, a constant spilling out, as it were: by *talking*. Here, as in the case of authority and consumption, an idea which once was productive has been turned into its opposite.

iii. *Free Association and Free Talk*

Freud had discovered the principle of *free association*. By giving up the control of your thoughts in the presence of a skilled listener, you can discover your unconscious feelings and thoughts without being asleep, or crazy, or drunk, or hypnotized. The psycholanalyst reads between your lines, he is capable of

understanding you better than you understand yourself because you have freed your thinking from the limitations of conventional thought control. But free association soon deteriorated, like freedom and happiness. First it deteriorated in the orthodox psychoanalytic procedure itself. Not always, but often. Instead of giving rise to a meaningful expression of imprisoned thoughts, it became meaningless chatter. Other therapeutic schools reduced the role of the analyst to that of a sympathetic listener, who repeats in a slightly different version the words of the patient, without trying to interpret or to explain. All this is done with the idea that the patient's freedom must not be interfered with. The Freudian idea of free association has become the instrument of many psychologists who call themselves counselors, although the only thing they do not do is to counsel. These counselors play an increasingly large role as private practitioners and as advisers in industry.¹ What is the effect of the procedure? Obviously not a cure which Freud had in mind when he devised free association as a basis for understanding the unconscious. Rather a release of tension which results from talking things out in the presence of a sympathetic listener. Your thoughts, as long as you keep them within yourself, may disturb you—but something fruitful may come out of this disturbance; you mull them over, you think, you feel, you may arrive at a new thought born out of this travail. But when you talk right away, when you do not let your thoughts and feelings build up pressure, as it were, they do not become fruitful. It is exactly the same as with unobstructed consumption. You are a system in which things go in and out continuously—and within it is nothing, no tension, no digestion, no self. Freud's discovery of free association had

¹ cf. W. J. Dickson, *The New Industrial Relations*, Cornell University Press, 1948, and G. Friedmann's discussion in *Où va le Travail Humain?*, Gallimard, Paris, 1950, p. 142 ff. Also H. W. Harrell, *Industrial Psychology*, Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York, 1949, p. 372 ff.

the aim of finding out what went on in you underneath the surface, of *discovering who you* really were; the modern talking to the sympathetic listener has the opposite, although unavowed aim; its function is to make a man *forget* who he is (provided he has still some memory), to lose all tension, and with it all sense of self. Just as one oils machines, one oils people and especially those in the mass organizations of work. One oils them with pleasant slogans, material advantages, and with the sympathetic understanding of the psychologists.

The talking and listening to eventually has become the indoor sport of those who cannot afford a professional listener, or prefer the layman for one reason or another. It has become fashionable, sophisticated, to "talk things out." There is no inhibition, no sense of shame, no holding back. One speaks about the tragic occurrences of one's own life with the same ease as one would talk about another person of no particular interest, or as one would speak about the various troubles one has had with one's car.

Indeed, psychology and psychiatry are in the process of changing their function fundamentally. From the Delphic Oracle's "Know thyself!" to Freud's psychoanalytic therapy, the function of psychology was to discover the self, to understand the individual, to find the "truth that makes you free." Today the function of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis threatens to become the tool in the manipulation of men. The specialists in this field tell you what the "normal" person is, and, correspondingly, what is wrong with you; they devise the methods to help you adjust, be happy, be normal. In the Brave New World this conditioning is done from the first month of fertilization (by chemical means), until after puberty. With us, it begins a little later. Constant repetition by newspaper, radio, television, does most of the conditioning. But the crowning achievement

of manipulation is modern psychology. What Taylor did for industrial work, the psychologists do for the whole personality—all in the name of understanding and freedom. There are many exceptions to this among psychiatrists, psychologists and psychoanalysts, but it becomes increasingly clear that these professions are in the process of becoming a serious danger to the development of man, that their practitioners are evolving into the priests of the new religion of fun, consumption and self-lessness; into the specialists of manipulation, into the spokesmen for the alienated personality.

iv. *Reason, Conscience, Religion*

What becomes of *reason*, *conscience* and *religion* in an alienated world? Superficially seen, they prosper. There is hardly any illiteracy to speak of in the Western countries; more and more people go to college in the United States; everybody reads the newspapers and talks reasonably about world affairs. As to conscience, most people act quite decently in their narrow personal sphere, in fact surprisingly so, considering their general confusion. As far as religion is concerned, it is well known that church affiliation is higher than ever, and the vast majority of Americans believe in God—or so they say in public-opinion polls. However, one does not need to dig too deeply to arrive at less pleasant findings.

If we talk about *reason*, we must first decide what human capacity we are referring to. As I have suggested before, we must differentiate between *intelligence* and *reason*. By intelligence I mean the ability to manipulate concepts for the purpose of achieving some practical end. The chimpanzee—who puts the two sticks together in order to get at the banana because no one of the two is long enough to do the job—uses intelligence. So do we all when we go about our business, “figuring out” how to

nous le déluge! Even from the nineteenth century to our day, there seems to have occurred an observable increase in stupidity, if by this we mean the opposite to reason, rather than to intelligence. In spite of the fact that everybody reads the daily paper religiously, there is an absence of understanding of the meaning of political events which is truly frightening, because our intelligence helps us to produce weapons which our reason is not capable of controlling. Indeed, we have the know-how, but we do not have the know-why, nor the know-what-for. We have many persons with good and high intelligence quotients, but our intelligence tests measure the ability to memorize, to manipulate thoughts quickly—but not to reason. All this is true notwithstanding the fact that there are men of outstanding reason in our midst, whose thinking is as profound and vigorous as ever existed in the history of the human race. But they think apart from the general herd thought, and they are looked upon with suspicion—even if they are needed for their extraordinary achievements in the natural sciences.

The new automatic brains are indeed a good illustration of what is meant here by intelligence. They manipulate data which are fed into them; they compare, select, and eventually come out with results more quickly or more error-proof than human intelligence could. However, the condition of all this is that the basic data are fed into them beforehand. What the electric brain cannot do is think creatively, to arrive at an insight into the essence of the observed facts, to go beyond the data with which it has been fed. The machine can duplicate or even improve on intelligence, but it cannot simulate reason.

Ethics, at least in the meaning of the Greco-Judaeo-Christian tradition, is inseparable from reason. Ethical behavior is based on the faculty of making value judgments on the basis of reason; it means deciding between good and evil, and to act upon the

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decision. Use of reason presupposes the presence of self; so does ethical judgment and action. Furthermore, ethics, whether it is that of monotheistic religion or that of secular humanism, is based on the principle that no institution and no thing is higher than any human individual; that the aim of life is to unfold man's love and reason and that every other human activity has to be subordinated to this aim. How then can ethics be a significant part of a life in which the individual becomes an automaton, in which he serves the big It? Furthermore, how can conscience develop when the principle of life is conformity? Conscience, by its very nature is nonconforming; it must be able to say no, when everybody else says yes; in order to say this "no" it must be certain in the rightness of the judgment on which the no is based. To the degree to which a person conforms he cannot hear the voice of his conscience, much less act upon it. Conscience exists only when man experiences himself as man, not as a thing, as a commodity. Concerning *things* which are exchanged on the market there exists another quasi ethical code, that of *fairness*. The question is, whether they are exchanged at a fair price, no tricks and no force interfering with the fairness of the bargain; this fairness, not good and evil, is the ethical principle of the market and it is the ethical principle governing the life of the marketing personality.

This principle of fairness, no doubt, makes for a certain type of ethical behavior. You do not lie, cheat or use force—you even give the other person a chance—if you act according to the code of fairness. But to love your neighbor, to feel one with him, to devote your life to the aim of developing your spiritual powers, is not part of the fairness ethics. We live in a paradoxical situation: we practice fairness ethics, and profess Christian ethics. Must we not stumble over this obvious contradiction? Obviously, we do not stumble. What is the reason? Partly, it is

to be found in the fact that the heritage of four thousand years of the development of conscience is by no means completely lost. On the contrary, in many ways the liberation of man from the powers of the feudal state and the Church, made it possible for this heritage to be brought to fruition and in the period between the eighteenth century and now it blossomed as perhaps never before. We still are part of this process—but given our own twentieth-century condition of life, it seems that there is no new bud which will blossom when this flower has wilted.

Another reason why we do not stumble over the contradiction between humanistic ethics and fairness ethics lies in the fact that we reinterpret religious and humanistic ethics in the light of fairness ethics. A good illustration of this interpretation is the Golden Rule. In its original Jewish and Christian meaning, it was a popular phrasing of the Biblical maxim to "love thy neighbor as thyself." In the system of fairness ethics, it means simply "Be fair when you exchange. Give what you expect to get. Don't cheat!" No wonder the Golden Rule is the most popular religious phrase of today. It combines two opposite systems of ethics and helps us to forget the contradiction.

While we still live from the Christian-humanistic heritage it is not surprising that the younger generation exhibits less and less of the traditional ethics and that we come across a moral barbarism among our youth which is in complete contrast to the economic and educational level society has reached. Today, while revising this manuscript, I read two items. One in the *New York Times*, regarding the fact of the murder of a man, cruelly trampled to death by four teen-agers of average middle-class families. The other in *Time* magazine, a description of the new Guatemalan chief of police, who as former chief of police under the Ubico dictatorship had "perfected a head-shrinking steel skull cap to pry loose secrets and crush improper political

our religion is not more than one of the commodities in our show windows. Monotheism is incompatible with alienation and with our ethics of fairness. It makes man's unfolding, his salvation, the supreme aim of life, an aim which never can be subordinated to any other. Inasmuch as God is unrecognizable, indefinable, and inasmuch as man is made in the likeness of God, *man* is indefinable—which means he is not and can never be considered a *thing*. The fight between monotheism and idolatry is exactly the fight between the productive and the alienated way of life. Our culture is perhaps the first completely secularized culture in human history. We have shoved away awareness of and concern with the fundamental problems of human existence. We are not concerned with the meaning of life, with the solution to it; we start out with the conviction that there is no purpose except to invest life successfully and to get it over with without major mishaps. The majority of us believe in God, take it for granted that God exists. The rest, who do not believe, take it for granted that God does not exist. Either way, God is taken for granted. Neither belief nor disbelief cause any sleepless nights, nor any serious concern. In fact, whether a man in our culture believes in God or not makes hardly any difference either from a psychological or from a truly religious standpoint. In both instances he does not care—either about God or about the answer to the problem of his own existence. Just as brotherly love has been replaced by impersonal fairness, God has been transformed into a remote General Director of Universe, Inc.; you know that He is there, He runs the show, (although it probably would run without Him too), you never see Him, but you acknowledge His leadership while you are "doing your part."

The religious 'renaissance' which we witness in these days is perhaps the worst blow monotheism has yet received. Is there any greater sacrilege than to speak of "the Man upstairs," to

teach to pray in order to make God your partner in business, to "sell" religion with the methods and appeals used to sell soap?

In view of the fact that the alienation of modern man is incompatible with monotheism, one might expect that ministers, priests and rabbis would form the spearhead of criticism of modern Capitalism. While it is true that from high Catholic quarters and from a number of less highly placed ministers and rabbis such criticism has been voiced, all churches belong essentially to the conservative forces in modern society and use religion to keep man going and satisfied with a profoundly irreligious system. The majority of them do not seem to recognize that this type of religion will eventually degenerate into overt idolatry, unless they begin to define and then to fight against modern idolatry, rather than to make pronouncements about God and thus to use His name in vain—in more than one sense.

v. *Work*

What becomes the meaning of *work* in an alienated society? 124

We have already made some brief comments about this question in the general discussion of alienation. But since this problem is of utmost importance, not only for the understanding of present-day society, but also for any attempt to create a saner society, I want to deal with the nature of work separately and more extensively in the following pages.

Unless man exploits others, he has to work in order to live. However primitive and simple his method of work may be, by the very fact of production, he has risen above the animal kingdom; rightly has he been defined as "the animal that produces." But work is not only an inescapable necessity for man. Work is also his liberator from nature, his creator as a social and independent being. *In the process of work, that is, the molding and*

changing of nature outside of himself, man molds and changes himself. He emerges from nature by mastering her; he develops his powers of co-operation, of reason, his sense of beauty. He separates himself from nature, from the original unity with her, but at the same time unites himself with her again as her master and builder. The more his work develops, the more his individuality develops. In molding nature and re-creating her, he learns to make use of his powers, increasing his skill and creativeness. Whether we think of the beautiful paintings in the caves of Southern France, the ornaments on weapons among primitive people, the statues and temples of Greece, the cathedrals of the Middle Ages, the chairs and tables made by skilled craftsmen, or the cultivation of flowers, trees or corn by peasants—all are expressions of the creative transformation of nature by man's reason and skill.

In Western history, craftsmanship, especially as it developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, constitutes one of the peaks in the evolution of creative work. Work was not only a useful activity, but one which carried with it a profound satisfaction. The main features of craftsmanship have been very lucidly expressed by C. W. Mills. "There is no ulterior motive in work other than the product being made and the processes of its creation. The details of daily work are meaningful because they are not detached in the worker's mind from the product of the work. The worker is free to control his own working action. The craftsman is thus able to learn from his work; and to use and develop his capacities and skills in its prosecution. There is no split of work and play, or work and culture. The craftsman's way of livelihood determines and infuses his entire mode of living."¹

With the collapse of the medieval structure, and the begin-

¹ C. W. Mills, *White Collar*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1951, p. 220.

ning of the modern mode of production, the meaning and function of work changed fundamentally, especially in the Protestant countries. Man, being afraid of his newly won freedom, was obsessed by the need to subdue his doubts and fears by developing a feverish activity. The outcome of this activity, success or failure, decided his salvation, indicating whether he was among the saved or the lost souls. Work, instead of being an activity satisfying in itself and pleasureable, became a duty and an obsession. The more it was possible to gain riches by work, the more it became a pure means to the aim of wealth and success. Work became, in Max Weber's terms, the chief factor in a system of "inner-worldly asceticism," an answer to man's sense of aloneness and isolation.

However, work in this sense existed only for the upper and middle classes, those who could amass some capital and employ the work of others. For the vast majority of those who had only their physical energy to sell, work became nothing but forced labor. The worker in the eighteenth or nineteenth century who had to work sixteen hours if he did not want to starve was not doing it because he served the Lord in this way, nor because his success would show that he was among the "chosen" ones, but because he was forced to sell his energy to those who had the means of exploiting it. The first centuries of the modern era find the meaning of work divided into that of *duty* among the middle class, and that of *forced labor* among those without property.

The religious attitude toward work as a duty, which was still so prevalent in the nineteenth century, has been changing considerably in the last decades. Modern man does not know what to do with himself, how to spend his lifetime meaningfully, and he is driven to work in order to avoid an unbearable boredom. But work has ceased to be a moral and religious obligation in the

job is in the pay check, not in anything connected with the work or the product. Work appears as something unnatural, a disagreeable, meaningless and stultifying condition of getting the pay check, devoid of dignity as well as of importance. No wonder that this puts a premium on slovenly work, on slow-downs, and on other tricks to get the same pay check with less work. No wonder that this results in an unhappy and discontented worker—because a pay check is not enough to base one's self-respect on."¹

This relationship of the worker to his work is an outcome of the whole social organization of which he is a part. Being "employed,"² he is not an active agent, has no responsibility except the proper performance of the isolated piece of work he is doing, and has little interest except the one of bringing home enough money to support himself and his family. Nothing more is expected of him, or wanted from him. He is part of the equipment hired by capital, and his role and function are determined by this quality of being a piece of equipment. In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to the psychology of the worker, and to his attitude toward his work, to the "human problem of industry"; but this very formulation is indicative of the underlying attitude; there is a human being spending most of his lifetime at work, and what should be discussed is the "*industrial problem of human beings*," rather than "*the human problem of industry*."

Most investigations in the field of industrial psychology are concerned with the question of how the productivity of the individual worker can be increased, and how he can be made to work with less friction; psychology has lent its services to "hu-

¹ cf. Peter F. Drucker, *Concept of the Corporation*, The John Day Company, New York, 1946, p. 179.

² The English "employed" like the German *angestellt* are terms which refer to things rather than to human beings.

rationalization for the appeal to complete passivity and receptivity. A package of breakfast cereal is being advertised as "*new—easier to eat.*" An electric toaster is advertised with these words: ". . . the most distinctly different toaster in the world! Everything is done *for* you with this new toaster. You need not even bother to lower the bread. Power-action, though a unique electric motor, *gently takes the bread right out of your fingers!*" How many courses in languages, or other subjects are announced with the slogan "effortless learning, no more of the old drudgery." Everybody knows the picture of the elderly couple in the advertisement of a life-insurance company, who have retired at the age of sixty, and spend their life in the complete bliss of having nothing to do except just travel.

Radio and television exhibit another element of this yearning for laziness: the idea of "push-button power"; by pushing a button, or turning a knob on my machine, I have the power to produce music, speeches, ball games, and on the television set, to command events of the world to appear before my eyes. The pleasure of driving cars certainly rests partly upon this same satisfaction of the wish for push-button power. By the effortless pushing of a button, a powerful machine is set in motion; little skill and effort is needed to make the driver feel that he is the ruler of space.

But there is far more serious and deep-seated reaction to the meaninglessness and boredom of work. It is a hostility toward work which is much less conscious than our craving for laziness and inactivity. Many a businessman feels himself the prisoner of his business and the commodities he sells; he has a feeling of fraudulency about his product and a secret contempt for it. He hates his customers, who force him to put up a show in order to sell. He hates his competitors because they are a threat; his employees as well as his superiors, because he is in a constant com-

petitive fight with them. Most important of all, he hates himself, because he sees his life passing by, without making any sense beyond the momentary intoxication of success. Of course, this hate and contempt for others and for oneself, and for the very things one produces, is mainly unconscious, and only occasionally comes up to awareness in a fleeting thought, which is sufficiently disturbing to be set aside as quickly as possible.

vi. *Democracy*

Just as work has become alienated, the expression of the will of the voter in modern democracy is an alienated expression. The principle of *democracy* is the idea that not a ruler or a small group, but the people as a whole, determine their own fate and make their decisions pertaining to matters of common concern. By electing his own representatives, who in a parliament decide on the laws of the land, each citizen is supposed to exercise the function of responsible participation in the affairs of the community. By the principle of the division of powers, an ingenious system was created that served to retain the integrity and independence of the judiciary system, and to balance the respective functions of the legislature and executive. Ideally, every citizen is equally responsible for and influential in making decisions.

18-2 In reality, the emerging democratic system was beset by one important contradiction. Operating in states with tremendous inequalities of opportunity and income, the privileged classes naturally did not want to lose the privileges which the status quo gave them, and which they could easily have lost if the will of the majority, who were without property, had found its full expression. To avoid such a danger, many among the property-less population were excluded from the franchise, and only very slowly was the principle accepted that every citizen, without restrictions and qualifications, had the right to vote.

presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups. Results are not zero. But they are small. People cannot be carried up the ladder.

"Thus the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again."¹

Schumpeter too points to the similarity between the manufacturing of the popular will in political issues and that in commercial advertising. "The ways," he says, "in which issues and the popular will on any issue are being manufactured is exactly analogous to the ways of commercial advertising. We find the same attempts to contact the subconscious. We find the same technique of creating favorable and unfavorable associations which are the more effective the less rational they are. We find the same evasions and reticences and the same trick of producing opinion by reiterated assertion that is successful precisely to the extent to which it avoids rational argument and the danger of awakening the critical faculties of the people. And so on. Only, all these arts have infinitely more scope in the sphere of public affairs than they have in the sphere of private and professional life. The picture of the prettiest girl that ever lived will in the long run prove powerless to maintain the sales of a bad cigarette. There is no equally effective safeguard in the case of political decisions. Many decisions of fateful importance are of a nature that makes it impossible for the public to experiment with them at its leisure and at moderate cost. Even if that is possible, however, judgment is as a rule not so easy to arrive at as it is in the case of the cigarette, because effects are less easy to interpret."²

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 262.

² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

arguments are sheer rationalizations is evidenced by the fact that the same people have no qualms about praising economic security as one of the chief aims of life. One needs only to read the advertisements of insurance companies, with their promises to free their customers from insecurity which could be caused by accidents, death, sickness, old age, etc., to be aware of the important role which the ideal of economic security plays for the moneyed class, and what else is the idea of saving, but practicing the aim of economic security? This contradiction between the denunciation of the striving for security among the working class, and the praise of the same aim for those in the higher income brackets is another example of man's unlimited capacity for thinking contradictory thoughts, without even making a feeble attempt to become aware of the contradiction.

Yet the propaganda against the "welfare state" and the principle of economic security is more effective than it would otherwise be, because of the widespread confusion between economic and emotional security.

Increasingly people feel that they should have no doubts, no problems, that they should have to take no risks, and that they should always feel "secure." Psychiatry and psychoanalysis have lent considerable support to this aim. Many writers in this field postulate security as the main aim of psychic development and consider a sense of security more or less equivalent with mental health. (Sullivan is the most profound and the most searching among these.) Thus parents, especially those who follow this literature, get worried that their little son or daughter may, at an early age, acquire a sense of "insecurity." They try to help them avoid conflicts, to make everything easy, to do away with as many obstacles as they can, in order to make the child feel "secure." Just as they try to inoculate the child against all illnesses, and to prevent it from getting in touch with any germ,

they think they can banish insecurity by preventing any contact with it. The result is often as unfortunate as exaggerated hygiene sometimes is: once an infection occurs, the person becomes more vulnerable and helpless before it.

How can a sensitive and alive person ever feel secure? Because of the very conditions of our existence, we cannot feel secure about anything. Our thoughts and insights are at best partial truths, mixed with a great deal of error, not to speak of the unnecessary misinformation about life and society to which we are exposed almost from the day of birth. Our life and health are subject to accidents beyond our control. If we make a decision, we can never be certain of the outcome; any decision implies a risk of failure, and if it does not imply it, it has not been a decision in the true sense of the word. We can never be certain of the outcome of our best efforts. The result always depends on many factors which transcend our capacity of control. Just as a sensitive and alive person cannot avoid being sad, he cannot avoid feeling insecure. The psychic task which a person can and must set for himself, *is not to feel secure, but to be able to tolerate insecurity, without panic and undue fear.*

Life, in its mental and spiritual aspects, is by necessity insecure and uncertain. There is certainty only about the fact that we are born and that we shall die; there is complete security only in an equally complete submission to powers which are supposed to be strong and enduring, and which relieve man from the necessity of making decisions, taking risks, and having responsibilities. *Free man is by necessity insecure; thinking man by necessity uncertain.*

How, then, can man tolerate this insecurity inherent in human existence? One way is to be rooted in the group in such a way that the feeling of identity is guaranteed by the membership to the group, be it family, clan, nation, class. As long as the process

of individualism has not reached a stage where the individual emerges from these primary bonds, he is still "we," and as long as the group functions he is certain of his own identity by his membership in it. The development of modern society has led to the dissolution of these primary bonds. Modern man is essentially alone, he is put on his own feet, expected to stand all by himself. He can achieve a sense of identity only by developing the unique and particular entity which is "he" to a point where he can truly sense "I am I." This accomplishment is possible only if he develops his active powers to such an extent that he can be related to the world without having to submerge in it; if he can achieve a productive orientation. The alienated person, however, tries to solve the problem in a different way, namely by conforming. He feels secure in being as similar as possible to his fellow man. His paramount aim is to be approved of by others; his central fear, that he may not be approved of. To be different, to find himself in a minority, are the dangers which threaten his sense of security; hence a craving for limitless conformity. It is obvious that this craving for conformity produces in turn a continuously operating, though hidden, sense of insecurity. Any deviation from the pattern, any criticism, arouses fear and insecurity; one is always dependent on the approval of others, just as a drug addict is dependent on his drug, and similarly, one's own sense of self and "self"-reliance becomes ever increasingly weaker. The sense of guilt, which some generations ago pervaded the life of man with reference to sin, has been replaced by a sense of uneasiness and inadequacy with regard to being different.

Another goal of mental health, *love*, like that of security, has assumed a new meaning in the alienated situation. For Freud, according to the spirit of his time, love was basically a sexual phenomenon. "Man having found by experience that sexual

(genital) love afforded him his greatest gratification, so that it became in fact a prototype of all happiness to him, must have been thereby impelled to seek his happiness further along the path of sexual relations, to make genital eroticism the central point of his life. . . . In doing so he becomes to a very dangerous degree dependent on a part of the outer world, namely, on his chosen love object, and this exposes him to most painful suffering if he is rejected by it, or loses it by death or defection." ¹ In order to protect himself from the danger of suffering by love, man, but only a "small minority," can transform the erotic functions of love by transferring "the main value from the fact of being loved to their own act of loving," and "by attaching their love not to individual objects, but to all men equally." Thus "they avoid the uncertainties and disappointments of genital love by turning away from its sexual aim and modifying the instinct into an impulse with an *inhibited aim*. . . . Love with an inhibited aim was indeed originally full sensual love, and in men's unconscious minds is so still." ² The feeling of oneness and fusion with the world (the "oceanic feeling") which is the essence of religious experience and specifically of mystical experience, and the experience of oneness and union with the beloved person is interpreted by Freud as a regression to a state of an early "limitless narcissism." ³

In accordance with his basic concepts, mental health for Freud is the full achievement of the capacity for love, which is attained if the libido development has reached the genital stage.

In H. S. Sullivan's psychoanalytic system we find, in contrast to Freud, a strict division between sexuality and love. What is the meaning of love and intimacy in Sullivan's concept? "In-

¹ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, loc. cit., p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

timacy is that type of situation involving two people which permits validation of all components of personal worth. Validation of personal worth requires a type of relationship which I call collaboration, by which I mean clearly formulated adjustments of one's behavior to the expressed needs of the other person in the pursuit of increasingly identical—that is, more and more nearly mutual satisfactions, and in the maintenance of increasingly similar security operations.”¹ Sullivan, putting it more simply, defined the essence of love as a situation of collaboration, in which two people feel: ‘we play according to the rules of the game to preserve our prestige and feeling of superiority and merit.’²

Just as Freud's concept of love is a description of the experience of the patriarchal male in terms of nineteenth-century materialism, Sullivan's description refers to the experience of the alienated, marketing personality of the twentieth century. It is a description of an “*egotism à deux*,” of two people pooling their common interests, and standing together against a hostile and alienated world. Actually his definition of intimacy is in principle valid for the feeling of any co-operating team, in which everybody “adjusts his behavior to the expressed needs of the other person in the pursuit of common aims.” (It is remarkable that Sullivan speaks here of *expressed* needs, when the least one could say about love is that it implies a reaction to *unexpressed* needs between two people.)

In more popular terms one can discover the marketing connotation of love in discussions on marital love and on the need for children for love and affection. In numerous articles, in counseling, in lectures, marital love is described as a state of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

² *Ibid.*, p. 246. Another definition of love by Sullivan, that love begins when a person feels another person's needs to be as important as his own, is less colored by the marketing aspect than the above mentioned formulation.

day mornings, and traveling, for those who can afford it. If we use a more respectable term, instead of the word "fun," and "having a good time," we might say that the concept of happiness is, at best, identified with that of pleasure. Taking into consideration our discussion of the problem of consumption, we can define the concept somewhat more accurately as the pleasure of unrestricted consumption, push-button power and laziness.

From this standpoint, happiness could be defined as the opposite of sadness or sorrow, and indeed, the average person defines happiness as a state of mind which is free from sadness or sorrow. This definition, however, shows that there is something profoundly wrong in this concept of happiness. A person who is alive and sensitive cannot fail to be sad, and to feel sorrow many times in his life. This is so, not only because of the amount of unnecessary suffering produced by the imperfection of our social arrangements, but because of the nature of human existence, which makes it impossible not to react to life with a good deal of pain and sorrow. Since we are living beings, we must be sadly aware of the necessary gap between our aspirations and what can be achieved in our short and troubled life. Since death confronts us with the inevitable fact that either we shall die before our loved ones or they before us—since we see suffering, the unavoidable as well as the unnecessary and wasteful, around us every day, how can we avoid the experience of pain and sorrow? The effort to avoid it is only possible if we reduce our sensitivity, responsiveness and love; if we harden our hearts and withdraw our attention and our feeling from others, as well as from ourselves.

of
Eckhardt.

If we want to define happiness by its opposite, we must define it not in contrast to *sadness*, but in contrast to *depression*.

What is depression? It is the inability to feel, it is the sense of being dead, while our body is alive. It is the inability to experience

are truly ours. To be able to be alone, and at the same time one with a loved person, with every brother on this earth, with all that is alive; to follow the voice of our conscience, the voice that calls us to ourselves, yet not to indulge in self hate when the voice of conscience was not loud enough to be heard and followed. The mentally healthy person is the person who lives by love, reason and faith, who respects life, his own and that of his fellow man.

The alienated person, as we have tried to describe him in this chapter, cannot be healthy. Since he experiences himself as a thing, an investment, to be manipulated by himself and by others, he is lacking in a sense of self. This lack of self creates deep anxiety. The anxiety engendered by confronting him with the abyss of nothingness is more terrifying than even the tortures of hell. In the vision of hell, I am punished and tortured—in the vision of nothingness I am driven to the border of madness—because I cannot say “I” any more. If the modern age has been rightly called the age of anxiety, it is primarily because of this anxiety engendered by the lack of self. Inasmuch as “I am as you desire me”—I am *not*; I am anxious, dependent on approval of others, constantly trying to please. The alienated person feels inferior whenever he suspects himself of not being in line. Since his sense of worth is based on approval as the reward for conformity, he feels naturally threatened in his sense of self and in his self-esteem by any feeling, thought or action which could be suspected of being a deviation. Yet, inasmuch as he is human and not an automaton, he cannot help deviating, hence he must feel afraid of disapproval all the time. As a result he has to try all the harder to conform, to be approved of, to be successful. Not the voice of his conscience gives him strength and security but the feeling of not having lost the close touch with the herd.

Another result of alienation is the prevalence of a feeling of

guilt. It is, indeed, amazing that in as fundamentally irreligious a culture as ours, the sense of guilt should be so widespread and deep-rooted as it is. The main difference from, let us say, a Calvinistic community, is the fact that the feeling of guilt is neither very conscious, nor does it refer to a religiously patterned concept of sin. But if we scratch the surface, we find that people feel guilty about hundreds of things; for not having worked hard enough, for having been too protective—or not protective enough—toward their children, for not having done enough for Mother, or for having been too kindhearted to a debtor; people feel guilty for having done good things, as well as for having done bad things; it is almost as if they had to find something to feel guilty about.

What could be the cause of so much guilt feeling? It seems that there are two main sources which, though entirely different in themselves, lead to the same result. The one source is the same as that from which the feelings of inferiority spring. Not to be like the rest, not to be totally adjusted, makes one feel guilty toward the commands of the great It. The other source of guilt feeling is man's one conscience; he senses his gifts or talents, his ability to love, to think, to laugh, to cry, to wonder and to create, he senses that his life is the one chance he is given, and that if he loses this chance he has lost everything. He lives in a world with more comfort and ease than his ancestors ever knew—yet he senses that, chasing after more comfort, his life runs through his fingers like sand. He cannot help feeling guilty for the waste, for the lost chance. This feeling of guilt is much less conscious than the first one, but one reinforces the other, the one often serving as a rationalization for the other. Thus, alienated man feels guilty for being himself, and for not being himself, for being alive and for being an automaton, for being a person and for being a thing.

Alienated man is unhappy. Consumption of fun serves to re-

press the awareness of his unhappiness. He tries to save time, and yet he is eager to kill the time he has saved. He is glad to have finished another day without failure or humiliation, rather than to greet the new day with the enthusiasm which only the "I am I" experience can give. He is lacking the constant flow of energy which stems from productive relatedness to the world.

Having no faith, being deaf to the voice of conscience, and having a manipulating intelligence but little reason, he is bewildered, disquieted and willing to appoint to the position of a leader anyone who offers him a total solution.

Can the picture of alienation be connected with any of the established pictures of mental illness? In answering this question we must remember that man has two ways of relating himself to the world. One in which he sees the world as he needs to see it in order to manipulate or use it. Essentially this is sense experience and common-sense experience. Our eye sees that which we have to see, our ear hears what we have to hear in order to live; our common sense perceives things in a manner which enables us to act; both senses and common sense work in the service of survival. In the matter of sense and common sense and for the logic built upon them, things are the same for all people because the laws of their use are the same.

The other faculty of man is to see things from within, as it were; subjectively, formed by *my* inner experience, feeling, mood.¹ Ten painters paint the same tree in one sense, yet they paint ten different trees in another. Each tree is an expression of their individuality while also being the same tree. In the dream we see the world entirely from within; it loses its objective meaning and is transformed into a symbol of our own purely individual experience. The person who dreams while

¹ See a more detailed discussion of this point in E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*, Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York, 1952.

awake, that is, the person who is in touch only with his inner world and who is incapable of perceiving the outer world in its objective-action context, is insane. The person who can only experience the outer world photographically, but is out of touch with his inner world, with himself, is the alienated person. Schizophrenia and alienation are complementary. In both forms of sickness one pole of human experience is lacking. If both poles are present, we can speak of the productive person, whose very productiveness results from the polarity between an inner and an outer form of perception.

Our description of the alienated character of contemporary man is somewhat one-sided; there are a number of positive factors which I have failed to mention. There is in the first place still a humanistic tradition alive, which has not been destroyed by the in-human process of alienation. But beyond that, there are signs that people are increasingly dissatisfied and disappointed with their way of life and trying to regain some of their lost selfhood and productivity. Millions of people listen to good music in concert halls or over the radio, an ever-increasing number of people paint, do gardening, build their own boats or houses, indulge in any number of "do it yourself" activities. Adult education is spreading, and even in business the awareness is growing that an executive should have reason and not only intelligence.¹

But promising and real as all these trends are, they are not enough to justify an attitude which is to be found among a number of very sophisticated writers who claim that criticisms of our society, such as the one which has been offered here, are dated and old-fashioned; that we have already passed the peak of alienation and are now on our way to a better world. Appeal-

¹ An impressive example of this new trend is the course in literature and philosophy for junior executives of the Bell Telephone Co., under the directorship of Professors Morse Peckham and Rex Crawford at the University of Pennsylvania.

In France, Condorcet, in his *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain* (1793), laid the foundation for the faith in the eventual perfection of the human race, which would bring about a new era of reason and happiness, and to which there were no limitations. The coming of the Messianic realm was Condorcet's message, which was to influence St. Simon, Comte and Proudhon. Indeed, the fervor of the French Revolution was Messianic fervor in secular language.

In German enlightenment philosophy the same translation from the theological concept of salvation into secular language occurred. Lessing's *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* became most influential on German, but also on French thinking. To Lessing the future was to be the age of reason and self-realization, brought about by the education of mankind, thus realizing the promise of Christian revelation. Fichte believed in the coming of a spiritual millenium, Hegel in the realization of God's realm in history, thus translating Christian theology into this-worldly philosophy. Hegel's philosophy found its most significant historical continuation in Marx. More clearly perhaps than that of many other enlightenment philosophers, Marx' thought is Messianic-religious, in secular language. All past history is only "prehistory," it is the history of self-alienation; with Socialism the realm of *human* history, of human freedom will be ushered in. The classless society of justice, brotherliness and reason will be the beginning of a new world, toward the formation of which all previous history was moving.¹

While it is the main purpose of this chapter to present the ideas of Socialism as the most important attempt to find an answer to the ills of Capitalism, I shall first discuss briefly the Totalitarian answers, and one which may be properly called Super-Capitalism.

¹ Cf. K. Löwith, *loc. cit.*, p. 191 ff.

they have been made by many socialist critics of Capitalism, and they show a sober and realistic appreciation of the economic and human facts. The philosophy behind it, however, is quite the contrary of socialist ideas. Lincoln is convinced "that development of the individual can only take place in the fiercely competitive game of life."¹ "*Selfishness is the driving force that makes the human race what it is*, for good or evil. Hence, it is the force that we must depend on, and properly guide, if the human race is to progress."² He then goes on to differentiate between "stupid" and "intelligent" selfishness, the former being the selfishness that permits man to steal, the latter that causes a man to struggle toward perfection, so that he becomes more prosperous.³ Discussing the incentives for work, Lincoln states that just as with the amateur athlete the incentive is not money, we can conclude that money is not necessarily an incentive for the industrial workers, nor are short hours, safety, seniority, security and bargaining power an incentive for work.⁴ The only potent incentive, according to him, is "recognition of our abilities by our contemporaries and ourselves."⁵ As a practical consequence of these ideas, Lincoln suggests a method of industrial organization in which the worker is "rewarded for all the things he does that are of help, and penalized if he does not do as well as others in all these same ways. He is a member of the team, and is rewarded or penalized, depending on what he can do and does do in all opportunities to win the game."⁶ In applying this system, ". . . the man is rated by all those who have accurate knowledge of some phase of his work. On this rating, he is rewarded or penalized. This program runs parallel to the write-ups following the playing of a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

word "Socialism" to give added appeal to his racial and nationalistic ideas, Stalin misappropriated the concept of Socialism and of Marxism for the purpose of his propaganda. His claim is false in the essential points. He separated the purely economic aspect of Socialism, that of the socialization of the means of production, from the whole concept of Socialism, and perverted its human and social aims into their opposite. The Stalinist system today, in spite of its state ownership of the means of production, is perhaps closer to the early and purely exploitative forms of Western Capitalism than to any conceivable idea of a socialist society. An obsessional striving for industrial advance, ruthless disregard for the individual and greed for personal power are its main-springs. By accepting the thesis that Socialism and Marxism are more or less identical with Stalinism, we do the greatest service in the field of propaganda which the Stalinists could wish to obtain. Instead of showing the falsity of their claims, we confirm them. This may not be an important problem in the United States, where socialist concepts have no strong hold on the minds of the people, but it is a very serious problem for Europe and especially for Asia, where the opposite is true. To combat the appeal of Stalinism in those parts of the world, we must uncover this deception, and not confirm it.

There are considerable differences between the various schools of socialist thought, as they have developed since the end of the eighteenth century, and these differences are significant. However, as happens so often in the history of human thought, the arguments between the representatives of the various schools obscure the fact that the common element among the various socialist thinkers is by far greater and more decisive than are the differences.

Socialism as a political movement, and at the same time as a theory dealing with the laws of society and a diagnosis of its ills,

may be said to have been started in the French Revolution, by Babeuf. He speaks in favor of the abolition of private ownership of the soil, and demands the common consumption of the fruits of the earth, the abolition of the difference between rich and poor, ruler and ruled. He believes that the time has come for a Republic of the Equals (*égalitaires*), "the great hospitable house (*hospice*) open for all."

In contrast to the relatively simple and primitive theory of Babeuf, Charles Fourier, whose first publication, "Théorie de Quatre Mouvements," appeared in 1808, offers a most complex and elaborate theory and diagnosis of society. He makes man and his passions a basis of all understanding of society, and believes that a healthy society must serve, not so much the aim of increasing material wealth, as a realization of our basic passion, brotherly love. Among the human passions, he emphasizes particularly the "butterfly passion," man's need for change, which corresponds to the many and diverse potentialities present in every human being. Work should be a pleasure ("*travail attrayant*") and two daily hours of work should be sufficient. Against the universal organization of great monopolies in all branches of industry, he postulates communal associations in the field of production and consumption, free and voluntary associations in which individualism will combine spontaneously with collectivism. Only in this way can the third historical phase, that of harmony, supersede the two previous ones: that of societies based on relations between slave and master, and that between wage-earners and entrepreneurs.¹

While Fourier was a theoretician with a somewhat obsessional mind, Robert Owen was a man of practice, manager and owner of one of the best-managed textile mills in Scotland. For Owen,

¹ cf. Charles Fourier, *The Passions of the Human Soul*, with a general introduction by H. Doherty, translated by J. R. Morell, H. Bailliere, London, 1851.

ROADS TO SANITY

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the various critical analyses of Capitalism we find remarkable agreement. While it is true that the Capitalism of the nineteenth century was criticized for its neglect of the material welfare of the workers, this was never the main criticism. What Owen and Proudhon, Tolstoy and Bakunin, Durkheim and Marx, Einstein and Schweitzer talk about is *man*, and what happens to him in our industrial system. Although they express it in different concepts, they all find that man has lost his central place, that he has been made an instrument for the purposes of economic aims, that he has been estranged from, and has lost the concrete relatedness to, his fellow men and to nature, that he has ceased to have a meaningful life. I have tried to express the same idea by elaborating on the concept of alienation and by showing psychologically what the psychological results of alienation are; that man regresses to a receptive and marketing orientation and ceases to be productive; that he loses his sense of self, becomes dependent on approval, hence tends to conform and yet to feel insecure; he is dissatisfied, bored, and anxious, and spends most of his energy in the attempt to

compensate for or just to cover up this anxiety. His intelligence is excellent, his reason deteriorates and in view of his technical powers he is seriously endangering the existence of civilization, and even of the human race.

If we turn to views about the *causes* for this development, we find less agreement than in the diagnosis of the illness itself. While the early nineteenth century was still prone to see the causes of all evil in the lack of *political* freedom, and especially of universal suffrage, the socialists, and especially the Marxists stressed the significance of economic factors. They believed that the alienation of man resulted from his role as an object of exploitation and use. Thinkers like Tolstoy and Burckhardt on the other hand, stressed the spiritual and moral impoverishment as the cause of Western man's decay; Freud believed that modern man's trouble was the over-repression of his instinctual drives and the resulting neurotic manifestations. But any explanation which analyzes one sector to the exclusion of others is unbalanced, and thus wrong. The socio-economic, spiritual and psychological explanations look at the same phenomenon from different aspects, and the very task of a theoretical analysis is to see how these different aspects are inter-related, and how they interact.

What holds true for the causes holds, of course, true for the remedies by which modern man's defect can be cured. If I believe that "the" cause of the illness is economic, *or* spiritual, *or* psychological, I necessarily believe that remedying "the" cause leads to sanity. On the other hand, if I see how the various aspects are interrelated, I shall arrive at the conclusion that sanity and mental health can be attained only by simultaneous changes in the sphere of industrial and political organization, of spiritual and philosophical orientation, of character structure, and of cultural activities. The concentration of effort in any of these spheres, to the exclusion or neglect of others, is destructive of *all* change. In

fact, here seems to lie one of the most important obstacles to the progress of mankind. Christianity has preached spiritual renewal, neglecting the changes in the social order without which spiritual renewal must remain ineffective for the majority of people. The age of enlightenment has postulated as the highest norms independent judgment and reason; it preached political equality without seeing that political equality could not lead to the realization of the brotherhood of man if it was not accompanied by a fundamental change in the social-economic organization. Socialism, and especially Marxism, has stressed the necessity for social and economic changes, and neglected the necessity of the inner change in human beings, without which economic change can never lead to the "good society." Each of these great reform movements of the last two thousand years has emphasized one sector of life to the exclusion of the others; their proposals for reform and renewal were radical—but their results were almost complete failure. The preaching of the Gospel led to the establishment of the Catholic Church; the teachings of the rationalists of the eighteenth century to Robespierre and Napoleon; the doctrines of Marx to Stalin. The results could hardly have been different. Man is a unit; his thinking, feeling, and his practice of life are inseparably connected. He cannot be free in his thought when he is not free emotionally; and he cannot be free emotionally if he is dependent and unfree in his practice of life, in his economic and social relations. Trying to advance radically in one sector to the exclusion of others must necessarily lead to the result to which it did lead, namely, that the radical demands in one sphere are fulfilled only by a few individuals, while for the majority they become formulae and rituals, serving to cover up the fact that in other spheres nothing has changed. Undoubtedly *one* step of integrated progress in all spheres of life will have more far-reaching and more lasting results for the progress of the human race than a hundred steps preached—and even for a short while lived—in only one isolated sphere.

Several thousands of years of failure in "isolated progress" should be a rather convincing lesson.

Closely related to this problem is that of *radicalism* and *reform*, which seems to form such a dividing line between various political solutions. Yet, a closer analysis can show that this differentiation as it is usually conceived of is deceptive. There is reform and reform; reform can be *radical*, that is, going to the roots, or it can be superficial, trying to patch up symptoms without touching the causes. Reform which is not radical, in this sense, never accomplishes its ends and eventually ends up in the opposite direction. So-called "radicalism" on the other hand, which believes that we can solve problems by force, when observation, patience and continuous activity is required, is as unrealistic and fictitious as reform. Historically speaking, they both often lead to the same result. The revolution of the Bolsheviks led to Stalinism, the reform of the right wing Social Democrats in Germany, led to Hitler. The true criterion of reform is not its tempo but its realism, its true "radicalism"; it is the question whether it goes to the roots and attempts to change causes—or whether it remains on the surface and attempts to deal only with symptoms.

If this chapter is to discuss roads to sanity, that is, methods of cure, we had better pause here for a moment and ask ourselves what we know about the nature of cure in cases of individual mental diseases. The cure of social pathology must follow the same principle, since it is the pathology of so many human beings, and not of an entity beyond or apart from individuals.

The conditions for the cure of individual pathology are mainly the following:

1.) A development must have occurred which is contrary to the proper functioning of the psyche. In Freud's theory this means that the libido has failed to develop normally and that as a result, symptoms are produced. In the frame of reference of humanistic psychoanalysis, the causes of pathology lie in the failure

to develop a productive orientation, a failure which results in the development of irrational passions, especially of incestuous, destructive and exploitative strivings. The *fact* of suffering, whether it is conscious or unconscious, resulting from the failure of normal development, produces a dynamic *striving to overcome the suffering*, that is, *for change in the direction of health*. This striving for health in our physical as well as in our mental organism is the basis for any cure of sickness, and it is absent only in the most severe pathology.

2.) The first step necessary to permit this tendency for health to operate is the awareness of the suffering and of that which is shut out and disassociated from our conscious personality. In Freud's doctrine, repression refers mainly to *sexual* strivings. In our frame of reference, it refers to the repressed irrational passions, to the repressed feeling of aloneness and futility, and to the longing for love and productivity, which is also repressed.

3.) Increasing self-awareness can become fully effective only if a next step is taken, that of changing a practice of life which was built on the basis of the neurotic structure, and which reproduces it constantly. A patient, for instance, whose neurotic character makes him want to submit to parental authorities has usually constructed a life where he has chosen dominating or sadistic father images as bosses, teachers, and so on. He will be cured only if he changes his realistic life situation in such a way that it does not constantly reproduce the submissive tendencies he wants to give up. Furthermore, he must change his systems of values, norms and ideals, so that they further rather than block his striving for health and maturity.

The same conditions—*conflict* with the requirements of human nature and resulting suffering, *awareness* of what is shut out, and *change* of the realistic situation and of values and norms—are also necessary for a cure of *social* pathology.

To show the conflict between human needs and our social structure, and to further the awareness of our conflicts and of that which is dissociated, was the purpose of the previous chapter of this book. To discuss the various possibilities of practical changes in our economic, political and cultural organization is the intention of this chapter.

However, before we start discussing the practical questions, let us consider once more what, on the basis of the premises developed in the beginning of this book, constitutes mental sanity, and what type of culture could be assumed to be conducive to mental health.

The mentally healthy person is the productive and unalienated person; the person who relates himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time feels one with his fellow man; who is not subject to irrational authority, and accepts willingly the rational authority of conscience and reason; who is in the process of being born as long as he is alive, and considers the gift of life the most precious chance he has.

Let us also remember that these goals of mental health are not ideals which have to be forced upon the person, or which man can attain only if he overcomes his "nature," and sacrifices his "innate selfishness." On the contrary, the striving for mental health, for happiness, harmony, love, productiveness, is inherent in every human being who is not born as a mental or moral idiot. Given a chance, these strivings assert themselves forcefully, as can be seen in countless situations. It takes powerful constellations and circumstances to pervert and stifle this innate striving for sanity; and indeed, throughout the greater part of known history, the use of man by man has produced such perversion. To believe that this perversion is inherent in man is like throwing seeds in the soil of the desert and claiming they were not meant to grow.

A
Sane
Society

What society corresponds to this aim of mental health, and what would be the structure of a sane society? First of all, a society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself; hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers; where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth. A sane society is one in which qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness, narcissism, have no chance to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. Where acting according to one's conscience is looked upon as a fundamental and necessary quality and where opportunism and lack of principles is deemed to be asocial; where the individual is concerned with social matters so that they become personal matters, where his relation to his fellow man is not separated from his relationship in the private sphere. A sane society, furthermore, is one which permits man to operate within manageable and observable dimensions, and to be an active and responsible participant in the life of society, as well as the master of his own life. It is one which furthers human solidarity and not only permits, but stimulates, its members to relate themselves to each other lovingly; a sane society furthers the productive activity of everybody in his work, stimulates the unfolding of reason and enables man to give expression to his inner needs in collective art and rituals.

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

A. SOCIALISM AS A PROBLEM

We have discussed in the previous chapter the three answers to the problem of present-day insanity, those of Totalitarianism, Super-Capitalism and Socialism. The totalitarian solution, be it of

capital would not employ labor, but labor would employ capital. They stressed the organization of work and the social relations between men, not primarily the question of ownership. As I shall show later, there is a remarkable return to this attitude by socialists all over the world, who some decades ago considered the pure form of Marxist doctrine to be *the* solution of all problems. In order to give the reader a general idea of the principles of this type of communitarian socialist thought, which in spite of considerable differences is common to syndicalists, anarchists, guild socialists, and increasingly so to Marxist Socialists, I quote the following formulations by Cole:

He writes: "Fundamentally the old insistence on liberty is right; it was swept away because it thought of liberty in terms of political self-government alone. The new conception of liberty must be wider. It must include the idea of man not only as a citizen in a free state, but as a partner in an industrial commonwealth. The bureaucratic reformer, by laying all the stress upon the purely material side of life, has come to believe in a society made up of well-fed, well-housed, well-clothed machines, working for a greater machine, the state; the individualist has offered to men the alternative of starvation and slavery under the guise of liberty of action. The real liberty, which is the goal of the new Socialism, will assure freedom of action and immunity from economic stress by treating man as a human being, and not as a problem or a god.

"Political liberty by itself is, in fact, always illusory. A man who lives in economic subjection six days, if not seven, a week, does not become free merely by making a cross on a ballot-paper once in five years. If freedom is to mean anything to the average man it must include industrial freedom. Until men at their work can know themselves members of a self-governing community of workers, they will remain essentially servile, whatever the political system under which they live. It is not enough to sweep away the

degrading relation in which the wage-slave stands to an individual employer. State Socialism, too, leaves the worker in bondage to a tyranny that is no less galling because it is impersonal. Self-government in industry is not merely the supplement, but the precursor of political liberty.

"Man is everywhere in chains, and his chains will not be broken till he feels that it is degrading to be a bondsman, whether to an individual or to a State. The disease of civilization is not so much the material poverty of the many as the decay of the spirit of freedom and self-confidence. The revolt that will change the world will spring, not from the benevolence that breeds "reform," but from the will to be free. Men will act together in the full consciousness of their mutual dependence; but they will aet for themselves. Their liberty will not be given them from above; they will take it on their own behalf.

"Socialists, then, must put their appeal to the workers not in the question, 'Is it not unpleasant to be poor, and will you not help to raise the poor?' but in this form: 'Poverty is but the sign of man's enslavement: to cure it you must cease to labour for others and must believe in yourself.' Wage-slavery will exist as long as there is a man or an institution that is the master of men: it will be ended when the workers learn to set freedom before comfort. The average man will become a socialist not in order to secure a 'minimum standard of civilized life,' but because he feels ashamed of the slavery that blinds him and his fellows, and because he is resolved to end the industrial system that makes them slaves."¹

"First, then, what is the nature of the ideal at which Labour must aim? What is meant by that 'control of industry' which the workers are to demand? It can be summed up in two words—

¹ G. D. H. Cole and W. Mellor, *The Meaning of Industrial Freedom*, Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1918, pp. 3, 4.

direct management. The task of actually conducting the business must be handed over to the workers engaged in it. To them it must belong to order production, distribution, and exchange. They must win industrial self-government, with the right to elect their own officers; they must understand and control all the complicated mechanism of industry and trade; they must become the accredited agents of the community in the economic sphere.”¹

C. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS

Before discussing practical suggestions for the realization of communitarian Socialism in an industrial society, we had better stop and discuss some of the main objections to such possibilities; the first type of objection being based on the idea of the nature of industrial work, the other on the nature of man and the psychological motivations for work.

It is precisely with regard to any change in the work situation itself, that the most drastic objections to the ideas of communitarian Socialism are made by many thoughtful and well-meaning observers. Modern industrial work, so the argument runs, is by its very nature mechanical, uninteresting and alienated. It is based on an extreme degree of division of labor, and it can never occupy the interest and attention of the whole man. All ideas to make work interesting and meaningful again are really romantic dreams—and followed up with more consequence and realism they would logically result in the demand to give up our system of industrial production and to return to the pre-industrial mode of handicraft production. On the contrary, so the argument goes on, the aim must be to make work *more* meaningless and *more* mechanized. We have witnessed a tremendous reduction of working hours within the last hundred years, and a working day of four, or even two hours does not seem to be a fantastic expectation for the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

future. We are witnessing right now a drastic change in work methods. The work process is divided into so many small components, that each worker's task becomes automatic and does not require his active attention; thus, he can indulge in daydreams and reveries. Besides, we are using increasingly automatized machines, working with their own "brains" in clean, well-lit, healthy factories, and the "worker" does nothing but watch some instrument and pull some lever from time to time. Indeed, say the adherents of this point of view, *the complete automatization of work is what we hope for*; man will work a few hours; it will not be uncomfortable, nor require much attention; it will be an almost unconscious routine like brushing one's teeth, and the center of gravity will be the leisure hours in everybody's life.

This argument sounds convincing and who can say that the completely automatized factory and the disappearance of all dirty and uncomfortable work is not the goal which our industrial evolution is approaching? But there are several considerations to prevent us from making the automatization of work our main hope for a sane society.

First of all it is, at the least, doubtful whether the mechanization of work will have the results which are assumed in the foregoing argument. There is a good deal of evidence pointing to the contrary. Thus, for instance, a very thoughtful recent study among automobile workers shows that they disliked the job to the degree to which it embodied mass-production characteristics like repetitiveness, mechanical pacing, or related characteristics. While the vast majority liked the job for economic reasons (147 to 7), an even greater majority (96 to 1) disliked it for reasons of the immediate job content.¹ The same reaction was also expressed in the behavior of the workers. "Workers whose jobs had 'high mass

¹ Ch. R. Walker and R. H. Guest, *The Man on the Assembly Line*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, pp. 142, 143.

production scores'—that is, exhibited mass production characteristics in an extreme form—were absent more often from their jobs than workers on jobs with low mass production scores. More workers quit jobs with high mass production scores than quit jobs with low ones."¹ It must also be questioned whether the freedom for daydreaming and reverie which mechanized work gives is as positive and healthy a factor as most industrial psychologists assume. Actually, daydreaming is a symptom of lacking relatedness to reality. It is not refreshing or relaxing—it is essentially an escape with all the negative results that go with escape. What the industrial psychologists describe in such bright colors is essentially the same lack of concentration which is so characteristic of modern man in general. You do three things at once because you do not do anything in a concentrated fashion. It is a great mistake to believe that doing something in a non-concentrated form is refreshing. On the contrary, any concentrated activity, whether it is work, play or rest (rest, too, is an activity), is invigorating—any nonconcentrated activity is tiring. Anybody can find out the truth of this statement by a few simple self-observations.

But aside from all this, it will still be many generations before such a point of automatization and reduction of working time is reached, especially if we think not only of Europe and America but of Asia and Africa, which still have hardly started their industrial revolution. Is man, during the next few hundred years, to continue spending most of his energy on meaningless work, waiting for the time when work will hardly require any expenditure of energy? What will become of him in the meantime?

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144. The experiences with job enlargement made by I.B.M. point to similar considerations. When one worker performed several operations which were subdivided before among several workers, so that the worker could have a sense of accomplishment and be related to the product of work, production rose and fatigue decreased.

Will he not become more and more alienated and this just as much in his leisure hours as in his working time? Is the hope for effortless work not a daydream based on the fantasy of laziness and push-button power, and a rather unhealthy fantasy at that? Is not work such a fundamental part of man's existence that it cannot and should never be reduced to almost complete insignificance? Is not the mode of work in itself an essential element in forming a person's character? Does completely automatized work not lead to a completely automatized life?

While all these questions are so many doubts concerning the idealization of completely automatized work, we must now deal with those views which deny the possibility that work could be attractive and meaningful, hence that it could be truly humanized. The argument runs like this: modern factory work is by its very nature not conducive to interest and satisfaction; furthermore, there is necessary work to be done, which is positively unpleasant or repelling. Active participation of the worker in management is incompatible with the requirements of modern industry, and would lead to chaos. In order to function properly in this system, man must obey, adjust himself to a routinized organization. By nature man is lazy, and not prone to be responsible; he therefore must be conditioned to function smoothly and without too much initiative and spontaneity.

To deal with these arguments properly we must indulge in some speculations on the problem of *laziness* and on that of the various *motivations for work*.

It is surprising that the view of man's natural laziness can still be held by psychologists and laymen alike, when so many observable facts contradict it. *Laziness, far from being normal, is a symptom of mental pathology.* In fact, one of the worst forms of mental suffering is boredom, not knowing what to do with oneself and one's life. Even if man had no monetary, or any other

and afternoon, refreshments offered during these rest pauses, and the hours of work cut by half an hour. Throughout these changes, the output of each worker rose considerably. So far, so good; nothing was more plausible than the assumption that increased rest periods and some attempt to make the worker "feel better" were the cause for an increased efficiency. But a new arrangement in the twelfth experimental period disappointed this expectation and showed rather dramatic results: by arrangement with the workers, the group returned to the conditions of work as they had existed in the beginning of the experiment. Rest periods, special refreshments, and other improvements were all abolished for approximately three months. To everybody's amazement this did not result in a *decrease* of output but, on the contrary, the daily and weekly output rose to a higher point than at any time before. In the next period, the old concessions were introduced again, with the only exception that the girls provided their own food, while the company continued to supply coffee for the midmorning lunch. The output still continued to rise. And not only the output. What is equally important is the fact that the rate of sickness among the workers in this experiment fell by about 80 per cent in comparison with the general rate, and that a new social friendly intercourse developed among the working women participating in the experiment.

How can we explain the surprising result that "the steady increase seemed to ignore the experimental changes in its upward development"? ¹ If it was not the rest pauses, the tea, the shortened working time, what was it that made the workers produce more, be more healthy and more friendly among themselves? The answer is obvious: while the technical aspect of monotonous, uninteresting work remained the same, and while even certain improvements like rest pauses were not decisive, the social aspect of the total

¹ E. Mayo, *loc. cit.*, p. 63.

work situation had changed, and caused a change in the attitude of the workers. They were informed of the experiment, and of the several steps in it; their suggestions were listened to and often followed, and what is perhaps the most important point, they were aware of participating in a meaningful and interesting experiment, which was important not only to themselves, but to the workers of the whole factory. While they were at first "shy and uneasy, silent and perhaps somewhat suspicious of the company's intentions," later their attitude was marked "by confidence and candour." The group developed a sense of participation in the work, because they knew what they were doing, they had an aim and purpose, and they could influence the whole procedure by their suggestions.

The startling results of Mayo's experiment show that sickness, fatigue and a resulting low output are not caused primarily by the monotonous technical aspect of the work, but by the alienation of the worker from the total work situation in its social aspects. As soon as this alienation was decreased to a certain extent by having the worker participate in something that was meaningful to him, and in which he had a voice, his whole psychological reaction to the work changed, although technically he was still doing the same kind of work.

Mayo's Hawthorne experiment was followed by a number of research projects which tend to prove that the social aspect of the work situation has a decisive influence on the attitude of the worker, even though the work process in its technical aspect remains the same. Thus, for instance, Wyatt and his associates ". . . provided clues as to other characteristics of the work situation which affect the *will to work*. These showed that variation in the rate of work in different individuals was dependent upon the prevailing group or *social atmosphere, i.e., on a collective influence*

87 shares apiece, at a total cost of \$3,500. "By investing \$10 (per week) apiece—which is about what our steel workers gained in the recent wage increase—the employees of U.S. Steel could buy all of the outstanding common stock in less than seven years." Actually, they would not even have to purchase that much, but only part of it in order to have enough of the stock to give them a voting majority.

Another proposal has been made by F. Tannenbaum in his *A Philosophy of Labor*. He suggests that the unions could buy sufficient shares of the enterprises whose workers they represent to control the management of these enterprises.¹ Whatever the method employed is, it is an evolutionary one, only continuing trends in property relations which already exist, and they are means to an end—and only means—to make it possible that men work for a meaningful aim in a meaningful way, and are not bearers of a commodity—physical energy and skill—which is bought and sold like any other commodity.

In discussing workers' participation one important point must be stressed, the danger namely, that such participation could develop in the direction of the profit sharing concepts of the super-capitalist type. If the workers and employees of an enterprise were exclusively concerned with *their* enterprise, the alienation between man and his social forces would remain unchanged. The egotistical, alienated attitude would only have been extended from one individual to the "team." It is therefore not an incidental but an essential part of workers' participation that they look beyond their own enterprise, that they be interested in and connected with consumers as well as with other workers in the same industry, and with the working population as a whole. The development of a kind of local patriotism for the firm, of an "esprit de corps" similar to that of college and uni-

¹ F. Tannenbaum, *A Philosophy of Labor*, loc. cit.

versity students, as recommended by Wyatt and other British social psychologists, would only reinforce the asocial and egotistical attitude which is the essence of alienation. All such suggestions in favor of "team" enthusiasm ignore the fact that there is only one truly social orientation, namely the one of solidarity with mankind. Social cohesion within the group, combined with antagonism to the outsider, is not social feeling but extended egotism.

Concluding these remarks on workers' participation, I want to stress again, even at the risk of being repetitious, that all suggestions in the direction of the humanization of work do not have the aim of increasing economic output nor is their goal a greater satisfaction with work *per se*. They make sense only in a totally different social structure, in which economic activity is a part—and a subordinate part—of social life. One cannot separate work activity from political activity, from the use of leisure time and from personal life. If work were to become interesting without the other spheres of life becoming human, no real change would occur. In fact, it could not become interesting. It is the very evil of present-day culture that it separates and compartmentalizes the various spheres of living. The way to sanity lies in overcoming this split and in arriving at a new unification and integration within society and within the individual human being.

I have spoken before of the discouragement among many socialists with the results of applied Socialism. But there is a growing awareness that the fault was not with the basic aim of Socialism, an unalienated society in which every working person participates actively and responsibly in industry and in politics, but with the wrong emphasis on private versus communal property and the neglect of the human and properly social factors. There is, correspondingly, a growing insight into the necessity

funds required for armament, and to the cost of waging war, the amount required does not appear to be excessive. When we compare it to the potential gains that can result from a successful program, it appears even smaller. And when we compare the cost with that of inaction and to the consequences of maintaining the status quo, it is indeed insignificant."¹

The foregoing problem is only part of the more general problem as to what extent the interests of profitable capital investment may be permitted to manipulate the public needs in a detrimental and unhealthy way. The most obvious examples are our movie industry, the comic-book industry and the crime pages of our newspapers. In order to make the highest profit, the lowest instincts are artificially stimulated and the mind of the public is poisoned. The Food and Drug Act has regulated the unrestricted production and advertising of harmful food and drugs; the same can be done with regard to all other vital necessities. If such laws should prove to be ineffective, certain industries, such as the film industry, must be socialized, or at least competing industries must be created, financed with public funds. In a society in which the only aim is the development of man, and in which material needs are subordinated to spiritual needs, it will not be difficult to find legal and economic means to insure the necessary changes.

As far as the economic situation of the individual citizen is concerned, the idea of equality of income has never been a socialist demand and is for many reasons neither practical nor even desirable. What is necessary is an income which will be the basis for a dignified human existence. As far as inequalities of income are concerned, it seems that they must not transcend the point where differences in income lead to differences in the experience

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 247, 248.

of life. The man with an income of millions, who can satisfy any whim without even thinking about it, experiences life in a different way from the man who to satisfy one costly wish has to sacrifice another. The man who can never travel beyond his town, who can never afford any luxury (that is to say, something that is not necessary), again has a different life experience from his neighbor who can do so. But even within certain differences of income the basic experience of life can remain the same, provided the income difference does not exceed a certain margin. What matters is not so much the greater or lesser income as such, but the point where quantitative differences of income are transformed into a qualitative difference of life experience.

Needless to say, the system of social security, as it exists now in Great Britain for instance, must be retained. But this is not enough. The existing social-security system must be extended to a *universal subsistence guarantee*.

Each individual can act as a free and responsible agent only if one of the main reasons for present-day un-freedom is abolished: the economic threat of starvation which forces people to accept working conditions which they would otherwise not accept. There will be no freedom as long as the owner of capital can enforce his will on the man who owns "only" his life, because the latter, being without capital, has no work except what the capitalist offers him.

A hundred years ago it was a widely accepted belief that no one had the responsibility for his neighbor. It was assumed—and scientifically "proved" by economists—that the laws of society made it necessary to have a vast army of poor and jobless people in order to keep the economy going. Today, hardly anybody would dare to voice this principle any longer. It is generally accepted that nobody should be excluded from the wealth of the

nation, either by the laws of nature, or by those of society. The rationalizations which were current a hundred years ago, that the poor owed their condition to their ignorance, lack of responsibility—briefly, to their “sins”—are outdated. In all Western industrialized countries a system of insurance has been introduced which guarantees everyone a minimum for subsistence in case of unemployment, sickness and old age. It is only one step further to postulate that, even if these conditions are not present, everyone has a right to receive the means to subsist. Practically speaking, that would mean that every citizen can claim a sum, enough for the minimum of subsistence even though he is not unemployed, sick, or aged. He can demand this sum if he has quit his job voluntarily, if he wants to prepare himself for another type of work, or for any personal reason which prevents him from earning money, without falling under one of the categories of the existing insurance benefits; shortly, he can claim this subsistence minimum without having to have any “reason.” It should be limited to a definite time period, let us say two years, so as to avoid the fostering of a neurotic attitude which refuses any kind of social obligation.

This may sound like a fantastic proposal,¹ but so would our insurance system have sounded to people a hundred years ago. The main objection to such a scheme would be that if each person were entitled to receive minimum support, people would not work. This assumption rests upon the fallacy of the inherent laziness in human nature; actually, aside from neurotically lazy people, there would be very few who would not want to earn more than the minimum, and who would prefer to do nothing rather than to work.

¹ Dr. Meyer Shapiro called my attention to the fact that Bertrand Russell made the same suggestion in *Proposed Roads to Freedom*, Blue Ribbon Books, New York, p. 86 ff.

that the majority was *right*; it meant that it is better for the majority to be wrong than for a minority to impose its will on the majority. But in our age of conformity the democratic method has more and more assumed the meaning that a majority decision is necessarily right, and morally superior to that of the minority, and hence has the moral right to impose *its* will on the minority. Just as a nationally advertised product claims, "Ten million Americans can't be wrong," so the majority decision is taken as an argument for its rightness. This is obviously an error; in fact, historically speaking, all "right" ideas in politics as well as in philosophy, religion or science, were originally the ideas of minorities. If one had decided the value of an idea on the basis of numbers, we would still be dwelling in caves.

As Schumpeter has pointed out, the voter simply expresses preferences between two candidates competing for his vote. He is confronted with various political machines, with a political bureaucracy which is torn between good will for the best for the country, and the professional interest of keeping in office, or getting back into it. This political bureaucracy, needing votes is, of course, forced to pay attention to the will of the voter to some extent. Any signs of great dissatisfaction force the political parties to change their course in order to obtain votes, and any sign of a very popular course of action will induce them to continue it. In this respect even the nondemocratic authoritarian regime is to some extent dependent on the popular will, except that by its coercive methods it can afford for a much longer time to pursue an unpopular course. But aside from the restricting or furthering influence which the electorate has on the decisions of the political bureaucracy, and which is more an indirect than a direct influence, there is little the individual citizen can do to participate in the decision making. Once he has cast his vote, he has abdicated his political will to his representative, who exer-

way could be channeled into the level of the central government and made effective in the field of decision making. There is no reason why forms for this process could not be found. In the parliamentary tradition we have usually two parliamentary houses, both participating in the decision making, but elected according to different principles. The decision of the face-to-face groups would constitute the true "House of Commons," which would share power with the house of universally elected representatives and a universally elected executive. In this way, decision making would constantly flow, not only from above to below, but from below to above, and it would be based on an active and responsible thinking of the individual citizen. Through the discussion and voting in small face-to-face groups, a good deal of the irrational and abstract character of decision making would disappear, and political problems would become in reality a concern for the citizen. The process of alienation in which the individual citizen surrenders his political will by the ritual of voting to powers beyond him would be reversed, and each individual would take back into himself his role as a participant in the life of the community.¹

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

No social or political arrangement can do more than further or hinder the realization of certain values and ideals. The ideals of the Judaeo-Christian tradition cannot possibly become realities in a materialistic civilization whose structure is centered around production, consumption and success on the market. On the other hand, no socialist society could fulfill the goal of brotherliness, justice and individualism unless its ideas are capable of filling the hearts of man with a new spirit.

We do not need new ideals or new spiritual goals. The great

¹ cf. to the problem of face-to-face groups, Robert A. Nisbet, *The Quest for Community*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1953.

teachers of the human race have postulated the norms for sane living. To be sure, they have spoken in different languages, have emphasized different aspects and have had different views on certain subjects. But, altogether, these differences were small; the fact that the great religions and ethical systems have so often fought against each other, and emphasized their mutual differences rather than their basic similarities, was due to the influence of those who built churches, hierarchies, political organizations upon the simple foundations of truth laid down by the men of the spirit. Since the human race made the decisive turn away from rootedness in nature and animal existence, to find a new home in conscience and brotherly solidarity, since it conceived first the idea of the unity of the human race and its destiny to become fully born—the ideas and ideals have been the same. In every center of culture, and largely without any mutual influence, the same insights were discovered, the same ideals were preached. We, today, who have easy access to all these ideas, who are still the immediate heirs to the great humanistic teachings, we are not in need of new knowledge of how to live sanely—but in bitter need of taking seriously what we believe, what we preach and teach. The revolution of our hearts does not require new wisdom—but new seriousness and dedication.

Education | The task of impressing on people the guiding ideals and norms of our civilization is, first of all, that of education. But how woefully inadequate is our educational system for this task. Its aim is primarily to give the individual the knowledge he needs in order to function in an industrialized civilization, and to form his character into the mold which is needed: ambitious and competitive, yet co-operative within certain limits; respectful of authority, yet "desirably independent," as some report cards have it; friendly, yet not deeply attached to anybody or anything. Our high schools and colleges continue with the task of provid-

ing their students with the knowledge they must have to fulfill their practical tasks in life, and with the character traits wanted on the personality market. Very little, indeed, do they succeed in imbuing them with the faculty of critical thought, or with character traits which correspond to the professed ideals of our civilization. Surely there is no need to elaborate on this point, and to repeat a criticism which has been made so competently by Robert Hutchins and others. There is only one point which I want to emphasize here: the necessity of doing away with the harmful separation between theoretical and practical knowledge. This very separation is part of the alienation of work and thought. It tends to separate theory from practice, and to make it more difficult, rather than easier, for the individual to participate meaningfully in the work he is doing. If work is to become an activity based on his knowledge and on the understanding of what he is doing, then indeed there must be a drastic change in our method of education, in the sense that from the very beginning theoretical instruction and practical work are combined; for the young people, practical work should be secondary to theoretical instruction; for the people beyond school age, it should be the reverse; but at no age of development would the two spheres be separated from each other. No youngster should graduate from school unless he had learned some kind of handicraft in a satisfactory and meaningful manner; no primary education would be considered finished before the student has a grasp of the fundamental technical processes of our industry. Certainly high school ought to combine practical work of a handicraft and of modern industrial technique with theoretical instruction.

The fact that we aim primarily at the usefulness of our citizens for the purposes of the social machine, and not at their human development is apparent in the fact that we consider education necessary only up to the age of fourteen, eighteen, or at most,

"Collective art," is shared; it permits man to feel one with others in a meaningful, rich, productive way. It is not an individual "leisure time" occupation, *added* to life, it is an integral part of life. It corresponds to a basic human need, and if this need is not fulfilled, man remains as insecure and anxious as if the need for a meaningful thought picture of the world were unrealized. In order to grow out of the receptive into the productive orientation, he must relate himself to the world artistically and not only philosophically or scientifically. If a culture does not offer such a realization, the average person does not develop beyond his receptive or marketing orientation.

Where are *we*? Religious rituals have little importance any more, except for the Catholics. Secular rituals hardly exist. Aside from the attempts to imitate rituals in lodges, fraternities, etc., we have a few patriotic and sport rituals, appealing only to a most limited extent to the needs of the total personality. We are a culture of consumers. We "drink in" the movies, the crime reports, the liquor, the fun. There is no active productive participation, no common unifying experience, no meaningful acting out of significant answers to life. What do we expect from our young generation? What are they to do when they have no opportunity for meaningful, shared artistic activities? What else are they to do but to escape into drinking, movie-daydreaming, crime, neurosis and insanity? What help is it to have almost no illiteracy, and the most widespread higher education which has existed at any time—if we have no collective expression of our total personalities, no common art and ritual? Undoubtedly a relatively primitive village in which there are still real feasts, common artistic shared expressions, and no literacy at all—is more advanced culturally and more healthy mentally than our educated, newspaper-reading, radio-listening culture.

No sane society can be built upon the mixture of purely intel-

lectual knowledge and almost complete absence of shared artistic experience, college plus football, crime stories plus Fourth of July celebrations, with Mothers' and Fathers' day and Christmas thrown in for good measure. In considering how we can build a sane society, we must recognize that the need for the creation of collective art and ritual on a nonclerical basis is at least as important as literacy and higher education. The transformation of an atomistic into a communitarian society depends on creating again the opportunity for people to sing together, walk together, dance together, admire together—together, and not, to use Riesman's succinct expression, as a member of a "lonely crowd."

A number of attempts have been made to revive collective art and ritual. The "Religion of Reason" with its new feast days and rituals, was the form created by the French Revolution. National feelings created some new rituals, but they never gained the importance which the lost religious ritual once had. Socialism created its ritual in the First of May celebration, in the use of the fraternal "comrade," etcetera, but the significance was never greater than that of the patriotic ritual. Perhaps the most original and profound expression of collective art and ritual was to be found in the German Youth movement, which flourished in the years before and after the first World War. But this movement remained rather esoteric and was drowned in the rising flood of Nationalism and Racism.

On the whole, our modern ritual is impoverished and does not fulfill man's need for collective art and ritual, even in the remotest sense, either as to quality or its quantitative significance in life.

What are we to do? Can we invent rituals? Can one artificially create collective art? Of course not! But once one recognizes the need for them, once one begins to cultivate them, seeds will grow,

cannot separate the change in our industrial and political organization from that of the structure of our educational and cultural life. No serious attempt for change and reconstruction will succeed if it is not undertaken in all those spheres simultaneously.

Can one speak of a spiritual transformation of society without mentioning *religion*? Undoubtedly, the teachings of the great monotheistic religions stress the humanistic aims which are the same as those which underlie the "productive orientation." The aims of Christianity and Judaism are those of the dignity of man as an aim and an end in himself, of brotherly love, of reason and of the supremacy of spiritual over material values. These ethical aims are related to certain concepts of God in which the believers of the various religions differ among themselves, and which are unacceptable to millions of others. However, it was an error of the nonbelievers to focus on attacking the idea of God; their real aim ought to be to challenge religionists to take their religion, and especially the concept of God, seriously; that would mean to practice the spirit of brotherly love, truth and justice, hence to become the most radical critics of present-day society.

On the other hand, even from a strictly monotheistic standpoint, discussions about God mean to use God's name in vain. But while we cannot say what God *is*, we can state what God is *not*. Is it not time to cease to argue about God, and instead to unite in the unmasking of contemporary forms of idolatry? Today it is not Baal and Astarte but the deification of the state and of power in authoritarian countries and the deification of the machine and of success in our own culture; it is the all-pervading alienation which threatens the spiritual qualities of man. Whether we are religionists or not, whether we believe in the necessity for a new religion or in the continuation of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, inasmuch as we are concerned with the essence and not with the shell, with the experience and not with the word, with man and