CULTURE FOR THE MILLIONS?

MASS MEDIA IN MODERN SOCIETY

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With an Introduction by

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A General Theory of Mass Culture

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: I feel that there is a danger in this discussion of mass culture: the danger of excessive Platonization; that is, taking mass culture as one distinct entity and elite culture as another, each with essences of its own and the product of each having no relation to the product of the other.

Miss Arendt in her brilliant but somewhat artificial analysis suggested that society "produced" culture and mass society "consumed" entertainment. I think that these are useful distinctions if we consider them as representing certain extremes; but if we consider them as corresponding to qualitative distinctions in reality, the consequences are misleading.

I should propose that what is involved is more of a continuum than a deep and essential difference. If this is so, the distinction between mass culture and elite culture is not so absolute as some of the critics and the commentators would suppose. This would imply that the problem of mass culture itself is neither clearcut nor hopeless but rather ambiguous. It is clearly not one of inexorable, unilineal decay, as Mr. Van den Haag seemed to believe. In fact, I felt that Mr. Van den Haag's paper was largely a comparison of the cultural experience of past minorities with the cultural experience of present majorities. In pre-mass societies what cultural experience the few had was purchased at the price of considerable squalor and deprivation for the rest. We are past that stage in history and we have to come to terms with the consequences of social democracy.

Many people in this society cannot bear high level aesthetic experience. But this is not the result of mass culture. It is the consequence of the distribution of vitality and sensitivity in society.

The problem is an indeterminate one. Its very ambiguity means that we can do much more about it than we sometimes suppose. People who criticize the passivity produced by mass culture are often

passive in accepting what they regard as a predestined consequence. There are opportunities for leadership and influence in the future of the mass media. There can be administrative intervention to improve standards in the field of public policy through tax power and through F.C.C. licenses. The field of cultural policy has been inadequately considered. As we move into a phase of more affirmative government in the 1960's, I believe this area will require careful thought and will show great possibilities.

One of the indispensable conditions for any advance is criticism, some of which is exaggerated but which still undercuts any tendency toward complacency among those who manage the mass media and those who write for it. They have, many of them, reachable consciences. I think their consciences should be assailed by a constant attack and I condemn the tendency on the part of the mass media executives to react to this criticism with hurt self-defense. The critics of mass media often seem intoxicated by their own rhetoric and sometimes seem misled by a nostalgia for a society which never existed; however, their potential contribution to averting and saving modern society from the fate they seem to fear is great, and I am all for it.

Patrick Hazard: I come not to bury mass culture but to praise it with criticism motivated by love—not rancor or the sullen almost surly stance characteristic of the humanist attitude toward the mass media. Shils has said that mass society is characterized by people making many new kinds of choices; that this has set loose the cognitive, appreciative, and moral potential of the population. He feels that curiosity, sensibility, and privacy are present in mass society and reminds us of the great differences in the cognitive, appreciative, and moral capacities within this society.

The function of the intellectual, I suggest, is not one that he chooses but rather is one that society provides for him: in briefest terms, to clarify the many ambiguities that beset people who have not made these choices before, to help them develop their cognitive, appreciative, and moral potentials.

It seems to me that this whole discussion centers around the term "excellence." When I try to come to any meaningful understanding of this word, I look for instances characteristic of the new kind of society. One of our problems is that we have some free-floating ideal of excellence, the antithesis of which is an equally free-floating conformity. If we are to make any progress at all, we must be more precise in what we mean by these two words.

There is a continuum of excellence available in mass society; one man's excellence is another's mediocrity. The converse is also true. What we want is to get as many people as possible developing their own capacities along that continuum of excellence.

Furthermore excellence exists in a social context. It seems to me that the anti-business bias of most humanists makes it impossible for them to see what excellence exists in a mass society.

We ought to agree that the creation of material abundance is not a minor feat in human history. The problem in America is that there is a serious imbalance between our material productivity and our cultural productivity.

Much of the criticism of mass society reads like a coroner's report. The humanist has been imprudent in the way he has invested his critical energies; humanist criticism is shamefully over-invested in literature. What most humanist critics mean when they contend that mass culture and excellence are incompatible is that the aesthetic forms that flourished in, say, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe do not flourish in twentieth century America. It is, of course, perfectly legitimate for serious artists in literature, painting, and music to be concerned with the effects of social change on their genres. But it is an insufficiently acknowledged virtue of our mass society that it is more permissive to a wider range of aesthetic forms than any other culture in history. Never have the elite arts had, in both relative and absolute numbers, larger and more sophisticated audiences; and it is my impression that the opportunities for both creation and appreciation are rapidly increasing.

I suggest that we start reinvesting our critical energies in the new art forms characteristic of mass society. To do this we have to examine the art forms that have come out of mass production and mass communication.

Let me take mass production, to begin with. I have rarely heard critics talking about Charles Eames, George Nelson, or Frieda Diamond. Yet Charles Eames is perhaps the most impressive of our industrial designers. His plastic innovations encompass forms as diverse as colorful building cards for children, chairs and a brilliant color movie popularizing information theory.

George Nelson is another important designer with an articulate rationale. The Information Center at Colonial Williamsburg is an excellent example of how a first-rate designer like Nelson not only humanizes the artifacts and milieu of an industrial society but also makes the past meaningful and accessible.

One reservation about the work of our important industrial designers is that it is so expensive. In recent years, however, this objection has become less significant as designers like Frieda Diamond have aimed for the five-and-dime market and have executed pieces of high quality and low cost for such firms as Libbey Glass. Paul McCobb's furniture has also appeared in reasonably inexpensive lines. Alcoa's Forecast collection—plastic speculations about everyday shapes of the future done by the best designers—promises the convergence of good design with a mass market. The increasing visibility of these patterns of excellence is an earnest of a progressively more attractive physical environment. It is hard to imagine that a generation of school children reared on Eames classroom furniture will be complacent about the over-stuffy designs of the neighborhood furniture store.

Moving from design to mass architecture, Carl Koch in his Techbuilt Homes has successfully used prefabrication and the modular principle to make good architecture available to low income people. He is an unsung hero of mass society. Another is Charles Goodman, who for some years has been designing fine homes for National Homes, Inc., of Lafayette, Indiana, the largest manufacturer of prefabs in this country. Their lowest price house is a striking structure within the reach of the least paid factory worker.

Urban planning is still another area in which mass production has its impact on the new society. I find very few people talking about Victor Gruen's planned shopping centers in Detroit, Saarinen's General Motors Tech Center, and the revival of downtown in cities like New Haven, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. At Northland and Eastland in Detroit, for example, thanks to Gruen, shoppers not only have a pleasant time about their business; but the green vistas with contemplative sculpture for adults and play sculpture for children present a strong argument for the indispensability of amenities. The General Motors Tech Center north of Detroit is a vision of what industrial America can be like to live and work in.

It is true that there are very few instances of this excellence, but why should the intellectual feel that its extension ought to be easy? I should think he would address himself to the arduous discipline of extending the beachheads of maturity rather than engage in cerebral whimpering about the lack of excellence.

It is a polite cliché in our circles to talk about advertising as intrinsically debasing to man. Yet recently at the New York Art Directors' Club I saw forty-five minutes of television commercials

that were extraordinary in their almost minor lyric art. Anchor Books were only a Jason Epstein away less than a decade ago. When the book clubs started in the 1920's, horrified shouts of conformity echoed through every bookshop in the land, but by now the intellectual has made his peace with this method of distribution in the Mid-Century Book Society. The Teenage Book Club of *Scholastic Magazine* sold over ten million paperback books in one academic year.

The essentially snobbish attitude that humanists have had toward the mass education system in America has contributed materially to its present crisis. Our educational system is part of our multipurpose mass communication system. It is long overdue for a series of imaginative innovations in instruction, such as the closed circuit TV system financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education in Hagerstown, Maryland; or the fleet of 16 station wagons taking science teachers to small high schools in the Northwest financed by the National Science Foundation and operated by the University of Oregon. Who would have believed five years ago that Michigan State University, a school built around trips to the Rose Bowl, would found an elite campus at Oakland, Michigan to reassert the primacy of the academic?

Can one find a *via media* between the Pollyannas and Cassandras of mass culture? I should like to see some hard-headed idealism among my humanist colleagues where they use as much imagination trying to develop a new kind of society as they expend extolling what they think is a past one. The trouble with the coroners of mass culture is that they find a morbid fascination writing obituaries on a society just doffing its swaddling clothes. There may not be a satisfying surplus of excellence in contemporary America, but there is just enough around to confute those who don't care enough to look for it, or who wouldn't recognize the excellences of this new kind of society if they saw them. The only significant agenda for the humanities in a mass society is to husband the few archetypes already achieved and settle down to the workaday regimen of seeing that these first faltering steps don't go unnoticed and unimitated. In other words, instead of a doctrinaire Utopianism, I think we ought to have some kind of meliorism about mass society where we try to look for its characteristic excellence and do what we can to encourage its growth.

Sidney Hook: I am concerned with the integrity of culture as a

professional educator and as a person interested in values. I don't like the word "elite," but I think I am committed to what Professor Hazard calls the pursuit of excellence. I don't like the way he generalizes about this excellence, as if one man's excellence is another man's mediocrity. I believe one must take a position which would make it impossible to say that excellence is simply a matter of taste in any field of art or science.

However, I should like to ask: What is the empirical evidence that the diversification of approaches to culture and the existence of plural aspects of culture—and I think that Shils was defending a pluralistic approach to culture—lead to a debasement of what has been called refined or superior culture?

I confess that as a democrat I have no desire to impose my judgments of values and my taste upon other people in the community, and I certainly would resent it if they tried to impose their tastes and value judgments upon me. I am interested in the cultural autonomy which is involved in the pursuit of the best of the past and the present. But no evidence has been presented to show that the best has been degraded because of the existence of mass media in mass society; or that to the extent that we are not satisfied with authentic culture, we cannot improve it even using the instruments of modern technological society.

Dr. van den Haag said that the tales of Grimm are much superior in book form to the versions you hear or see on television. I grant this. But if you are interested in Grimm and can develop a taste for him, how is it affected by what goes on television? Suppose you don't like the television rendition of Shakespeare. If you appreciate and love Shakespeare, how does a poor television presentation affect your appreciation? After all, a good deal of popular science is just superstition. But would anyone say that the dissemination of popular science today has undermined work in pure science? The same thing holds true for the exploitation by writers of popular music of classical melodies. Would this undermine a serious interest in music? The assumption here is that the fact people can consume culture in ways which we disapprove will in the end undermine our own attachment and our own integrity to the higher standards of culture. I challenge those who maintain this to present their evidence. And I would conclude by asking what are the facts to indicate that our position as intellectuals is being threatened or undermined except by the temptation to leave the heights of scholarship or the frontiers of inquiry for the fleshpots? That is a moral question to be addressed

to individuals. It hardly seems to me to constitute a general indictment of the nature of culture.

Nathan Glazer: In speaking of the consumption of culture, everyone normally makes a triadic distinction: highbrow, lowbrow, and middlebrow. I think it might be helpful if we were to break up this triad into two variables which involve the quality of the product and the quality of the response to the product.

If you make this distinction, you find you can have high quality with a high or serious response but you can also have low quality with a low or shallow response. And obviously, to complete the possibilities, you can have low art with a high response and high art with a low response.

A person may go to see *The Sound and the Fury,* which was a horrible movie. He may be brought by it to think of serious problems of humanity. This is not an outrageous possibility. People can discuss a mean and cheap art product and come out with a high response. Thus it is useful to keep these two variables in mind when we discuss consumption of culture.

Oscar Handlin: I submit it is important to consider culture apart from the specific mass setting in which we usually think of it or the snob setting in which others have thought of it. I suggest that the use of culture has always been an incidental quality to some other function. That is, when cathedrals were built, people were not building architecture, they were building churches. The architecture was an incidental and almost unpredictable quality that was attached to a function and, to a considerable degree, independent of it.

It is at this point that I found Miss Arendt's statements most suggestive, for she pointed out that in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, and I would say in the last quarter of the 19th century in the United States, culture acquired another very important kind of utility: it became a means of identification with society in a special respect.

But even during this period, outside the realm of official culture, there existed another kind of culture in perhaps the more primitive and more original sense. The peasants, the working classes of Europe, had another kind of culture which was not that of the upper bourgeoisie, but which it seems to me showed a greater degree of continuity with the past culture than did the official culture and official society.

The characteristics of this culture were, first, the lack of a set of canons or classics by which it was measured and, second, a close functional relation to the felt needs and the immediate modes of expression of the people who exhibited it.

The question I find interesting is: What is the difference between the mass culture of our society and the type of culture that existed before the appearance of society in its formal sense; or the difference between what we call mass culture today and the popular culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries? I would like to suggest that the difference arises from the dilution of the functional qualities of what we call mass culture; of its ability to serve useful purposes; and of the rapport between the creators of this form of culture and its consumers.

Consider, for example, the extent to which the television playlet or variety performance is different from the performance on the vaudeville stage, which is its lineal antecedent, and yet which is totally removed in quality and relation from the audience from which it descended.

So it seems to me that when we deal with mass culture, the problem is not simply its separateness from other types of culture which may co-exist or not, but whether it is serving a function in the life of those who consume it. Do the people who seek entertainment in the movies or on television actually find it; or are they by the nature of the media so deprived of control over what they find that they must accept it without even being conscious of their dissatisfaction? They may or may not want fins on their cars, but the consumers are themselves often confused and unable to tell what they wish.

From the broadly social point of view, what may be harmful in the present situation is the compulsion under which many people labor of accepting what is not really satisfying and what does not really serve a function in their lives because the range of choices has narrowed and they lack the ability to control the choices available to them.

Bernard Rosenberg: I should like to direct your attention to the political implications of what has been said. The view is—I suppose it starts with de Tocqueville—that somehow mass culture is a consequence of democracy, the price that we must pay for democracy and the price worth paying. This is the major theme suggested by Shils; that we have in modern society some kind of consensual society. I don't know what this can mean; from a political standpoint, it seems to me that primitive society had more consensus,

and in that sense perhaps, there was greater democracy among the North American Indian tribes.

It is no longer necessary to develop literacy in order to propagandize and manipulate mass audiences. There have been radios blasting away for a long time in every public square of the Soviet Union, as there are now in the Middle East. We know of Hitler's indebtedness to Madison Avenue for the application of advertising techniques to politics. We are not altogether unfamiliar with this in the United States. But this does not seem to be an enhancement of democracy.

Somehow there seems to be an implication that you are undemocratic if you criticize mass culture; and that you can do so only from the elitist point of view of someone concerned with restoring the aristocratic past. I am concerned that we may establish totalitarianism in the United States without concentration camps through the use of the mass media, which are perfectly neutral in themselves.

When the printing press was first invented it was a liberating force. One can link such historical phenomena as the Reformation and the French and American Revolutions to the uses to which printed matter of all sorts was put. But it should not bewilder us that something used to liberate man has also been used to enslave him. Hasn't this happened before in history? You start with nationalism, which has been a liberating force and then reverses itself. You have the liberating effect of Christianity and then its evolution during the Middle Ages. I have in mind Francis of Assisi, committed to poverty and humility and buried in a marble grave at the expense of a powerful and rich Order bearing his name.

Hook: Are you trying to say anything more than that the mass media may be abused?

Rosenberg: Have been and are being abused.

Hook: Everything can be abused. That is a commonplace. The question is whether you find an inherent tendency here. If you lose political democracy, then literacy becomes a weapon of conformity. The emphasis must therefore lie on democracy. I think the point we are trying to discuss here is whether there are inherent tendencies toward vulgarity in mass culture; and whether literacy must necessarily be used as an agent of conformity.

Hannah Arendt: I stated in my paper that culture is a phenome-

non of the world and that entertainment is a phenomenon of life. Culture in its wordly existence is endangered through the human life process and its consumption needs. This danger is not new; it probably exists in all societies. The question is only whether or not it becomes more acute in a mass society.

My point of departure was not man and his "need" for culture, but the cultural objects themselves. Among them, we distinguish use objects and art objects, and the distinction between them is that only the former are meant to meet the immediate needs of human life. Art objects, on the contrary, must be removed from all use if they are to be what they are meant to be. For this reason, we put them into museums or churches or temples; that is, we create a special worldly space where these things are removed and protected from human needs and the functions of human life.

My objection concerns the indiscriminate functionalization of both types of objects. Obviously, use objects were made to be used, to fulfill certain functions, although, by virtue of having forms and shapes, they transcend their use and function. Art objects, however, lose their meaning entirely through this kind of functionalization; they have no function and to think of them in functional terms contradicts their very essence.

I happen to believe that our century is a century of great art. Our political and social troubles are great enough, so great indeed that we do not know whether mankind will survive. No one doubts that this century, however it may end, is outstandingly great in scientific achievement; the same may well be true for achievement in the arts. Yet while scientific progress has long since ceased to be an unmixed blessing, the great art of the twentieth century has been the only oasis in the desert of modern life. Modern sociology and psychology are born from the troubles of life in our century and whenever their conceptual tools are permitted to invade the domain of art, I have the feeling that we carry the sand of the desert into the only oases left to us.

One last word on my use of the word "contemplation." I chose it in order to indicate an attitude of letting things be, of letting them alone, of not using them for one's own purposes, not even for the purpose of self-education or self-perfection.

Ernest van den Haag: I do not think the developments I have described are inevitable. I just haven't found any way to avoid them. I do not think that mass culture involves a decay.

I think mass culture is what it is, as I have tried to describe it, not anything decaying or degenerating.

For a historian it seems to me that Professor Schlesinger was peculiarly unhistorical in refusing to recognize that there is something new in mass culture. Of course there are always continuities, but the important thing is to call attention to what is new.

I have never said that mass culture is necessarily bad. All I am saying is that it is not individual and cannot be. Therefore, the excellence of industrial design, referred to by Professor Hazard, which may indeed be greater than the excellence achieved by an individual artist, is irrelevant.

I think that viewing Grimm's fairy tales on television may not interfere with those who read them separately—though I'm not sure—but it will deter many from reading them. And in these matters half a loaf spoils the appetite.

I do not agree with Mr. Rosenberg. First of all, Hitler did not learn anything from Madison Avenue but rather from Soviet Russia. Secondly, it is very clear that the mass media have fairly little *political* influence, if you recall that Roosevelt and Truman were elected, even though the mass media were strongly opposed to their election. I do not believe that political considerations are important in this context.

The Mass Media

Bernard Berelson: Do we want to understand the phenomenon of mass culture; do we want to evaluate it; or do we want to try to change it? The latter objective brings into play a number of problems involving institutional arrangements that may not be directly involved if we simply limit ourselves to trying to understand mass culture.

There ought to be more empirical studies of the effects of the mass media. There are a large number of facts available and an even larger number of alleged facts about the "consumption" by a variety of people of the range of materials in mass media.

It is a fact that people generally like what they get in the mass media. This is something we cannot ignore if we want to understand and evaluate the mass media, and particularly if we want to change them.

I should take it as a value that people ought to be free to read and listen to what they want to read and listen to, provided—and this is a big proviso—provided that they have relatively equivalent access to a wide range of communication materials. There are some very difficult problems involved in that proviso.

Although people generally like what they see, the question remains whether they will not like something else better if they are exposed to it. But this raises the question—who decides what is better?

I think if I had to say what the one central value of a communication system is or ought to be, and the one on which we might get agreement, it is that we ought to maximize the range of material available to the different social groups and personality types in the culture. To be sure, the institutional arrangements by which one maximizes the range of materials is not an easy problem to solve.

Irving Kristol: Mr. Rosten said that the mass media do not sufficiently inform their readers about current events and international affairs. He has a rejoinder which in my opinion is invalid, although I think the accusation itself is misleading.

His rejoinder is: "Look at the articles we have published by Adlai Stevenson and Arthur Schlesinger, Hannah Arendt, Randall Jarrell and so forth." But this is beside the point. The problem of quality in political journalism is not at all a matter of particulars but one of principle. What is wrong with the mass media in political affairs is that their manner of presentation is based on a false premise; namely, that these things are simple. The mass media can't operate without that premise; and yet that premise is false. All political developments are extremely complicated, far more complicated than even the New York *Times* would lead one to believe.

All I think one can ask is that the articles be presented with a restraint, a decorum, a sobriety that would prepare the reader to function as a citizen in a free society.

Remarkably few words have been said about our educational system. We are not educating people to appreciate our high humanist, literary culture in this country. In order to appreciate this culture, you have to have certain years of training. We don't give our children these years of training.

Our educational system is the way it is because a group of people decided that it should be that way. Everyone talks about the intractability of our educational problems, but we forget that we have the blessed right not to avail ourselves of public education. When we talk about the elite culture in England, we should remember that this is not based upon public education but upon private education.

If intellectuals feel strongly enough that they want their children to grow up to read *Partisan Review*, Plato, and Proust, all they have to do is establish the right kind of schools.

The problem of law has thus far not been raised. I am glad Arthur Schlesinger mentioned the F.C.C. because those initials are not to be found in any of the papers. So many of the abominations of mass culture are really trivial matters which could be overcome by the slightest political effort.

For instance, I think that advertising on children's programs is an absolute abomination. I can't understand how it came into existence, and I can't understand why it should be allowed to continue. The F.C.C. has the authority to stop it. All you have to do is get a lot of

people to kick up a row and they *will* stop it. This is just a matter of lax administration which is quite within our power to cure.

The last problem I wish to mention is a much more difficult one; it touches upon the question of generations. I think we should make a distinction, when we talk about the mass media, in terms of the generations to which they are directed. On the whole, there is nothing objectionable, in my opinion, in the mass media that are directed to older people. The media are anodyne, trivial, sentimental. They entertain, and that's what the older people want. I think we tend to forget the centuries of endless boredom that stretched behind us. It was not despair, not rebellion, it was just sheer boredom. Millions of people were bored, bored, bored; they took to drink, crime, brigandage; they took to anything they could to dispel boredom. I think TV has made a magnificent achievement here. Where television and the mass media are corrupting is in dealing with youth, the teenagers. The most obnoxious aspects of all of these mass media are those that disorient youth, those that destroy their values and prevent them from achieving anything themselves. This is part of what seems to me at the moment to be a worldwide phenomenon—what Hannah Arendt has called a breakdown of authority—in which youths tend to secede from society and establish a community of their own. How to reach them, I don't know.

Robert Saudek: The intellectual, it seems to me, is in the wholesale trade; the mass media are in the retail trade. If we accept this assignment of roles, the question becomes whether the mass media can intelligently and accurately translate, interpret, or adapt the culture of the intellectuals for the non-intellectuals on a scale that makes this a significant effort.

The mass media go directly to the mass; they speak or should speak its language. They need be no less intelligent in what they choose to say and may even be more intelligible.

The mass media dare not create a cult or a secret society. The vocabulary of the mass media is more difficult to use because it must not depend on the shorthand of the specialist. The mass media must know words so well that cultural expression may be no poorer and may be even richer for the exquisite care taken in translation.

Generally, we who are professionally involved in mass culture are interpreters; and to interpret, one must know two languages, not just one. We must understand ideas first, and we must be able to state them clearly and with an accuracy no less exact than that of their originators; yet in words that will hopefully have a temperature capable of inflaming the minds of otherwise very cool and indifferent people.

I read with some anticipation and anxiety the lists of television programs that Dr. Stanton and Mr. Rosten gave in their papers, and I found none which I felt was a true relative of mine. I therefore feel I have to list a handful of programs which indicate what the mass media can present to very large audiences on a non-profit and profit basis and over a period of a good many years:

Orestes, Ustinov's *The Empty Chair*, Bernstein on Bach; programs on Gershwin and Shostakovitch; *Oedipus Rex*, the *Antigone*, Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, studies of the Renaissance, of the American Constitution, of Isaac Newton.

And to name some contributors, let me mention: James Agee, Allan Nevins, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard Hofstadter, W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, Shaw, Beethoven, Wagner, and Mozart.

Mr. Rosten has decried the influence television advertisers have in deciding who and what shall appear or not appear in the programs they sponsor. This insidious and pernicious influence exists in television, as I am sure it exists in magazines and newspapers. The scale on which it exists is the important thing today. The degree to which it may be controlled is the important issue for tomorrow.

Mr. Rosten has pointed to the failure of magazines of superior intellectual content. A circulation rise from fifty to one hundred thousand readers would turn them from failures to successes. I should estimate that none of the programs listed above reached less than ten million people. The average number, I should guess, was in the neighborhood of twenty million.

It is not economical to put on television something that will only reach fifty thousand or fewer people, or even a million people. It is as though you hired a passenger car train to carry a family from coast to coast. There are other ways to communicate with this relatively small number of people by television.

Sidney Hook: I confess that I find myself in substantial agreement with Mr. Rosten's point of view, although I find it difficult to square my agreement with my revulsion against so much trash on radio and television.

Why can't there be an American equivalent of the Third Program? The comparison of television and radio to libraries is completely invalid. The air doesn't belong to any particular group; it belongs

to me as much as anyone else. There is only a limited number of outlets. Why can't one be made available to people like me?

I am not afraid of government regulation. You cannot rely on private enterprise to provide a Third Program which is not a profitable venture.

Alan Willard Brown: We have forty-three stations operating across the country in META [Metropolitan Educational Television Association]. We don't have any in New York.

Hook: I should like to see that on televison.

Brown: It is on televison, forty-three stations, entirely non-commercial.

Hook: An editor of a widely circulated magazine once said to me in reply to a question about the contents of his publication, "Well, we want to publish something which all our readers can understand."

Is it an assumption made by those working in the mass media that all readers or members of the audience should be able to find the article or program within the limits of their comprehension? Is it impossible for an editor to publish something which only five per cent of his readers could understand? I think that if one did not try to publish things to appeal to everybody in every item, there would be less danger of finding the least common denominator. In other words, why cannot content be diversified?

If it is granted—I am not sure that everyone will grant it—that we are living in a century of great art, great science, great literature, and possibly great philosophy, then popular culture has had little corrupting effect. I should feel very much relieved if this were true. All other questions become academic or merely technical.

Gilbert Seldes: Mr. Rosten said that intellectuals project their own tastes and yearnings on the masses who do not share them.

I should say that the real charge against the mass media is not that they fail to interest the masses in what interests the intellectuals. The real charge is that they satisfy a small percentage, a vital but small percentage, of the interests of their huge audience. It is not that everyone is to be made appreciative of the finer things, but that the media actually stifle sixty per cent of the audience's interests,

or perhaps eighty per cent, by over-feeding the remaining twenty per cent. I should defend the eggheads from the accusation that they are trying to impose their standards on the public. I am only saying the public has many more interests than are served by the mass media.

Ernest Van den Haag: I do not share Hook's private faith in public ownership. In a mass society such as ours I do not think public ownership would improve things very much. It would make them a little duller but it would not make them better. The English do not have the same kind of mass culture society as we do. The contents of their Third Programs are dictated by an educational elite who do not care very much for popularity. A taxpayer in our democracy would say "I want to see what I want to see," how are you going to prevent him? If the Metropolitan Opera House were owned by the government, we would have more musical comedy and less opera. Now that it is being subsidized by small contributions, its standards may be declining already.

Alan Willard Brown: We should remember that the BBC Third Program, which is a radio program, appeals to a very limited percentage of the British population. Interestingly enough, the single Third Program which had the largest tested audience on radio was a full length production of *Hamlet:* this was an audience of around four hundred thousand people out of a population of sixty million. Even in the case of a program service as excellent as that of the Third Program, the material appeals to a limited proportion of the population.

The forty-three educational television stations, although they reach a potential viewing audience of somewhere between fifty to sixty million people, are not a network, and not one of them reaches more than a very small proportion of the viewers in a given area.

There are seventeen million potential viewers in the New York area. Of these, the largest number that has ever viewed an educational program either on META [Metropolitan Educational Television Association] or on Sunrise Semester or Continental Classroom, or any of the other educational programs specifically prepared for educational and cultural viewing, is somewhere around one hundred and forty thousand.

I do not consider this a cultural disaster. If we put on a Russian language course that meets twice a week in the afternoon; and ten

thousand copies of the book used in the course are sold in one New York book store, this in itself justifies the use of television for teaching languages. I think we tend to ignore or fail to realize that there is a difference between the aims of television as a mass medium and as an instrument for the dissemination of culture and education. We in educational television believe we can serve and should serve a wide variety of audiences, and the audience for one program is almost by definition not the same as the audience for another.

Gerald Holton: When the archeologists of the year 5000 A.D. dig down to our stratum, I think they will very quickly dig past our bones and perhaps even past our libraries to that which makes us typical as a mass culture: our cyclotrons, superhighways, hospitals, and supermarkets. So the positive aspect of scientific and technological vitality needs to be put in the foreground of our discussion if we speak of mass culture.

A recent study of the relation of the mass media to science severely criticized the media with respect to the way in which they handle scientific news. Scientific output is fantastic: there are over ten thousand articles a week published the world over; there are also books and government reports. The supply is large and the demand is large, but the available material in the mass media is minuscule. By charitably lumping health, safety, technology, and science together, one finds that the total maximum devoted to science in the mass media is five per cent.

Some of the efforts of the large networks to put science across on a mass media basis are deplorable. It has been asked: What can popular science do to demean science itself? One of the things that popular science does is to change the public image of what science is, and this has an immediate and very striking effect upon what scientists themselves can do.

There is nothing more important about any field, as you well know, than what the public image is, particularly when you have to recruit from the public for support and students. The substitution of packaged ideas of science for valid ideas can have a severe effect. When mass science becomes the image; when the mass medium approach to a very large audience becomes the criterion of success, the effect on the scientific investigator may be destructive.

Melvin Tumin: Much of our discussion concerning different levels of taste and appreciation seems to depend on the assumption

you make regarding how many more people could experience high culture than are now experiencing it. If I understood Messrs. Shils and Schlesinger correctly, they asserted that by natural endowment, probably the large majority of people could never experience deep aesthetic sensations.

I should like to ask them whether this is a correct version of their view; and if correct, what is the evidence?

Edward Shils: So far as the evidence is concerned, the general distribution of talents in a normal population follows a normal distribution. There is no point where a line separates, let us say, deep from superficial or great from mediocre. There is a gradual shading off.

The number of people who can appreciate high culture or be artistically creative is probably greater in proportion to the population than it has ever been before. The number is large but it is not infinitely extensible, and it can never become as large as the total population.

Arthur Schlesinger: I don't think we want to inject a Calvinist predestination here. There are only a few who are capable of intense aesthetic experience. But the distribution of talents and the distribution of occupations in society are such that there has never been more than a minority who have had this particular quality.

A society requires a system of priorities, so far as most members of the society are concerned. It is a rare person who has the vitality to meet the administrative imperatives of society and at the same time have deep aesthetic experiences. That is why I add vitality to talents.

Irving Kristol: Someone has said that England could have a Third Program because it is not yet a mass society, and Dr. Brown has pointed out that only a very tiny audience listens to it anyway. But no one has said how utterly dreary the Third Program is. It has excellent music—but you can hear this on most of the FM stations in the country.

I'd like to suggest a problem inherent in the technical consequences of these media. It seems to me possible to read Wittgenstein or to attend a lecture on Wittgenstein; but it is virtually impossible to listen to three people talking about Wittgenstein on the radio.

The intellectuals were all for the Third Program. They made a lot of money from it but most of them did not listen to it. The people who

listened were the oddballs of English society—the half educated and the would-be educated.

But the problem I want to raise is whether the mass media can be easily used for high culture, particularly for high culture which has a literary bent in a literary tradition.

Bernard Rosenberg: The mass media are swarming with intellectuals. All you have to do is look around at the entirely new occupations which have been created just to accommodate them—not only writers and musicians, but motivation researchers, people who pre-test, copy test, and do product testing. In view of this, it is a little startling to have many here argue that there is some sort of deep opposition between people we have called intellectuals and the mass media.

William Fitelson: If an intellectual wants to write a book, he writes it on paper. He gets into trouble when he works in the mass media, particularly television, because that is a collaborative medium of art. It does not depend solely on him. It depends on actors, technicians, and a director.

Faulkner finished *The Sound and the Fury* when he wrote the novel. He was not responsible for what Hollywood did with it; in fact, he wasn't very happy with the movie. But the original work remains undestroyed, and there is evidence to show that more people bought more copies of the novel after seeing the bad motion picture.

It seems to me intellectuals are unwilling to participate in the television and movie media. The intellectual is welcome there.

There is another danger which has not yet been mentioned. Our population is increasing rapidly. The number of owners of the most important mass media, and the number of, say, newspapers is decreasing. It is doubtful that there will ever be more than three major networks. There should be more.

Leo Rosten: It is well known that an editor will run a feature that will be read by less than five per cent of the readers. We have singularly exact figures on who reads what, and it has been repeatedly demonstrated that a certain type of article or certain type of editorial will attract only a certain type of reader.

As for the number of intellectuals who contribute to the mass media, if they did not contribute, you would deplore this.

Mr. Hook asked about relying on private enterprise to provide a

Third Program. Suppose you compare a system in which people vote to a system in which they do not vote. Let us say the newsstand is a voting booth; whoever pays a quarter for a magazine, votes for it; whoever buys a different one—or none—has cast a negative vote. I must say that it is my own conviction that it is much safer to rely on the freest possible market and access to the market than on even the most benevolent government control.

Sidney Hook: Can't you combine both; in education we have the government in control without what you fear.

Rosten: But you also have private schools. Mr. Holton's comment on the subject of the media and the scientist depressed me. It is extremely hard to find talented or experienced people today who can serve as communicators between scientists and a less well-oriented people. There is a definite shortage here, and I notice that one of the foundations has just given money to finance the education of competent people in science writing and science interpretation.

I confess I am surprised that after hearing Mr. Saudek's list of programs on *Omnibus*, no one said: "Isn't it extraordinary that twenty million or thirty million people have been given Euripides, not distorted, not interpreted or debased, but straight?" Mr. van den Haag said that mass culture does not produce any new art. I submit that this was said when movies first appeared; I suggest that the introduction of the camera has certainly created new avenues of artistic expression. When Mr. van den Haag said they occasionally, of course, produce a masterpiece, I wondered how one can say with such flippancy, "occasionally a masterpiece." I am grateful if they occasionally produce a masterpiece; there are few fields in which masterpieces are produced more often than occasionally.

It is possible that sometimes something is good and at times it is bad; some aspects of some things are good and some aspects of the same things are bad. This is the way it is, and to deplore this is only to deplore what seems inescapable. I distinguish criticism which is realistic from castigation which is bemused by utopianism.

Mass Culture and the Creative Artist

James Baldwin: In speaking about culture, to me the only thing that makes sense is that in this country there is a group of people who are held together by some things they believe in commonly, some things that threaten them commonly; and that what they take to be reality is not, for example, what a Frenchman takes to be reality.

I think there is a confusion about the glories of the past as opposed to the harshness of the present. I don't think the past was so great. I don't think there can be any question that no matter how complex my present situation may be, it is much better than being a slave. I think too that no matter how complex the American situation is, part of it is the result of the fact that we have for the first time in the history of the world a great body of people who are free, who—and this is in some ways really an affliction—are relatively rich, and who in some sense hold their fate in their own hands.

In this chaos, I think we find it necessary to create standards which have never been needed before, which are very painful and very difficult to work out. Despite the fact that people here are supposed to be educated, I think we all know that the act of going to school and reading books, or even the desire to learn, does not make an educated person. In my view, an educated person has to have a certain independence of mind. He must be able to make choices, even very dangerous choices, which most other people are not able to make because they have other things to do: raise their children, earn a living.

I don't think we can criticize the mass media unless we are willing to talk about what we believe in, what we want. There is a kind of confusion between what Americans say they want and say they do: these are not the things they really want and really do.

It seems to me that the fate of knowledge has not been changed by

the twentieth century in America. Ever since there has been art, there has been the same struggle. We have one advantage over the past. We can look back and see what was there. But I don't see any reason to assume that the bulk of the populace was reading Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

I am sure most of the populace was doing then what it is doing now: reading bad novels, going to bad plays, listening to bad music; and other people were trying to raise the standards of spiritual life.

I think the pressures of mass culture which seem so threatening are the pressures one has always had. I think the responsibility of the artist is to have a standard, to cling to it, and to maintain it. I don't believe that artists are more threatened now than they were before. If I believed that, I should have to revise my whole belief of what an artist is.

There are people who think they are artists who are not. Also the American artist has a kind of problem which did not obtain before, that is, he can make much more money than others have ever been able to make.

No Frenchman, and I don't think any Englishman until lately, ever assumed that by being an artist he was going to make a lot of money. I think one has to be prepared to give up a great many things for this discipline, if you believe it is worth it.

I think the role the artist plays in relation to his culture is simply to maintain this standard, whether or not it is followed, whether or not it seems to be a dialogue, whether or not he seems to be popular. The whole importance of art is to make real, to bring into the world forever, a standard of possibility of what a man can be and do. This will not necessarily raise the level of the people, but I think without this, the level of the people would be inconceivably lower than it is today.

It is very hard to be an artist. It is not a democratic thing and it cannot be. Nor do I see any reason why it should be. What I mean is that it is there for those who want it, it is there to prove something that nothing else can prove: that a man can be and do what he really wants to be and do.

Leo Lionni: The definition of mass culture at this conference has shifted from one speaker to another, and so I have found myself, as many of you have, in the wonderful position of being able to agree with all sorts of contrasting viewpoints.

But what finally has become clear to me is that what I thought to

be my distaste for mass culture, is really a distaste for the mass society. I do not like that marketing society which Mr. Hazard has been telling us about.

As a painter, I find the visual spectacle of the marketing society more damaging than my professional involvement in the mass media. It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify with people in the mass; increasingly difficult to see faces. The evidence of the basic simplicity of man, of his basic condition, is difficult to find and to describe. Man is always on the run, always on a buying spree. He is less discernible as a man, woman, child, mother, worker. He is now as difficult to find as are the classic ingredients for the still life, unless one is willing to paint bottles of California wine and cans of fruit salad.

Nothing is sacred. The manners of marketing have penetrated the universities. The curricula are prepared with the same criteria as the mass media, edited the same way, and for the same motivations. The United States Navy has a public relations office which operates in the same way as the public relations office of Lever Brothers. Even the professors in their public speeches have, for example, become indistinguishable from those who address sales conventions; there is the same pattern of jokes, the same calculated charm. The organization of museums and galleries, Mr. Sweeney has pointed out, follows the pattern that has been established along Broadway.

The marketing aspects of mass culture are the most damaging. They are well echoed in the statement made by an architect who said: "I don't want to be interesting. I want to be good." I think this is a very important statement. What he really meant is: "I don't want to be competitive. I want to be good."

There is a tendency here to lump social scientists and artists together as intellectuals. I must say that as a painter I feel as ill at ease here as with the most illiterate groups in our society. You represent brutal culture to the painter, and he represents refined culture to himself.

In the mass media where the artist should function well, the pressure for novelty and visibility is unbearable to anyone whose standards are absolute values—more unbearable, I think, than the pressures for conformity.

Perhaps it is difficult for the artist to function in a prosperous society. Many creative artists feel that way. Many of us are leaving —ironically enough, with foundation money—for poorer countries.

Gilbert Seldes: Mr. Jarrell's paper is suffused with a kind of melancholy over the fate of the poor artist, this superior, creative man who even if he stands outside the mass media, is doomed because he cannot create as he would have been able to create had the mass media not existed.

Well, this is a tragic figure, and I couldn't care less what happens to him. If my recollection is fairly clear, Mr. Jarrell wrote elsewhere that in a good society Marcel Proust would have made a million dollars, and I have forgotten what riffraff now making a million would be starving in the streets.

Now I really have no sympathy with the whole idea of equating genius, the products of genius with money.

The Dial Magazine paid two cents a word to the best known of our writers and to the beginning writers, not that they were worth only two cents—it was all we could afford. There was no equation between the amount paid and the quality and fame of the author. But if we have to accept this standard, it is a hell of a good society in which Charlie Chaplin made a million dollars and a pretty bad society that turned him into a cantankerous exile. I should rather have Charlie Chaplin than Marcel Proust. I think Charlie Chaplin had much more to give us. I am not making professional jokes. Chaplin has contributed more to the happiness of the world than a neurotic, terribly concerned with himself, reporting on a society which I hope to God will pass.

All of us here are aware that a revolution is taking place. It is the shift in power between the print culture and the electronic culture. But we are all assuming that the change is only quantitative and that this post-atomic, pre-cobalt world of ours is really as safe as, let us say, it was in the age of Shakespeare; that we can tolerate the ignorance, bad taste, and apathy of the masses as well as Shakespeare's age could.

Every time we make a comparison with the past and we find that things weren't any better then, we are relieved. I say that cannot be so. We are in danger of annihilation, and past ages, as far as we can see, were not.

I haven't any statistical or philosophic basis for this, but I suggest at least as a basis for study that the change in quantity, velocity, and force of our mass media is so great as to really make it a qualitative change; that the mass media cannot any longer be compared with anything that went before.

People have talked here as if a rise in the aesthetic qualities of the mass media would make them perfectly acceptable, and we would all love them. I submit that a nation which is passively accepting works even ten times as good as those we have now, passively accepting them, might still be drugged and become entirely apathetic and remain emotionally immature. The need is not so much for improvement in a single product or for so much criticism of the product that comes from the mass media. We need an audience more active than any audience that has ever before been in the world.

It is no use saying to me that three hundred years ago, people were not any more selective or demanding. We cannot run the risk of an undemanding public. We have got to find a way to make the public require things . . . a public which tries to make popular arts responsive to its own needs.

For this I suggest that we take the producers of the mass media at their word. Let us stop being hostile to them. Let us accept the basic statement that they give the public what the public wants and let us try to make the public want a great deal more.

If we can prove to the purveyors of the media that the public really wants something, then they are, by their own principle, committed to fill that want. My objective therefore is the public, the audience, the individual citizen.

Now I can return, happily, to the basic subject—the traditional role of the artist. The artist goes beneath the surface and finds out the real need of a society, a nation, or a community. That is where I think the artist really returns to the mass media, for it is only through the mass media that he is going to be able to fulfill himself at a time when, whether he regrets it or not, these media are dominant and will remain so.

Nathan Glazer: The representatives of the mass media have tended to take an apologetic or defensive position, pointing out that works of high culture are often presented by the media, and there is no argument about this. In fact, more is presented than probably anyone wants. I don't know that there was any great demand for "Orestes" on *Omnibus*.

The problem here is the transformation of the work of art into a fetish: the notion that there are unspoiled works and that these works have to be injected into the media and presented to the people. This conception of the problem is related to the ambiguity of the word "culture." Culture can be found in the high creative achievements of man which do have this unspoiled character and which can be communicated through different media; alternatively there is another meaning of culture which anthropologists use, that is, culture as the expression of life or the accompaniment of life.

I think that the introduction of the high works of art into the mass media has nothing to do with the second meaning of culture. What happened in the shift from popular to mass culture was not only the technical invention of devices which made it possible to reach more people. It was also a change in the character of the people, as they lost those ethnic characteristics which made it meaningful to refer to things in their experience, to use certain kind of jokes or cultural references or language. The cultural forms of these people changed in character. In other words even if the mass media were broken down so that they could reach a thousand people at a time, I don't know that they could get any closer to the people because they have lost so much of these specialized characteristics. The problem, you might say, is the change from popular groups to masses. The question is whether there is a cultural form appropriate for masses, something which does for them what the more specific type of folk and popular cultures of the past did for ordinary people. I feel the problem has to be located in the loss of traditional characteristics and the development of a general type of man rather than in the simple technological problem itself.

Randall Jarrell: I have been trying to think of the fundamental cause for the disagreement among us, and it seems to me that in four out of five cases, the people who have had a direct intensive, extensive experience of works of art are on one side, and the people who haven't are on the other side. The people who are relatively optimistic about accepting mass culture are mostly people who, I believe, have not been primarily interested in works of art. Art does not have final, important, intense value for them.

Often in what sociologists say about art in society there is what seems to the artist a kind of fundamental naïvete or lack of acquaintance. It is something that a person says because he isn't more acquainted with works of art. If he were an artist, you feel that he would necessarily have a discernibly different position.

Several people have said that the artist has always been alienated; there is no difference between past and present. This just isn't true historically. If sociologists will read the history of art or of culture, they will find that the kind of alienation called "romantic" in artists

today was extremely rare and quite abnormal before the middle of the eighteenth century.

Nathan Glazer: Mr. Baldwin said that, not the sociologists.

Randall Jarrell: Let me quote to you Arnold Hauser, whose book *The Philosophy of Art* would make good reading for sociologists.

He says: "The consequences of the fact that ever greater masses of people are coming into the market as consumers of art are quite incalculable. The products of mass culture not only ruin people's taste, make them unwilling to think for themselves, educate them in conformity; they also open the eyes of the majority for the first time to fields of life with which they never came in contact before. . . .

"Whenever the circle of consumers of art has been widened, the immediate result has been to debase the level of artistic production. . . .

"Today in consequence of the emergence of the lower middle classes and certain sections of the industrial workers as consumers of art, a phenomenon well known in past history is recurring."

Charles Frankel: I am puzzled. This suggests that this phenomenon has occurred many times in the past and that every time there is a widening of the circle standards change, standards fall a little bit, and the creative artist feels a little more alienated during the period of transition. The quotation doesn't prove your point.

Randall Jarrell: Well, a number of people have said there is no debasement or evidence of even a temporary debasement of aesthetic production in this widening of the audience.

Mr. Seldes quoted me earlier on Proust. What I really said was that in an ideal culture, *Remembrance of Things Past* would have made Proust a million dollars and Elvis Presley would be in a gasoline station along with his friends and family.

In an ideally bad society *Remembrance of Things Past* would never be published. In fact it wouldn't even be written. And Proust would write a biography of Presley for the *Saturday Evening Post.*

I was quite shocked by what Mr. Seldes said about Proust and Chaplin. This was a wonderful example of using the good, in so far as you can, to destroy the best. In one sense Chaplin is a kind of Proust of the movies. He is a marvellous artist, but Proust is one

of the greatest writers who ever lived, one of the absolute summits of Western culture, and to use Chaplin as a way of sweeping Proust out of existence is, I think, a terrible mistake. It is a kind of negation of values.

Several people have said that the mature artist, the really creative person is all right; we don't need to worry about him. He is always going to produce great works of art, no matter what, if he is that good; and we don't need to worry about his being corrupted or bent or warped or seduced or any of those things. That is a fable.

If you want to know about it, surely the obvious thing to do is, in the first place, to ask the artists whether they are bothered by it; in the second place, to study their lives and the letters they write just before they kill themselves; and finally to study the careers of a number of artists or writers.

For example, the standard thing one says about an American writer—the exception is wonderful—is that he doesn't develop. His best book is almost certainly his first or second or third; and the regular thing for him is to end up hardly writing books at all but writing articles, certainly not developing.

When you have a culture that is profoundly wrong for the artist, he cannot remain unaffected. You will immediately say: "Some artists do." Of course, they are the great exceptions, but generally artists don't keep on unaffected. A number of people have said that creative artists need not be affected by our special kind of world; they can even go into the mass media and manage to create real works of art. A propos, I will say that the best text for a sermon I know is the quotation we heard: "I don't want to be interesting. I want to be good." This is exactly what our commercial culture disbelieves. In fact, it doesn't make the distinction.

I was amused when James Baldwin said that someone once said people in general can't bear very much reality. That someone must have been quoting T. S. Eliot. Baldwin says there is a division of labor in the world, and people have quite enough reality to bear simply getting through their lives.

The implication is: It is hard enough to get through your life without art, simply get through it bare; and with the additional burden of art falling on you, you can't manage it.

But, you see, the reverse is true. Art is primarily to enable us to get through our lives and to help us bear them. In the case of the people Baldwin talks about, who are simply getting through life, does that mean they are getting through without art? None of us do that.

We get through it with good, bad, or indifferent art, but with art of a kind; and it is generally a bad kind which makes our lives as dreary and awful as Mr. Baldwin described.

I should like to talk for an instant about the difficulties of different sorts of artists in this country. Painters have the easiest time, I think. People just swallow them whole. Serious American composers are worse off than American poets. They truly can't even get to hear their own pieces or have them played.

Poets are better off in that they don't have to have an orchestra to play their works. In the past it was taken for granted that intellectuals read poetry. How many of you here do read poetry easily and enjoy doing it? I mean poetry of the past and contemporary poetry. I will wager that a majority of the people here do not. A hundred years ago as many people read Tennyson as read Dickens.

This is extremely hard on poets. It is not so much that they don't have any audience; they have a small audience; and they would be better off without half the audience they have. The kind of thing that happens to an art when it is experienced by only a few people is a terrible thing.

Sidney Hook: When Mr. Jarrell talks about the decline in the appreciation of modern poetry, the assumption is that the development of mass culture is the decisive factor. If this is so, why has there not been a corresponding decline in the appreciation of the modern novel? Perhaps one explanation may be the cerebral character of modern poetry, the fact that to understand it, one can't read it the way one reads nineteenth century poetry. At the same time I can testify to a revolution in the sensibility of the generations of students I have known since the twenties. The appreciation of modern poetry seems to me more widespread than ever. I am wondering whether Mr. Jarrell hasn't over-simplified this, and whether he doesn't owe us an explanation of the casual imputation that the decline in appreciation has been due to mass culture.

Jarrell: If poetry has become more cerebral, harder to read, then easier poetry should be more popular. Poetry since Eliot has become increasingly easier. Richard Wilbur is a far easier poet to read than Tennyson. Similarly, if difficult poetry made people stop reading poetry, this should happen in other countries. But in many European and South American countries, poetry is as difficult as it has been in this country, and yet it is popular.

Hook: What is the explanation for the decline in appreciation of modern poetry?

Jarrell: It is very complicated. I am not sure that we know the answer.

Hook: I guess that is the answer to most of our problems here. We don't know really.

Jarrell: Perhaps as Shils said there has been a real shift in our culture from active to passive consumption, from reading to a passive looking. People are less and less able to respond to a special art form. Poetry is a special art form. You have to have different expectations and training. People don't have the training. Increasingly people who read want everything to be pretty much the same: they don't want to have to change their attitudes.

One of the hardest things artists have to contend with today is the kind of wall between them and the semi-artists. In television, radio, and the movies, on Broadway, and in most magazines there is always someone who knows better than the writer how something ought to be written. There is always someone who can "fix" a piece up the way it ought to be.

Take the *New Yorker*. It's as if the writers always had the *New Yorker* riding on their backs and as a kind of mask over their faces. I know good writers who write for the *New Yorker*, but in the long run they are changed by it. They don't want to be changed; but after a while they begin to develop a *New Yorker* unconscious.

Tennessee Williams is the country's most famous playwright. He says he won't produce another play on Broadway: they so change and falsify his work, the situation is unbearable. If that happens to him, what do you think it is like for playwrights who aren't among the most famous?

It is characteristic of our culture that it is interested in human interest and not in ideas or in works of art. There seems to be nothing more important that one can say in our culture than "I love people." This reminds me that during the war on a number of occasions when our air force bombed a famous cathedral because some Germans were using it for observation purposes, I used to read, "All the cathedrals in Europe are not worth the life of one American boy." Well, if all the cathedrals in Europe are not worth that, they certainly aren't worth much, because just for the slightest gain—crossing a river—the Army

was willing to sacrifice from up to five hundred to six hundred boys.

Miss Arendt said that there is nothing you can do with a work of art; in the end all you can do with real values is feel them and be moved by them and see them for what they are. Works of art are in a sense quite beyond any use to society. Constantly talking of function is an awful thing.

When Mr. Hazard talked the other day, I was impressed and frightened, because I thought that more than anyone else here, he was the man of the future. There will be a lot more people like him in ten to fifteen years.

Patrick Hazard: That is very reassuring.

Randall Jarrell: Yes, I know, and they will like it too. But what I mean is there will be people who essentially think of things as functional and will come to terms with a second or third or fourth best. They will be pretty well-adjusted people, but I think that in our culture you ought to be violently ill-adjusted or maladjusted or different from it in many ways.

James Baldwin: Perhaps I said some reckless things earlier. When I said that I didn't think the situation of the artist had changed greatly, I did not mean anything mysterious. I meant that what an artist does is try to interpret experience. What has happened in this culture is that everything is incoherent; people no longer believe what they say they believe; no one believes, for example, in a Presbyterian God.

I myself have never believed for a moment that America was what Americans thought it was. I have believed from my own experience that it was possible for people in a general way to become better. I think it is possible for some people to become better if they want to be. I think that we are really complaining about the fact that no one is related to his own experience.

It is very hard to be an American. The only thing harder is to be a writer, and to be an American writer is almost impossible.

There is a great mass of people who have to get through their lives, and I don't mean that they get through their lives without art. What I mean is that they wouldn't be here at all if there had not been in each generation, in each epoch, in each era, in each country, a few people, maybe ten thousand, a distinct minority who kept showing in cathedrals, books, in their own lives what life was like; who gave

back an image of their lives to help people get through life.

Having a baby, paying taxes, living in the country is coherent. People can do that. All the artist can do is describe the world around him and try to interpret that world and make it bearable not only for himself but for everyone in it. This is very hard to do now because we are in a new situation altogether. We are at the end of a whole era . . . the whole European era.

Let me put it this way at the risk of sounding paranoic because it is the only way to make this vivid. As a writer, a Negro writer in this country, by which I mean in the West—what I found out was that I was born into a civilization which is always describing me. I was at the mercy of that description, not only outside but inside. I believed that description.

Now the image that the West has of itself is beginning to break down, and we are beginning to see ourselves as we are. I think just the attempt to describe simply the American chaos is a very valuable thing.

Life in this country is appalling. Human deprivation and misery and want have been abolished, we have no child labor, but we have people going mad. We have people dying for lack of authority. Everything seems to be breaking down. In the time we have left, people, artists—all people—have to live and to work. I think that is all we can do. It is going to be a very bumpy ride but that's it.

Ideals and Dangers of Mass Culture

H. Stuart Hughes: I have been asked by a number of those present how I can be at once on both sides of the cleavage which divides us. I think I can explain.

What we have been discussing for a day and a half is the price we pay for democracy. I shall put it almost as simply as that. I don't think we can begin to understand the subject unless we say this is a price that we should be more than willing to pay. It is a heavy price. This is the paradox of our whole discussion. It is heavier than most of the defenders of the mass media will admit.

I was very much impressed with James Baldwin's moving statement about the past. Those of us who sometimes look back from an elite point of view on the culture of previous minorities should always remember what life was for the majority. Nobody plans to return to the past.

Again and again it has been said here that high or refined culture suffers great difficulties in its production and diffusion. The efforts of the mass media to help are noble but essentially irrelevant to much of our discussion.

It seems to me that what we are talking about is, first, the situation of the artist; second, that of the mass of society.

I am impressed by the fact that none of the practicing artists who have spoken—Messrs. Baldwin, Jarrell, Berger, Lionni—is very happy as far as I can tell; and they do not seem to be extraordinarily difficult human beings. They simply say they do not particularly enjoy the social framework in which they are operating.

I think we are far more in agreement than seems to be the case that high or refined culture will continue to be restricted to very special audiences. The people we like and admire will wall themselves up behind barriers of self-protection with very small audiences. I see

no escape from this. What else can you expect of a society that Shils has correctly called a society of consensus, a society in which the artist no longer starves?

It seems to me we cannot understand our mass culture unless we talk about the social substructure. (You will pardon me the Marxist expression, but occasionally Karl Marx needs to be dragged to the forefront.) The one great divisive question left in our society is to be found in the South. Sometimes I think a cynic would say that what is really being fought for is the right of the unhomogenized to join the homogenized.

I agree with Mr. Schlesinger that the problem is to maintain the vitality in our society, but I am extremely sceptical that it can be done. I have much less hope than most of my friends as to what is going to come out of this society in terms of creative values. I agree with James Baldwin that we are at the end of an era. It seems to me that we are going through the transition from the European or nineteenth century to the century of mass society; and that fifty years from now the difference between our society and Communist society will be far less than it is today. I think their society will become more humane. We are going, it seems to me, in a similar direction by a far more humane, slower, and, in our value terms, better process, and I am awfully glad I am going through this transition here rather than in the Soviet Union or China, but I think it is part of a world transition.

The mass media are helping this transition. They are smoothing the way for all of us, for most of the population. They are helping an increasingly gentle and tolerant society bridge its differences. This is a role that has a great social function. It is not a role in which I am interested or in which I think most of you are interested, but if we look at it from a hundred-year or a thousand-year perspective, it may have enormous historical importance.

Alex Inkeles: I am struck by the split to which Stuart Hughes referred. One of the participants, as a matter of fact, said to me: "How come you are playing it so cool?" What was meant was that I was taking a rather dispassionate attitude toward mass culture instead of joining with both feet in stamping on it. This is what I ought to do, a lot of people feel; for mass culture is so evil that to stand back and simply examine it is the wrong attitude.

Others said to me: "I see you have joined the other side." I asked what they meant, and they said: "What is this business of dismissing so many people as incapable of rising in capacity? How can a man

with your background deny the possibility that some day we shall all be people of high culture?"—Something which I personally don't believe.

I am much influenced—although I am not convinced—by some of the things Mr. Jarrell has said and the vigor and persistence with which he has said them. Yet I have doubts as to the capacity of mass culture, however bad it may be, to interfere seriously with the activity of the creative artists.

Much depends on the creative artists you have known and what kind of sensitivities they have. My own reference is to a novelist friend, a teacher, who is unusual in the vigor with which he has resisted the seduction, blandishments, or temptations that people have placed in his way. He puts up a sign on his door: "Students and members of the faculty who wish to speak to me will do so between 9 and 12 a.m. I write between 2 and 5 p.m." He doesn't care what anybody thinks of what he has written. He won't revise his stories. For that reason he won't write for the *New Yorker*.

I think only a rather systematic study will settle the issue as to the extent of harm that has been done and the relation between the pressures of the mass media and creative work. As Mr. Baldwin hints, I personally believe that the travail which a man suffers has an uncertain relation to the quality of the art he may produce; and in fact, it may well be that at least for a certain kind of art and in certain times, the man who suffers most distinctively and uniquely, most deeply, most sensitively, is the one who will produce the work that will be important to us through time.

Under the stimulus of discussion with Mr. Jarrell and others, I have tried to set down some of the elements of the contemporary situation of mass culture. Let me refer to one of these as the problem of diffusion. By this I mean that in the past it was not necessary to build too high a wall for protection. Today one's eyes and ears are constantly assaulted by the products of mass culture. It is almost impossible to escape these assaults unless you go to the high mountains. The air, the streets, the buses, everything is spoiled by the infusion of the products of mass culture. Doubtless the capacity of mass culture to reach the artist, the difficulties he finds in separating himself from it are important.

Another element or problem is that of intrusion: the extent to which mass culture tends to move into areas where previously it could not penetrate. For example, a newspaper like the New York *Times* often carries the same cheap and vulgar ads carried by many

other newspapers because of the way advertising contracts are placed. The good magazines tend to escape this kind of intrusion because by and large, they have not been discovered as an advertising source. So far, in the best magazines there are only book advertisements. But as the good magazines win larger audiences, they will be discovered as outlets for the same vulgar ads.

Another element of mass culture may be called invasion: People invade areas which previously were the exclusive reserve of the elite. Homogenization is another problem. Artists find it harder and harder to look for stimulus in popular culture. This special kind of experience is no longer available. Also people lack the awareness of the fact that they do not have the capacity to appreciate works of art. The mass media very often encourage people to believe that they have a level of accomplishment and a right of criticism far beyond what their actual capacity to understand and consume makes possible.

Finally there is the problem of the loss of audience. I don't think audiences are much smaller. But there has been a qualitative change in the audience. It is certainly a real problem to establish contact with people who are part of your audience or who are, like yourself, part of the group of people engaged in the production of works of art. I think many artists have much larger audiences than they realize. The crucial thing is that they don't realize it.

William Phillips: Is cultural coexistence possible? Is it possible for genuine art and mass culture to coexist? A number of people here have either minimized, defended, apologized for, or tended to ignore what might be called the bad effects of mass culture. Let me cite some of their arguments.

First, mass culture or middlebrow culture may be bad, but it does not do any damage.

Second, it is really not so bad.

Third, it is bound to improve.

Fourth, the masses are incapable of anything better; so why try to give them anything better?

Fifth, we try to give them the best we can, and so we feed them special articles by Bertrand Russell and so on.

Sixth, the very idea of an elite is not a democratic concept.

Seventh, a key point which Mr. Hughes developed and which is accepted by a number here, political democracy requires cultural democracy and cultural democracy requires something called mass culture.

Political democracy can be defined as a society which permits a certain minimum or maximum of civil rights, freedom of speech, a certain recognition of differences and the recognition of the basic dignity and worth of individual human beings.

There is no reason whatsoever, as far as I can make out, to assume that this kind of society requires that you have, for example, *Look* Magazine, or *Life*, or our kind of television.

Edward Shils: Has the proposition been asserted during this meeting?

William Phillips: It has been implied. I think Mr. Hughes will agree. He says this is the price one pays for democracy. Is that correct, Mr. Hughes?

Hughes: That is right.

Nathan Glazer: The problem is the word "requires."

Phillips: I will retract the word "requires." You substitute the word.

Glazer: It is likely to happen if you have political democracy.

Phillips: It seems to me that the phenomena we see in mass culture, magazines like *Look* and the big television stations, are the result of two forces: commercial considerations and some sort of egalitarianism which has flourished in this country more than in any other.

To put it crudely, Leo Rosten has somehow left the commercial factor out of his account. One gets the impression that the purpose of *Look* Magazine is to supply culture to the masses, a kind of culture they do not get in the various forms of poetry or the novel which we usually associate with "high" culture. In other words they had to be fed something that was manufactured for them.

It seems to me obvious that the only reason we have *Look* Magazine—and let's be frank about it—is that it makes a profit. I object to the introduction of all kinds of motives or ideologies of uplift, of endless theories of culture which really have only one basic result: to camouflage the reason for the existence of what we roughly call mass culture. Cultural pluralism has been cited by a number of people as another argument in favor of mass culture. The trouble

with the word is that it is honorific. When we hear the word "pluralism," we think of democracy, of the fact that people have a right to think as they please; we think of civil liberty, of academic freedom.

It seems to me the notion of pluralism in culture is highly questionable. If all one means by pluralism is that people have a legal right to their opinions, that the editors or owners of *Look* have a legal right to print and publish it, of course everybody will grant that. But what we are concerned with is a question of basic values.

Some years ago, when I was teaching at Sarah Lawrence, the question of totalitarianism arose in a class in literature. To my amazement some of my students said—and they were presenting a kind of pluralistic point of view—"Well, look. Maybe fascism is what the Germans wanted and Communism what the Russians wanted. We should have what we want, and they should have what they want."

One could answer this argument quickly and cleverly by saying that the people of Russia don't vote freely and the people of Poland don't vote freely, etc. But even if people voted, Sidney Hook would be against it. He doesn't take the pluralist point of view.

People say that there are different cultural values; people like different things, but the point is: what do we stand for, what do we value? It seems to me that the whole question of pluralism is basically a cloak to conceal our own values.

We talk about art and culture as though these are subjects or activities which were created so they could be talked about. Somehow we escape the nature of the experience which lies behind art. James Baldwin and Randall Jarrell tried to indicate something of the feeling or tone of that experience.

Nobody objects—it would be insane to object—to getting more readers, more viewers, more hearers for some genuine form of work of art. But this is confusing the issue. Under the guise of saying that one wants to bring things that we all value to larger groups of people, something else is going on. Before you know it, there is a shift of gears, and suddenly we are talking about the fact that there can be an occasional piece by Bertrand Russell in a mass media publication.

I do not object to the products of mass culture; I like to see baseball and football and Westerns. I like to be entertained, and my tastes are sometimes low in that respect. What I object to is the fact that a certain number of people find values that don't exist in

these products; that all kinds of theories of art are developed to justify the fact that *Gunsmoke* appears on television, when we all really know why it is presented.

Charles Frankel: The mass media are with us to stay. The question is not whether they are good or bad, but whether we have the wit, intelligence and will—including the artistic intelligence and the political intelligence—to use these things as they ought to be used.

Let me begin by saying what I find wrong with the mass media: First, I find their slickness objectionable. I should immediately add that I admire their professional expertise, and I think that on this level the editors and writers of scholarly journals have nothing to be proud of at all. They do a disservice to their own profession and to the cause of the culture they claim to protect when they write so badly and when they allow so many—at any rate in my field—trivial and unimportant things to be published.

But slickness is not the same thing as professional expertise. Slickness is making things look speciously easy.

Now I don't think obscurity is a virtue; many consumers of elite culture seem to feel that the opposite of slickness is obscurity. But an important argument or idea requires attention. The principle behind mass journalism seems to be that you can absorb serious ideas without paying attention.

Second, I think the mass media in the U.S. have a tendency to confuse facts and ideals. They describe a state of affairs which in fact does not exist, and they do a disservice both to what exists and to the ideals I think decent and sensitive men ought to hold.

Third, the ideals that are held up as ideals America serves frequently seem to me to be meretricious.

I found so much that Mr. Seldes said sympathetic that I hope he won't mind my saying that his remark about Charlie Chaplin stunned me and is an example of what I have in mind.

Charlie Chaplin, he said, has made more people happy than Proust. This may very well be true but that isn't the only way you measure the worth of a work of art. It would seem to me that the values we seek in works of art are the increased intensity of our consciousness, increased self-awareness, increased ability to make discriminations. I don't know whether people will thereby be made happier.

Finally there is the committee system that exists in the production of works for television, the theater, magazine articles and the like. I suspect that the committee system is unlikely to produce as great works of art as is a system in which the individual can work pretty much on his own.

I think, however, that all these things are due not to the growth of industrial society and not, by the way, Mr. Hughes, to democracy; they are due to factors about which, if you have the guts, you can do something.

A play costs a great deal of money to produce. You have a star system; you have to please the actors; the labor unions are organized in a certain way. It is hardly likely that you can turn out a good play under these conditions. What can you do about it? For one thing, you can have a subsidized theater.

Someone said that the mass media give people what they want. There is no way of knowing that. It is the very rare man, and I should add, the rare intellectual who knows exactly what he wants. Everything would be easier if people knew what they wanted.

One way by which you can find out whether people are getting what they want is to be sure that there is constantly offered to them an interesting range of choices. The introduction of foreign cars into the United States and the interest people show in buying them needs analysis, but perhaps tail fins don't express an innate American prejudice. In any case, the mass media offer a rather thin diet and there is no way of knowing whether people are getting what they want; it seems to me to be fairly plain that there is a relative lack of control by the audience of what is offered to it.

No one here would complain about the mass media if he didn't think that something else was better and possible for a much larger number of people in our society precisely because the mass media exist and industrialization has taken place. The question is: what is possible? And it is in terms of everyone's implicit sense of the possible that these complaints are made. I find it difficult to go along with Mr. Hughes when he says we are paying a heavy price for democracy. I don't think you have to pay as heavy a price as we are paying. This is a problem of power politics, if you want, and involves the structure of power in the U.S. So I should disagree, and most emphatically with van den Haag when he makes an iron law out of his analysis. It seems to me the problem is one in the organization of our political lives.

Daniel Bell: In looking at the proliferation of what might be called contemporary culture, I am reminded of the way I felt

when I made my first visit to Calcutta, India. I was prepared for the dirt, the noise, the cows, the people; but one thing I was not prepared for was the sheer quantity of it all.

It seems to me one finds the same problem in the proliferation of contemporary culture. What you have is the breakdown, quite obviously, of the notion of a unified culture, of the concept of a cultivated, educated man capable of the realization of a few central values which are the heritage of his civilization.

I am not saying that this is good or bad, but people find emotional satisfaction in this kind of proliferation.

It seems to me that this is the real issue rather than simply the question of the conventional categories of high, low, or middle.

A second problem I should like to raise is the one of cost, which is involved in the very nature of a mass society. Let me take as an example, *Partisan Review*, which has been over the last three decades the bearer of our culture, and let me also take *Evergreen Review*. You have the problem of the old method of trying to increase circulation by subscription, and this involves high costs. As a result, you may find it easier to put onto the bookstands a magazine like *Evergreen Review* than to raise circulation by subscriptions.

Many problems grow out of the different methods of marketing. With *Partisan Review*, there is a community among readers and writers. They recognize each other. *Evergreen Review* has an audience. It is not a community. But this is the kind of situation which has been created as a result of the cost problem, when you substitute an audience for a community. This problem normally does not receive attention because no one seriously considers the merchandising or the cost problems of the distribution of culture in a modern society.

I should like to make a third point: In the year or so in which I have been engaged in reading material on mass culture, I have been struck by the loose way in which we easily talk about the "public," the "people," "most people," without any sense of whom we are really talking about.

There is a very real problem of evidence and specificity. For example, *Partisan Review* has raised the question as to the effects of the situation wherein the universities have absorbed so much of cultural activity; that poets and writers turn to the university for support; that this is a new institutional form. We do not know the effects. I don't know what kind of study would find out what we need to know, but we are in the realm of opinion rather than knowledge.

There is a whole series of questions whose answers we don't know. Generalizations are made about how art is produced, but really one doesn't know. One would like to know what the results of commissioning music would be. Is this the best way? Mr. Frankel raised the point that there are new problems of creating new institutional forms of support.

I am, finally, troubled by the question that has been raised concerning the coexistence of mass culture and high culture. Regardless of whether or not I have a brief for mass culture, I do not think that many of us here inherited our culture, our education, and our books. By and large we are in a society which gave us some chance to get them. The problem, it seems to me, is how do you create a society which gives those people who want it a chance to become cultured.

This brings us back to Mr. Shils' paper; for the context is a historical one; namely, for the first time masses of people have come into society. The fact that Dostoyevsky was popular in his time is meaningless. Most Russians didn't read in his time. The fact is that you have a mass society which is essentially thirty-five to fifty years old; you have a problem of finding new institutional forms of support; you have the problem of keeping paths open.

Edward Shils: One of the concerns which underlies our discussion and which has not come to the surface sufficiently is the present state of the tradition of high or superior culture, whatever you want to call it. We have made a mistake in not confronting the problem more directly.

The tradition of our high culture is very problematic at present. It isn't that there is not lots of creativity in the United States, England, or France today; there is. These countries have many outstanding people in science, scholarship, literature. Nonetheless, none of us seems to he very happy about it.

We are in a state of distraction about these matters. We have the itch but can't quite locate it. Somehow, we have taken to blaming the poor, miserable middle and working classes for having brought the ants into the house.

But we really ought to inspect ourselves more and see what condition we ourselves have come to. Daniel Bell has emphasized the vast body, the quautities of material available to us. We are caught in a position of mad dilettantism or in a kind of stupefying expertise. We concentrate our efforts on one particular subject which is very

narrow, and the literature on the smallest subject is beyond the capacities of any single individual today.

The literary men are free because they don't have to read, except perhaps their own work; nonetheless, they have other difficulties confronting them. In the midst of all this, there is a whole vast body of intellectual development unknown except to a small body of men, the scientists. Most of us have dabbled in science but we don't know much about it. Our humanist tradition is in danger of being overwhelmed by science. It is in danger because it has not assimilated science sufficiently. It has not appreciated the nonutilitarian elements in scientific knowledge. Of course we don't know much about the utilitarian elements of science but we are blind to its intellectual, moral, and aesthetic elements; we are inclined to think that science has been developed in order to make money or throw bombs on people.

Another of the things wrong with our high culture is that our audience seems to be going to pot, particularly in America. It has not expanded at the same rate as the population. Specialization is one of the reasons for this.

Another is that we don't have enough cultural Philistinism in this country. We have some but not enough. We don't have the serried row on row of the bourgeoisie buying works of Schiller and Lessing, putting more money into the booksellers' pockets, putting more books on their shelves, where they gather dust.

Not that most people who buy books read them. Even when books were copied by hand, most of the people who bought them didn't read them.

We seem to have acquired the technique of acquiring Philistines but not cultured Philistines. How did the Germans and French get so much cultural Philistinism? By the gymnasium and lycée; by a very stiff system of education.

We come back to the point made by Mr. Kristol: that the European educational system is superior. The secondary educational system in the United States seems to be particularly guilty.

One final point: the contention has been made frequently that mass culture is bad because it serves as a narcotic, because it affects our political democracy, because it corrupts our high culture. I don't think there is any empirical evidence for these contentions; and what impressionistic evidence there is does not support them either. I think we are not confronting the real problem: why we don't like mass culture. This seems to me to be the issue. We don't like it. It is repulsive to us. Is it partly because we don't like the working classes and the middle classes?

Some people dislike the working classes more than the middle classes, depending on their political backgrounds. But the real fact is that from an aesthetic and moral standpoint, the objects of mass culture are repulsive to us. This ought to be admitted. To do so will help us select an aesthetic viewpoint, a system of moral judgments which would be applicable to the products of mass culture; but I think it would also relieve our minds from the necessity of making up fictions about the empirical consequences of mass culture.

Stanley Edgar Hyman: I think I agree with everything William Phillips said except on the matter of pluralism, which I think he misunderstands when he calls it a cloak to conceal our own values or implies that behind this pretended pluralism we have no values. To put it clearly, let the rapist be the rapist. That is his way to the good life. I think this is a considerable distortion.

Pluralism assumes that there are many varieties of the good life; that we are not God; that none of us can say: "My form of the good life or my values are for everyone."

The rapist clearly cannot be allowed in our pluralism because he is no pluralist. He is forcing his values on someone else. That is why he is a rapist. I think Mr. Phillips knows about this. I suspect he is for pluralism too, so far as it goes. If we don't have pluralism in culture, we will not have any values probably; I think we have to see it from the other end: that it lets us live.

When I spoke of pluralism, I had in mind that mass culture in producing millions of copies of *Marjorie Morningstar* for whoever wanted them produced thousands of copies of *Finnegans Wake* for those who wanted them. We want to be included in the pluralism.

I want briefly to mention too that our problem is not mass culture but high culture and that is really where we seem to have ended up.

Mass culture will not die if we say "Go die." It will not change itself much if we say, "Go change yourself." It will hear us and be somewhat affected, but fundamentally it goes its own way, and has its past, present, and future.

As a matter of fact, as some people have said eloquently, high culture in some areas is in a desperate state. It is hungry and thirsty, and it is not flourishing. But where we end up is that mass culture ought to do something for high culture not directly, but as patrons, financially.

If William Nichols cannot print any poetry in *This Week* except pious or religious doggerel, perhaps *This Week* can subsidize the publication of volumes of poetry.

I am not going to propose the machinery for this, and it is not my idea. But perhaps the best thing mass culture can do for high culture is to find some way of supplying money without having anything else to do with it.

I propose a kind of wariness, and that is the note I shall end on. We do not have the last word. We do not know the answers. Our creation comes in peculiar fashions, and if we meet and talk about it in humility we may come somewhere to an understanding.