

CULTURE AND THE HUMAN ENTERPRISE

The term “culture” is often used broadly to include all the ways and products of human work, expression, and creativity. In this broad field, we may distinguish among the material, the social, and the semantic cultures. The material culture consists of all the physical tools, buildings, equipment, and things we produce for our use and enjoyment. The social culture consists of all the social instruments, structures, and systems we generate or create to meet human needs and to satisfy human aspirations. The semantic culture consists of our language and symbols, our ways and products of semantically appropriating and organizing reality and possibility, the wisdom acquired for guiding and directing our lives and institutions, and the ways and products of artistic comprehension and expression. It is the semantic culture with which we are concerned here. For simplicity, I shall speak of it simply as the “culture.”

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURE

The culture of a people is their most important product and possession. It is what most distinguishes human beings from all other creatures. Our culture determines, in broad outline, what we become and how we live as individuals and function as societies. It provides the concepts in terms of which we define ourselves and the world, and the framework of beliefs and commitments by which we live and run our institutions, including the norms in terms of which we judge truth and falsity, perfection and defect, well-being and sickness, right and wrong, success and failure. But the culture itself may go awry as the genome of a species does sometimes. (Think of the saber tooth tiger and the Irish elk; they developed efficient single-purpose but ultimately self-destructive physical features.) Reality may not be any more tolerant in the long run of mistakes deep in the culture of a people than in the genetic constitution of a species.

The genetic structure of a biological species is an “expression” of the “wisdom” of nature. The culture of a people, although the product of human powers, is also a product of “nature” in a sense. At least early cultures must have been largely the product of unconscious processes and operations that involved little thought of the end being realized. Human beings had to have a measure of cultural capital before they could take a rational, critical role in the correction, reconstruction, and advancement of the culture.

Early in human history, generations, finding a culture in place, took it to have been given along with nature by some higher power, for they did not understand how it, or at least the most important aspects of it, could have been generated by human beings. And when some individuals dared to amend or to change the received culture, the proposed amendments or changes were either rejected or accepted as revealed or inspired by a higher being. Historically, cultural institutions concentrated, for the most part, on the preservation and transmission of the culture. It took a long time for human beings to realize that the culture was a human product and that critical intelligence could be brought into the reconstruction

and ongoing development of the culture. This insight was the defining mark of the Enlightenment. Although the ancient Greek Enlightenment anticipated this development, only in modern times have societies developed and supported institutions with the mission to examine, correct, and advance the culture on all fronts. Even now the public frequently demands that our graduate/research universities concentrate on their teaching mission. The idea that the culture is our most important product and that the whole human enterprise depends on it is still incomprehensible to those who are unconscious of their culture and its role in forming their identity and defining their lives and their world. And there are those who, even at this late date, insist that the moral and religious dimensions of the culture come from a higher source and are immune to human criticism and improvement. This of course tends to stagnate the whole culture. The culture is logically webbed in such a way that protection of one part of it from critical reconstruction and advancement restrains developments in other sectors that would present a logical challenge to the protected area.

The culture is both an extension and product of our native semantic powers. We share with other animals the power to hold our bodily and environmental conditions *present to* ourselves in sensory experience. And no doubt many animals share with us, at least in a rudimentary form, the power to hold things present to themselves in memory and imagination.

We need to be careful, however, about what we mean by “present to *themselves*” in speaking of animals. We are not warranted in attributing to culture-free animals the kind of selfhood that culture-bred human beings have. Indeed, we are not warranted in attributing to them the same kind of sensory experiences, to say nothing of the same kind of memory and imagination. Neither are we warranted in attributing to pre-cultural “human beings” anything like the selfhood and modes of experience, memory, and imagination that we find in ourselves. But clearly animals, including pre-cultural “human beings,” have rudimentary semantic powers. Some bodily and environmental conditions are present to such beings in ways that evoke behavioral responses. No doubt some constitutive memory (the power to integrate and to hold together in

experience a complex happening that takes time to occur) and imagination are involved in any form of awareness that can evoke a behavioral response, but recall memory and pure imagination (imagination without immediate sensory stimulation) seem to require more integration of subjective states and acts than simple sensory awareness. Behavioral memory (the capacity to respond to a new situation in ways learned from similar situations in the past) comes earlier than memory as a purely internal rerun of an earlier experience. The capacity for this kind of memory seems to be required for imagination as the capacity for pre-run or feigned sensory experiences of actual or possible situations. Memory and imagination that can function with some independence of sensory stimulation and behavior require a budding self — some internal organization of subjective states and acts that can function as a system without engaging the whole organism behaviorally.

It is often said that human beings differ from other animals primarily in that we develop and use physical tools to extend our bodily power over our environment, but our most important tools are semantic — language and symbols. They enhance our semantic power to appropriate things, to hold them present to ourselves, and to relate to them on the basis of their semantic presence to us. Indeed, language and symbols have opened to us the past, the future, the distant present, the depths, the heights, the wholeness, and the order of the world, even the possible, the contrary to fact, what ought to be, and what must be. Hence, language and symbols not only greatly expand our power over our physical environment, but also make possible our selfhood, our semantic world, and the cultural/social structures in which we dwell. Without language and symbols we would not be human beings. We would have neither sufficient semantic power nor a sufficiently integrated subjective center for rational thought, for higher emotions and aspirations, for a rational will, or for a human life.

Of course our selfhood, our mental powers, and our culture had to develop together; they are interdependent. But somehow our early ancestors, with their native semantic powers, were able to develop a protolanguage; and with the added powers this rudimentary language made possible, they were able to improve their se-

matic tools. This has been, and still is, an ongoing process. But at some point in the long history of culture and self-development there was a sufficiently enlarged and empowered self and sufficient cultural capital for the culture to takeoff. We are now at the point in human history where we are more consciously committed to, and involved in, self development and the advancement of the culture than ever before. But many are pulling back from efforts over the past century to bring critical intelligence into the development of the society. Yet developments in the culture play themselves out in the society, even though there is usually a social lag.

In early societies, as previously remarked, the culture developed more or less unconsciously and uncritically. This does not mean that there were no restraints or requirements on the culture. Cultural developments that met needs of the society tended to survive and those that did not perished. Cultural criticism, however, was rudimentary and lax. The contents of most experiences, even the contents of some fantasies and dreams, were taken to obtain in the world. This resulted in a very rich but chaotic world. The history of cultural development has been a progressive tightening of the principles of logical and epistemic criticism and a correlative shrinking of the world in some respects and enlargement of it in others, with increasing orderliness. As we turn the pages of history from antiquity toward modern times, as David Hume remarked in the eighteenth century, it is amazing how much more orderly the world becomes.

THE INVERSION OF MODERN WESTERN CULTURE

Of course cultural development, whether by unconscious or critical processes, can go awry, even at very basic levels. The most fundamental requirement on the culture is that it be fruitful in the human enterprise. How this requirement works, however, depends

on the way the human enterprise is understood, and, of course how the human enterprise is defined is itself a cultural matter.

A culture defines the human enterprise by its dominant values — what the people count most important and give top priority. The values of a culture are shown by the kinds of institutions that are dominant in the society, the kinds of people who are most admired and those who are looked down on — those who are given the top rewards and benefits or the most prestigious awards, and the kind of people who are considered villains, undesirables, or simply failures.

It is a commonplace to say that our modern Western culture is materialistic. Obviously for-profit institutions are dominant in our society and the primary marks of personal success are wealth and power. We count poverty and powerlessness the major indications of failure. In America everything has to be organized around, or yield to, economic growth and military supremacy, including even the family, community, education, and our intellectual life. We organize our private lives, for the most part, for the pursuit of ever greater material gain or power or both. So the fundamental demand made on our culture is that it provide us, individually and collectively, with the knowledge and understanding, the virtues, the skills, and the social organization for success in the pursuit of these goals. We count our culture superior to others because of its greater success by these standards.

Moslem fundamentalists, however, call America, the recognized vanguard and leader of Western civilization, “the Great Satan.” They are afraid that their people will succumb to the Western way of life, with a radical transformation of their historic civilization for the worse. They are joined in their judgment on our modern way of life by many Christian fundamentalists in our own society. Yet both the Moslem and Christian fundamentalists seem prepared to embrace our commitment to wealth and power without realizing that this is the underlying cause of all that they find most abhorrent and threatening in our civilization.

When a culture is organized around, and the dominant restraints and requirements on it are, the twin objectives of wealth and power, it naturally develops in a way that is fruitful in terms of

these objectives. This means that knowledge must be conceived in a way that, at least in principle, provides human beings with the understanding needed for remaking or controlling the conditions of their existence. In short, the world must be understood in such a way that it lends itself to human domination and exploitation. For these reasons, our civilization has generated the modern scientific conception of knowledge and the naturalistic world view presupposed in our technologically oriented science.

All the great classical civilizations were based on humanistic values and were largely defined by them, at least in their intellectual vision of humankind and the world and in their artistic and religious life, if not in their practical endeavors. Humanistic values are grounded in the needs or normative requirements of selfhood and society — the needs the satisfaction of which is essential, not so much for bodily well-being and comfort, but for the moral well-being and enrichment of the spirit of persons, families, communities, institutions, and states. We all need self-respect and the respect of others; we need to love and to be loved; we need meaningful experiences and relationships; we need meaningful activities and work that involves self-expression and self-fulfillment; we need a stable social order in which we feel at home; we need justice and beauty in our lives; we need the call of the universal and the transcendent to lift us out of the perversions of self-centeredness and to orient us toward higher values; we need roots in a historical and metaphysical context that makes sense of our existence and sustains the human spirit. These are only some of the more important humanistic values.

Social institutions and the society as a whole are sources of humanistic values in their own right; they have their own normative requirements. An institution or a society may be well-formed or deformed, healthy or sick. But the normative structure of society, as the next chapter will explain, is grounded in, and derivative from, the normative structure of persons. Human beings need and normatively require a healthy family, a healthy community, healthy specialized institutions, and a healthy society. And by extension human beings require what the family, the community, the specialized institutions, and the society require.

Of course we cannot separate human beings and their society. They do not form two realities. Without a cultural community there would be no human beings; and without human beings there would be no cultural community. Yet it seems obvious that the ground of the whole complex lies in the constitution and needs of human beings as persons. We advance the culture and the cultural society for the benefit of human beings and the environment in which human beings dwell. Indeed, we have a responsibility for ourselves and for our corner of the universe. Although this responsibility may be more deeply grounded in the structure of the universe, we find it inherent in our constitution as human beings. Whatever transcending imperatives there may be, they do not override those inherent in our own constitution by which we define and live our lives and participate in organizing and running our society.

Within the humanistic perspective, we may raise questions about whether the deep or holistic structure of the universe normatively requires or needs human beings. In other words, is the universe coming to a higher level of fulfillment or perfection in human existence? It might be contended that the universe is coming into self-knowledge in human culture and that the processes of nature reach a new level in the knowledge-based creativity of human beings. Furthermore, it might be said that a level of freedom is achieved in human rationality that is not known to exist elsewhere. All of these developments may be regarded as fulfillments or perfections of being. If there are normative requirements of the universe being fulfilled in humankind, then such requirements are humanistic in the sense that the concept of them falls within our humanistic conceptual framework.¹

The revolution in Western civilization in the early modern period that gave rise to our modern culture was occasioned by a shift in the organizing and governing interests of the civilization, a shift in priorities from humanistic to materialistic concerns. Of course people have always tried to satisfy their materialistic needs, but in the modern period in the West the quest for wealth and power over the conditions of our existence became the overriding concern. Unlike humanistic values that have to do with our identity and

inner well-being, we have an external relationship with materialistic goods and so they are replaceable; they may be bought or exchanged. Hence the dominance of the market economy and its mode of rationality in the modern world.

This shift in dominant values not only gave rise to the hegemony of the market economy, but also a transformation of the culture. It led us to look to our sensory encounters with our physical environment for the data with which to construct an intellectual account of the world that would, at least in principle, make possible mastery of nature in a way that would enable us to exploit it for our materialistic purposes. It is not surprising that the world we know from this approach is one that imposes only factual limits on our will — limits that may be progressively pushed back by advances in science and technology. Such a world is factually constituted through and through without inherent ends, totally devoid of inherent structures of meaning and normativity; it is a world that imposes no normative limits and no normative requirements on us. Natural change, according to this view, is not value oriented; that is, causality engages only present or antecedent elemental or environmental factual conditions. It is a world made to order for us to impose our will upon it.

A major difficulty, however, is that this is a world in which we ourselves cannot dwell; it is no longer our home. Indeed, the impact of the modern intellectual revolution on the culture in terms of which we define ourselves, live our lives, and organize and run our institutions has been devastating. It has cut the grounds from under our humanistic culture — our human, social, moral, political, aesthetic, and religious concepts and ways of thought. The dominant philosophical issue in our culture for the past three hundred years has been how to understand the humanistic dimension of selfhood and the culture (especially subjectivity, normativity, knowledge, rationality, agency, freedom, morality, art, and religion) in light of the modern theory of knowledge based on sensory experience for data-gathering and theory confirmation, and the resulting naturalistic world view presupposed in modern science. It is widely held that, regardless of the human consequences, some interpretation or explanation of the humanistic dimension of the

culture must be found that protects the scientific view that reality is only factually constituted through and through, without either a value or a meaning dimension. Consequently, it is not uncommon for religious beliefs to be regarded as superstition, art as subjectivistic expression, and moral and political beliefs as ideology (that is, as not part of the cognitive enterprise but only expressions of the preferences and choices of the power structure of the particular historical community, without any claim to objective truth). Even some defenders of religion and morality contend that neither religion nor morality is a part of the cognitive enterprise. Some conservatives claim that religion is a matter of unreasoned faith that is immune to criticism and that moral judgments are grounded in faith-based assumptions or beliefs, with no cognitive ground.

With our increasing emphasis on wealth and power, growing dependence on science and technology, and rising levels of education geared to economic growth and military power, the scientific/technological way of thought dominates our practical endeavors, our intellectual life, and our educational system, and, even though we complain about the lack of scientific literacy, the broad outlines of the naturalistic world view of science is widely accepted. The result is that the humanistic dimension of the culture has become problematic, gone soft, and lost much of its power in our lives and in our institutions.

Our identity, our rationality, our norms and values, and our social institutions are no longer underwritten by our intellectual vision of humankind and the world. In disenchanting the world in our effort to gain mastery of it, we evicted ourselves. It is a world in which we as knower-agents have no place. Our selfhood, indeed the whole human phenomenon, is rendered a dangler without a context that makes our lives meaningful and our existence intelligible. Faced with this absurdity, the dominant response has been to reprocess ourselves conceptually in such a way that we and the whole human phenomenon will fit into the world as scientifically defined. But in doing so, we deny our humanity.

This is not just a matter of belief; it disturbs our selfhood, for we are knowledge-based beings. Each person is constituted by

one's normative self-concept as a human being and as the individual one is. We define and live our lives in terms of our understanding of ourselves and our world; and our life attitudes and inner strength depend on how we comprehend ourselves as human-beings-in-the-world. So we mutilate ourselves and thwart our lives by intellectually reprocessing ourselves so that we will fit into the scientifically defined world. The ways of thought that disenchant the world and reduced the idea of God to a superstition by eliminating structures of meaning, normative laws, and teleological causality from our view of things, when turned upon ourselves, render personhood a superstitious idea and dehumanize us; they reduce us to complex physical systems, without a subjective or normative dimension (without freedom and dignity), subject to the same naturalistic causal laws and pointless processes of change as everything else.

One major response to this development at the present time is skepticism about the whole intellectual enterprise or outright rejection of any foundation in knowledge or the structure of reality for any part of the culture, not even for modern science itself. This is often proclaimed as "postmodernism," but it is not so much a counter response to modern naturalism as a logical consequence of it, for modern naturalism, fully developed, eviscerates the cognitive enterprise, including science itself.

Such a culture fails most fundamentally. It undercuts and defeats the human enterprise, however it is conceived. The modern conception of knowledge and the world view generated by our dominant cultural perspective undermine the humanistic foundations of human identity, society, and the whole culture, even science and the technological enterprise on which our wealth and power depend. Clearly something is radically wrong. We can conclude only that modern Western civilization is misdirected and self-defeating. It is only within the humanistic perspective and its conceptual system that we can achieve a coherent culture and a unified world view. Indeed, it is only within the humanistic perspective and a humanistic culture that we can live as human beings and run our institutions.

THE NEED FOR A HUMANISTIC RENAISSANCE

The human plight in our age cries out for a humanistic renaissance, one that would be nothing less than a major cultural revolution. The humanities, philosophy and the disciplines that study life and culture in terms of a conceptual system that is grounded in selfhood and lived experience, should play a major role in preparing the way for cultural renewal. They constitute our primary disciplinary approach to cultural criticism and reconstruction. But unfortunately the humanities are ill prepared for the task, for they themselves have become perverted in their search for intellectual respectability in our scientific/technological age. In their study of the culture and its ways of understanding the world, the humanities, for the most part, concentrate on facts and accept modern science as the paradigm of knowledge and intelligibility. The first order of business for the humanities is to examine themselves. They must regain their own proper perspective, their authentic framework of thought, and their own methodology; and, then, they should assume their proper role in the study and criticism of life and culture.

The humanistic culture is primarily the culture that is grounded in, forms, and expresses selfhood, lived experience, and social reality. It is the culture in terms of which we define and live our lives and organize and run our institutions and society. The dominant humanistic categories are those of meaning, subjectivity, the mental, spirit, value, normativity, selfhood, personhood, agency, acts, rationality, freedom, lives, cultural objects, social entities and structures, human history, teleological causality, and the like. These categories are extended to ultimate reality in religion and theology. The humanistic culture contrasts with the modern scientific culture, which is defined by our concern to know and to understand the world in a way that would, in principle, give us power to manipulate and to control the conditions of our existence and to im-

pose our will upon the world. The scientific categories are grounded in, form, and express only sensory observation of, and thought about, objects in a way that guides action on things. In modern times, the scientific descriptive/explanatory conceptual system has been cleansed of all humanistic concepts. Its dominant categories are existence, factuality, energy, physical objects, events, quantity, and nonteleological causality that engages only elemental or antecedent existential and factual structures.

The modern scientific world view gives us a world devoid of an inner realm of subjectivity, inherent structures of meaning, normativity, values, rationality, and teleological causality. Modern naturalism takes this world picture to be true of the world as it is. Human beings and their cultural and social products are intellectually reprocessed to fit them into the world understood in this manner. So it has to give either a subjectivistic or a reductionistic interpretation of the humanistic culture, especially the language of value and meaning. Realistic humanism, on the other hand, is the position that the humanistic culture is objective, that the correct world view must be based on an integrated culture that is grounded in and expresses the whole range of human experience and thought, and that it must be such that it makes sense of and reinforces the human enterprise as we know it in lived experience.

Realistic humanism is based on the knowledge-yielding character of both our emotive (affective and conative) experience in which the value dimension of the culture is grounded and the modes of experience in which the language of meaning is grounded, namely, reflection on our own subjectivity and behavior and perceptual understanding of the expressions and behavior of others. If these modes of experience do not give us knowledge-yielding access to dimensions of value and inherent structures of meaning in the relevant subject matter, we must interpret the language of value and meaning in purely factual or physicalistic terms or as not part of the language of knowledge. While some philosophers have taken the latter alternative for value language, it is difficult to see how it could be an option for the language of meaning. The realistic humanist, however, takes emotive experience, reflection on our own subjective states and acts, and experience of the expressions and

acts of others as capable of yielding perceptual knowledge of their subject matter, thus opening to us dimensions of reality not available through sensory observation alone. (For a summary argument for these claims, see “The Case for Realistic Humanism” in Appendix A.)

The basic humanistic categories are value and meaning. The realistic value theory assumed in this work (but argued for in appendix A and in earlier books) takes *ought* to be the basic value concept. Accordingly, something is good if it ought to be or if it is more or less the way it ought to be; and something is bad if it ought not to be, if it is not the way it ought to be, or if it is a way that it ought not to be. An “ought” sentence indicates a normative requiredness in its subject matter. It indicates that a given situation normatively requires a being of a certain kind (e.g., the work load in the office requires another secretary); or it indicates that a given individual ought to have certain features (e.g., James’s job requires that he learn how to use a computer). These are social situations, but anything that may be by its own inner dynamics well-formed or deformed, healthy or sick, or mature or immature not only possesses certain features and properties, but also has an inherent normative structure. It ought to have or ought to come to have a certain form or it ought to function in a certain way. In other words, some subject matters have things, features, or structures *normatively in* them as well as existentially or factually in them. Normativity, like factuality, is a mode of constitution; it is a way in which various kinds of elements or features are bound together to form identifiable wholes. To describe this kind of subject matter factually (i.e., in terms of its elements and their factual relationships or the features and properties exemplified in it) is to leave out an important dimension of it, namely, its normative or value dimension. And surely such normative structures in some things or situations make a causal difference; they must be caught up in the causal dynamics inherent in the subject matter. This is teleological causality — the causal constraint or pull of what ought to be in its own realization. In other words, contrary to a widely held dogma in modern thought, value concepts must have a descriptive/explanatory role in our intellectual efforts to know and

understand some subject matters, especially in the biological and behavioral fields.

Meaning is the other most distinctive humanistic category. Subject matter with an inherent structure of meaning has a logical form and a semantic (or intentional) content (e.g., a sensory experience, memory, desire, feeling, thought, intention, act, image, picture, symbol, text, or anything of the kind). We may say that any such subject matter has something *semantically* in it, as distinct from having something existentially or normatively in it. In other words, meaning or intentionality is another mode, along with factuality and normativity, by which some things are constituted. Something with an inherent structure of meaning has its identity and unity in terms of its logical form and what is semantically in it, even though it may have a factual and normative dimension as well. Subjective (or mental) states and acts are the primary inherent structures of meaning, but all cultural and social entities and structures have a meaning dimension. And surely inherent structures of meaning are involved causally in behavioral and social dynamics, if no where else.

If philosophers, humanities scholars, and other cultural critics should regain confidence in the foundations of the humanistic culture along the lines of realistic humanism, they could play a powerful role in bringing about the humanistic renaissance we seek.

HUMANISTIC CRITICISM AND SOCIAL REFORM

In critical studies of the culture, we need to distinguish among the social character, the structure of feeling, and the mind of a culture.

The social character of a culture is constituted by the human identities, institutions, offices, and roles that the culture generates and legitimizes. With respect to human identities, a culture may be tribal, nationalistic, or cosmopolitan; aristocratic, class-based, or

meritocratic; racist, sexist, or egalitarian. With respect to institutions and offices, a culture may be humanistic or materialistic, according to whether the dominant institutions and offices serve primarily humanistic or materialistic needs. Of course there is overlapping. The family, for example, is primarily a humanistic institution, but it serves many materialistic needs as well. It serves fewer materialistic needs in advanced technological/industrial/service societies than in earlier times when people depended less on the market economy and the government. On the other hand, a bank, which is primarily a materialistic institution, may provide career opportunities for people that may be integrated into their identities and their lives in a way that enhances their sense of self-worth and makes their lives more meaningful.

Of course materialistic needs must not be neglected. They include the need for food and drink, conditions for bodily health and comfort, physical security, and the like; they also include the need for the necessary material or economic means of satisfying the humanistic needs of individuals, institutions, and the society as a whole, for ends without means are only dreams. The danger to be avoided, however, is the cultural conversion of material means into ends themselves — the pursuit of wealth and power as a means to more wealth and power, or, what is as bad, a cultural emphasis on the accumulation of material wealth or power, leaving the ends to be achieved by means of it to uncultivated or even harmful and dehumanizing desires, passions, and whims.

Everyone understands and seeks materialistic values; they are objects of universal concern. All of us want food and drink, bodily health and comfort, security of body and property, and the material means for doing what we like and having what we want. So it is not surprising that materialistic values become dominant. Unlike higher values, they appeal to all without regard to moral character or the level of education and refinement.

Talk about higher values and the cultivation and refinement of affective sensibilities sounds like elitism in a culture that has expunged value concepts from its descriptive/explanatory language. Cut loose from its grounding in reality, value language is tied to and defined in terms of desires and affective experiences, with no rec-

ognized value reality or conceptual system in terms of which desires and affective experiences can be educated or judged and ranked. Any effort to cultivate, refine, and instruct our value experiences and attitudes that goes beyond attending to or instructing about their factual conditions is taken to be cultural imperialism — the effort to impose the likes, desires, and preferences of an individual, class, or ethnic group on others.

However, if realistic humanism is true, and the case for it is convincing, then attitudes, feelings, desires, and aspirations can be appraised, cultivated, and educated. People may be prepared educationally to attend to and to feel the pull of higher values and normative requirements. Indeed, higher values move people more powerfully than materialistic values. Wars, for instance, are always fought in the name of higher values, for it is difficult to get people to make major sacrifices for purely materialistic reasons.

The social character of a culture is judged, in part, by the structure of feeling of the people. The emotive quality of, and the basic attitudes generated by, lived experience within the personal identities and social forms of the society constitute an experiential judgment on the social infrastructure of the society and on the culture embodied in it. People who are formed by and live within a culture and its social structures have some sense of the judgment of their own experience and the experience of those with whom they live in close relationships. But perhaps the most reliable access to the structure of feeling of a society is through its expression in the art and the psychopathologies the society produces. Although the art and the reports of counselors and psychotherapists constitute a reservoir of emotive data, they stand in need of interpretation and assessment by humanistic scholars and critics.

The artistic culture and the reports of psychological counselors, however, will reveal only the general judgment of lived experience on the social character of the culture or some aspect of it; it will only indicate whether the society is more or less healthy or suffering from some serious disorder. If there are social pathologies, neither the art nor the psychotherapist's reports on the malaise of individuals will be of much help in diagnosing what is specifically wrong. Social scientists can provide empirical data and theories

that will help social critics locate particular social disorders, and philosophers can locate deep troubles in the culture that underlie some kinds of personal and social disorders.

It is the task of philosophers to examine the cultural mind of a civilization — that is, the basic organizing and governing interests, ideas, and beliefs that shape how the people think and act. The governing interests define the people's culture-generating stance toward the world; they shape, or at least influence, the basic ideas and beliefs in terms of which the people order their experience, define the world, live their lives, and organize their society. Even if the dominant interests that shape the culture and the society are being more or less satisfied, the verdict of lived experience may be that the culture and the social structure are thwarting or distorting the identity and the lives of the people. Philosophers, sensitive to logical difficulties in the deep structure of the culture, may find that the basic ideas and beliefs that govern the way the people organize their experience and define the world are inconsistent with the unavoidable presuppositions of human experience, thought, and action. And they may find that the false ideas and assumptions in the culture about the knowledge-yielding powers of the human mind and the basic structure of the world were generated by the society's culture-generating stance toward the world. The fact that the organizing and governing interests generate a distorted, life-destructive culture and social structure is sufficient reason to call them into question. And a philosophical exploration of the nature of selfhood and society may reveal what the culture-generating stance of human beings should be.

There is general agreement that materialistic interests define the culture-generating stance of modern Western civilization and many critics agree that we are suffering from cultural inversion. It is a thesis of this work that, if we are going to have a culture and a social order oriented toward growing and nurturing human beings, we must restore humanistic values to their proper governing role in our lives, in our culture, and in our social order. This is a big order; it is the greatest challenge of our age.

Philosophers need to expose the basic faults in the foundations of our culture by an examination of the philosophical perplexities

that the culture generates; and they should propose and debate in the intellectual community ways of achieving coherence in the foundations of the culture that would preserve its life-supporting functions. There could emerge from such debates a vision of humankind and the world that would underwrite the human enterprise properly defined in humanistic terms. This will not be easy, however. Philosophers, being products of the culture, usually try even desperate measures to validate the prevailing cultural mind before they will consider alternatives. Philosophy was said to be the handmaiden of theology in the Middle Ages; and it is, for the most part, the handmaiden of science in our age. Nevertheless, philosophy proved itself to be a powerful revolutionary force in the transition from Christian feudalism to modern Western civilization, both in dismantling the old and in building the new culture. And it can be such a force again for a humanistic cultural revolution in our time.

In order for the intellectual vision and conceptual resources of a humanistic philosophy to grip the imagination of the age and conceptually inform and structure the whole range of human experience, thought, and behavior, and thus effect a cultural revolution, there would have to be a responsive cultural climate. The people, especially the trend-setters and opinion-makers, would have to come to realize that our dominant way of life is failing us and that the trouble lies with our governing values and ways of thought. The big problem is how the people, in living their lives and running their institutions, can shift from our reigning materialistic values and naturalistic ways of thought to humanistic values and a humanistic vision of humankind and the world.

Philosophers, humanities scholars and critics, and students of society should work together on how our society can heal itself; but the healing is something that the society must do itself, for healing can come only from within. A deranged culture and a disordered society, if left to blind historical forces, are likely to grow worse. Like the damaged self, a pathological society needs probing self-examination and reeducation; it needs to reconstitute its value system by turning toward humanistic values and to rethink its ways of thought and behavior in light of its new orientation.

In a humanistic culture under a realistic interpretation, human beings, morality, and society would be understood in quite different categories than in our present scientifically oriented culture; the human enterprise and success in life would be conceived in radically different ways, with the emphasis on human growth and inner well-being rather than economic growth and military power; education would be a very different process; and the major institutions would be revolutionized. In the following chapters, we shall explore what these transformations would be like. In the concluding chapter, we shall consider some steps we can take to bring about such a society.