

THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY

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PREFACE

Profound changes are taking place in the cultural complexion of the world. Not only is the world in a state of dynamic and revolutionary flux, but a whole new era is opening up in community, national and international affairs.

At the centre of all this activity is the individual. With all the changes which are taking place in economic and political systems, ethical and religious values, ecological and environmental practices, and social and demographic patterns, now is a propitious moment to be enquiring into the nature, role, and responsibilities of the individual. For it is clear that more and more people around the world are having difficulty coping with the realities of the present and prospects for the future.

It would be foolhardy to contend that *The Cultural Personality* can deal with either the complexity or the enormity of this situation. What it attempts to do, therefore, is set out a general framework or approach capable of addressing some of the more significant dimensions of it. It does so by postulating an ideal prototype of the human personality against which individuals can measure the reality of their own experience, and to which they can look for guidance in times of adversity. It is a prototype based on the conviction that culture, especially when it is defined cosmologically as a "worldview" in general and "ordered whole" in particular, provides one of the most promising avenues for coming to grips with the types of problems with which individuals are confronted in the modern world.

The monograph is divided into five parts. In part one, an assessment is made of the context within which the contemporary individual is located. The conclusion that is derived from this assessment is that a new prototype is needed to deal with the complexities

of the present as well as the uncertainties of the future. In part two, this new prototype is explored as a concept, largely by juxtaposing the two interdependent ideas of "culture" and "personality". What results is the notion of "the cultural personality". In part three, the main characteristics of the cultural personality are elucidated. In part four, the cultivation of the various capabilities, sensitivities and sensibilities which comprise the cultural personality are addressed. And finally, in part five, consideration is given to the way in which the cultural personality functions most effectively in the real world.

Like other monographs in the World Culture Project (see Appendix A), *The Cultural Personality* is exploratory and illustrative rather than authoritative or definitive in nature. Its purpose is to sketch out the main contours and principal features of the cultural personality and put enough flesh on them so that this particular prototype of the human personality can stand alongside other personality prototypes as a potential guide to human action and behaviour in the future.

It remains to express my gratitude to Jean Elliott, Joy MacFadyen, R. Murray Schafer, Sarah Aston and the members of the International Advisory Council (see Appendix B) for their valuable contributions to this monograph. While recognizing these contributions, I nevertheless assume full responsibility for everything contained in the text.

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LIVE IN THE WHOLE, IN THE GOOD, IN THE BEAUTIFUL

GOETHE

INTRODUCTION

The study of culture properly begins with the study of the cultural elements of the individual.¹

James Feibleman
The Theory of Human Culture

Culture and Personality. Personality and Culture. Profound words. Provocative words. Separately, these two words conjure up entirely different images. Together, they combine to form the cultural personality, surely one of the most relevant and timely ideas to appear on the global horizon in decades.

In an historical sense, could there be a more auspicious time to be enquiring into the nature and nurturing of the cultural personality? With all the economic, environmental, social, political and technological transformations occurring in the world, could there be a more propitious moment to be enquiring into the role and responsibilities of the individual with respect to the natural environment, other species, other human beings, future generations, people living in other parts of the world, and perhaps most important of all, the self?

From all accounts, more and more people around the world are having difficulty coping with the trials and tribulations of living in the modern world. Why is this? What vortex of forces is conspiring to make it difficult for people to confront the future with hope, optimism, and enthusiasm rather than anxiety, uncertainty, and apprehension?

THE CONTEXT OF THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY

It is not difficult to identify some of the forces which are making it difficult for people to deal with the realities of the present and prospects for the future. Since many of these forces are external in nature, let us probe these forces first, and then go on to consider some of the forces that are more internal in nature.

First of all, there are the myriad changes that are taking place in contemporary economic systems. So complex are the changes that are occurring in economic ideologies, production and distribution methods, income and employment practices, taxation measures and capital movements that people in all parts of the world are having difficulty adjusting to them. It is not only the complexity of these changes which is causing concern for many people, it is also the size, rapidity and pervasiveness of these changes. In today's world, it is difficult for anyone to escape the consequences of increases in the cost of living, the emergence of larger and larger trading blocks and economic super states, increased concentrations of wealth and power in fewer and fewer hands, escalations in public debts, and the operations of multinational corporations. All of these developments are producing a sense of uneasiness that it will prove less and less possible for people to earn a living and cope with the realities of a world that is in perpetual economic motion.

Such concerns are by no means limited to people who are living in particular parts of the world or working in specific industries. Indeed, they are shared by people from all parts of the world - Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and Europe -as well as people working in every conceivable type of economic activity.

With all the profound changes which are occurring in the ownership of business and industry, the nature of work and employment, labour-management relations, the demand for consumer products and the location of commercial activity, who is not seriously concerned about jobs, reductions in the standard of living, unemployment, and the ability to make ends meet in the future?

If economic change is proving difficult to cope with, consider technological change. It is not only the transformations which are taking place in the nature of work and the marketplace which are proving difficult to contend with. It is also the fact that technology is transforming virtually every aspect and dimension of human existence.

Technology is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it opens up limitless possibilities for the storage, retrieval and utilization of knowledge, information and ideas, thereby making it possible in principle for people everywhere in the world to enjoy the benefits of learning, discovery and access to the entire heritage of humankind. On the other hand, it makes it more difficult for people to adjust to the demands and dictates of a media-oriented and computer-dominated world. While the cruelties of war, poverty, famine, human rights abuses and corruption are never easy to accept, prior to the computer revolution and the space age, people had time to absorb these changes, largely because images and information moved around the world very slowly. Today, all that has changed. When news about racial violence, starvation, genocide, war, military coups, tornadoes and natural catastrophes can be transmitted to every nook and cranny of the globe the instant they are happening, it takes an enormous amount of psychic resistance on the part of all people to withstand it. For it is one thing to read about the devastation caused by a hurricane, a drought or a war in a book or newspaper a year or two after they happened, it is quite another thing to see them unfolding before your very eyes.

If it is difficult to adjust to the constant assault on the senses that is going on every minute of every day, it is even more difficult to accept the predictions for more technological change in the future. Rather than being able to look forward to a period of relative calm, tranquillity and a slowing down of technological change, all the evidence suggests that technological change will be speeded up in the future. With increased expenditure on computer systems, space exploration, satellite communications, telecommunications and the like, it could hardly be otherwise. Surely it will take a great deal of psychic stability on the part of all people to make the transition to living in an age in which every day feels like the industrial revolution.

If economic and technological change is proving difficult to deal with, so is political change. Not only are many countries in the world going through revolutionary transformations in their political ideologies and constitutional arrangements, but also they are experiencing numerous transformations in their governmental processes and bureaucratic practices. It is difficult to think of a country anywhere in the world which is not being forced to contend with fundamental rearrangements in its democratic or socialist ideals, conservative or liberal ideologies, demands for independence or sovereignty association, and shifts in political and governmental power. Whereas the political arena was once rather stable, as recent events in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America have demonstrated very clearly, now it is exceedingly dynamic.

Countless developments on the ecological and environmental front are compounding the rate, complexity and pervasiveness of these changes. Whereas the environment was largely taken for granted two or three decades ago, presumably because of the belief that technology could conquer and control it, today a whole new environmental consciousness is sweeping the world. Rather than controlling the environment as was

commonly assumed, it is clear that technology has been running roughshod over the environment. As this happens, a whole new set of environmental policies and practices comes into play. While it will take decades to reverse the damage that has been done by unfettered technological change and economic growth, especially the inordinate consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources, the colossal amount of atmospheric pollution, holes in the ozone layer, and mountains of industrial and human waste, it is undeniable that a new environmental consciousness is imperative if the globe's fragile ecosystem is to be preserved and protected in the future.

This new environmental awareness is mandatory in a world threatened by exponential population growth and standing room only. Even the most optimistic forecasts suggest that expanding numbers, particularly when they are etched against shrinkages in arable land and the depletion of non-renewable resources, may prove to be one of the most difficult and destabilizing problems of all. While urbanization may offer a temporary reprieve in a purely spatial sense, largely by sanctioning vertical as opposed to horizontal expansion and compressing more and more people into the same physical space, it does so at an exorbitant price. Not only does it dramatically increase the amount of noise, air, water, and traffic pollution, but also it makes it more and more difficult to maintain the level of social, recreational, and human amenities which are needed for a healthy and sane existence.

Finally there are all the demographic developments which are occurring in the world. Not only are societies becoming more and more pluralistic in character, thereby increasing the potential for racial violence and ethnic unrest, but also there is the revolution that is going on between the sexes. Whereas the former changes are having a profound effect on immigration and emigration patterns everywhere in the world, the latter are transforming the entire spectrum of relations between men and women. Relations in this

area which were once rather well-defined and quite stable are now up in the air and very dynamic. Moreover, it is impossible to predict where they will land in the future.

When all these economic, technological, political, environmental, and demographic developments are placed side by side and added up, they produce a portrait of a world that is in revolutionary if not cataclysmic change. Under these circumstances, it is easy to see why more and more people around the world are feeling confused, troubled and insecure. It is not that all of these changes are necessarily negative. In fact, many of them, such as the quest for equality between the sexes and the environmental movement, are exceedingly positive. It is just that they are all compounding at such an accelerated rate, and are so gargantuan in size and significance, that they are making it difficult for people to know how to respond to them. While there may be a grain of truth in the old adage that "the more things change, the more they stay the same", this would seem to be anything but true for the modern world. In fact, in the modern world, change itself may have become the problem. Its rapidity, complexity and propinquity have become so pronounced that people in all parts of the world are having the utmost difficulty dealing with it.

Unfortunately, many of the traditional safeguards which have been designed to deal with this situation are also undergoing profound transformations. This is tending to heighten the sense of anxiety and apprehension that many people are experiencing.

At the more elemental level, there are all those instant escape mechanisms and recreational outlets which people have evolved over the centuries to provide a counterpoise to excessive or revolutionary change. Whereas it was once possible to escape from the relentlessness of societal and global change through access to nature, walks in the countryside, long weekends, holidays and travel, fewer and fewer people are able today to

take advantage of these opportunities for rest, relaxation and recuperation. The reasons for this are not difficult to detect. Either modern economic, technological and political systems are compelling people to play the game all the time, or people lack the financial resources to take advantage of these opportunities. In either case, it is less and less possible for people in all parts of the world to engage in those therapeutic and recuperative measures which are necessary to enable the mind, body, soul, and spirit to recover from the demands of a hectic and speeded-up existence.

To compound this difficulty, at the more profound level, there is the breakdown in many of the traditional social systems and support structures which have been evolved to cope with the consequences of dynamic change. Whereas it was once possible to look to the family, the neighbourhood, or the community to cushion the shocks of pronounced economic, technological, political, demographic, and environmental dislocations, today this no longer seems possible. In an age where the family, kinship relationships, neighbourhoods and communities are themselves in a considerable state of uncertainty and flux, if not visibly breaking up, individuals are finding it more and more difficult to turn to these conventional sources of stability and security in order to counteract the stresses and strains of modern life. While many new social systems and support structures are in the process of formation, particularly among women, the elderly and the disadvantaged, they are in such an embryonic state of development that it is highly unlikely that they will provide the stability and security which is needed for some time in the foreseeable future.

Concomitant with these developments has been the erosion that has taken place in traditions, roots and identities. In the past, if transformations at the local, regional, national or international level were proving difficult to deal with, and there were not a lot of

safety nets or support systems around to help, it was always possible to look to traditions, roots and identities for consolation and guidance. Even here, however, it is harder and harder to find solace, stability and relief. Either these traditional touchstones are undergoing dramatic transformations of their own, or they are being rapidly eroded along with everything else. One only has to look at the impact of the media on Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America or Europe to realize how difficult it is to maintain individual and collective identities in an age characterized by relentless and pervasive change.

At the most profound level of all, these problems are being severely aggravated by the slow but steady deterioration in moral values, religious institutions, and spiritual practices in many parts of the world. While the erosion of these venerable ideals and institutions has been going on for some time, it has been particularly rapid in the latter part of the twentieth century. Not only has there been a challenging of religious, moral and spiritual authority in many parts of the world, but also there has been a steadily evolving skepticism over the ability of the world's religions and religious leaders to come up with answers to a whole host of contemporary problems. Even in parts of the world where there have been concerted attempts to bring about religious revivals, such as in the Middle East with Islamic fundamentalism or in Europe and North America with the born-again Christian movement, it is apparent that these attempts are driven far more by a desire to return to the past than they are by an ability to confront the present and the future.

What seems to be lurking behind many of these developments is a growing realization that a matrix of problems has emerged on the global horizon which stands well beyond the traditional theoretical and practical systems which have been designed to deal with them. Whether it is world population growth, poverty, the environmental crisis, growing inequalities in income distribution, the breakdown of social institutions or the

erosion of religious, ethical and spiritual values, there is a sinking feeling in most parts of the world that the entire global system may be on the brink of bankruptcy. It is not only political ideologies, economic theories, social conventions and religious practices which are being severely tested. More fundamentally, it is the whole legacy of accumulated knowledge, wisdom and understanding which is being shaken to its very foundations.

The combined effect of all these developments is that more and more people are feeling disoriented, disconnected and powerless to influence events. Whereas it was once possible to look outside the self for help in coping with the consequences of dynamic and revolutionary change, today this no longer seems possible. Today, perhaps more than ever before, people are being thrown back on their own resources and are being forced to confront the fallout from all these changes without the benefit of external sources of support. This is coming at a time when profound transformations are taking place in the psychological make-up and well-being of individuals. But how could it be otherwise? Given all the revolutionary developments which are occurring in the external world, is it any wonder that revolutionary changes are also taking place in the internal world?

For one thing, the whole notion of the individual as a one-dimensional person which has dominated the world over much of the last two centuries appears to be on the verge of collapse. Not only has specialization made it difficult for people to relate to one another, but also it has produced people who feel increasingly fragmented, compartmentalized and incomplete. Under these circumstances, is it any wonder that more and more people are finding it difficult to fuse mind, body, emotions, soul, and spirit in a meaningful and symbiotic relationship?

To complicate the matter, much of the psychological literature which has been designed to help people cope with their innermost fears and most intimate problems seems to confound rather than simplify the situation. Whether it is the writings of Freud, Jung, Adler, Maslow, Laing or others, much of this literature seems to raise more questions about human behaviour than it answers at the moment. While in the long-run this may prove to be enormously beneficial and a very necessary state of affairs, at the present time it is of little consolation in helping people to confront the complex psychological problems which are being coughed up by a world in the throes of profound transformational change. It is as if people were bobbing to and fro on the sea of life without a rudder. So much time and energy are expended merely trying to cope with the system and stay afloat that little or no time is left over to get one's bearings and chart one's future course.

While the desire to solve these problems is stronger than ever, the lack of understanding as to how this is best achieved is producing a paralysis of action and uncertainty which is as endemic as it is pervasive. People's actions have become so insignificant and inconsequential in the larger scheme of things that their sense of anxiety and apprehension is more and more tinged with a kind of resignation and despair.

Where do we commence our search for potential solutions to this problem? It is natural to turn first to the real world to see if there are any role models after which people can pattern their behaviour. After all, the ability to seek out and emulate role models has always been a potent source of human action and inspiration. Unfortunately, however, there seem to be very few role models in the real world capable of performing this function. Moreover, the ones that do exist are often invisible to the naked eye.

Clearly, when professional classes and visible elites manifest greater concern for prestige, profits, salaries or votes than they do for justice, jobs, or the needs and rights of others, it is obvious that such groups do not offer viable models on which to predicate human behaviour in the future. Regrettably, many of the individuals and groups which do provide such role models lack the media attention, social status, or public recognition which is needed to have much of an impact on human conduct. However, even if they were able to supply the moral and ethical leadership which is required, it is clear that they are having their own problems coping with the complexities of a computer powered, media-driven world.

If it is not possible to find the clues which are needed in role models in the real world, the next place to look is at the personality prototypes after which people are expected to pattern their behaviour.

While many such personality prototypes exist, two in particular demand our attention since they are so fundamentally related to contemporary life and hence the object of our investigation. They are "economic man" and "specialist man". Surely, there are difficulties with both these prototypes which make it impossible to accept them as viable models for human behaviour in the future.

The principal problem with "economic man" is that the individual is seen primarily as a commodity and maximizer of consumer satisfaction in the marketplace. While this may provide a realistic approximation of how people are treated by modern economic systems and behave in the marketplace, although even here there are considerable grounds for doubt, the real difficulty with this personality prototype is that it relates to only one dimension of the life of the individual. Moreover, as Marx and others so astutely

observed, it tends to treat individuals as economic objects rather than subjects to be exploited and manipulated in the interests of the marketplace.

Many of these same objections apply to "specialist man". Just as economic systems and labour practices are highly specialized in the modern era, so individuals are encouraged to specialize in the development of a narrow range of practical skills which will be saleable in the marketplace. The problem here is modern economic systems are changing so rapidly that these skills are often redundant not long after they are acquired, thereby leaving the individual at the mercy of powerful producers. Add to this the fact that both these prototypes yield a vision of the individual which is fragmented, one-dimensional, acquisitive and incomplete, and it is clear that it would be foolhardy to predicate personality behaviour in the future on either of them.

There is one final area where clues may be found which are helpful in discovering solutions to this problem. This is in the historical literature. Fortunately, there exists here a wealth of insight and understanding pertinent to the nature and behaviour of the human personality, the role of the individual in society, and the character of the contemporary predicament facing humanity. Much of this literature is religious, philosophical, and psychological in nature.

In the religious domain, there are all the teachings and historical writings of the world's great religions, such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, and others too numerous to mention here. One only has to look at the Bible, the Talmud, the Koran, the Upanishads, the Sayings of Confucius, or any other sacred texts to realize how pregnant all these religious writings are with valuable insights into human behaviour in a variety of social situations and geographical circumstances. These insights

are multiplied many times over when the focus is shifted to the philosophical literature. From Plato, Aristotle and Socrates down through Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Goethe to Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Gandhi, and Tagore, a significant portion of the philosophical thought of every culture has been devoted to an understanding of the trials and tribulations of the individual and his or her role and responsibilities in the world. Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, a very substantial segment of the psychological literature from Freud to Jung and others has been concerned with the problems of the individual, not only as individual but also as a member of a social group. While much of this literature seems to raise more questions than it answers at the moment, as indicated earlier, there is little doubt that eventually it will cast a great deal of light on the way in which individuals can deal more effectively with the demands and dictates of a rapidly changing world.

While all of this literature is enormously helpful in enabling people to cope with the vicissitudes and vagaries of contemporary existence, it is not without its problems. In the first place, it is extremely diffuse. It exists in so many diverse locations that it is difficult to pin down and pull together in such a way that it provides a prototype of the human personality which is consistent with contemporary reality. Secondly, much of it seems designed to deal more with abnormal than normal behaviour, or with particular problems and highly esoteric areas of the human personality. As a result, not enough of it is focused on the general problem of gleaning a clearer understanding of the nature of the individual and his or her role and responsibilities in the modern world. Thirdly, it often appears more appropriate to the past than it does to the present or the future. For example, many of the most important religious, philosophical, and psychological writings dealing with the individual are more in tune with a world that is distinctly different from the world we live in today. In a world characterized by profound secular and sacred change, unprecedented population growth, extraterrestrial discoveries and colossal communications

developments, much of the literature that has been written about the human personality seems to be of limited usefulness in coming to grips with the types of problems which people are encountering at the present time or may be expected to encounter in the future. In consequence, while we must be exceedingly careful not to reject this indispensable source of knowledge, wisdom, insight, and understanding, we must be equally careful to ensure that it is consistent and pertinent to our contemporary needs.

While it is clear that there is much to be learned from the scholarly literature, it is equally clear that what is needed most at this particular juncture in world history is a new prototype of the human personality. Such a prototype must be capable of coming to grips with the stark realities of the present as well as the most likely prospects for the future.

Of all the places where fragments can be found which are helpful in piecing together this prototype, it is the cultural area that provides the most promising possibilities. This is because the cultural area has contained within it the depth of understanding as well as the breadth of vision which is needed to illuminate the path for the future. It is through deeper and deeper forays into the realm of culture, therefore, that we are able to slowly but surely piece together a portrait of the human personality which possesses many of the attributes and capabilities which are needed to confront the complexities of the present and the unlimited potential of the future.

THE CONCEPT OF THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY

The cultural personality is a compound term. It derives its significance from two of the most dynamic and compelling concepts imaginable, namely personality and culture. Since both these concepts contain a panorama of different meanings,² it makes sense to examine them separately first, and then connect them to stand face to face with the concept of the cultural personality.

First, there is personality. Like the concept of culture, it has a long history. In fact, it can be traced back to ancient times, to the Greeks and the Romans and their use of the term "persona" from which the modern term personality is derived.

In its original form, persona was the term that was used to denote the masks used in Greek and Roman drama. These masks, which were adaptations of the masks of comedy and tragedy and had horns in the mouthpiece to amplify the sound, were used to distinguish the role of the actor or actress. Interestingly, this led to a fundamental cleavage between the two basic dimensions of personality: the real self which is more internal in nature; and the role the individual is expected to play in society which is more external in nature. It is a cleavage that has persisted right up to the present day. Whether it is the individual seen in terms of a subjective-objective split, the self and the other, the introvert and the extrovert, the egoist and the altruist, or any other dichotomous view, this basic separation between the internal and external dimensions of the personality, often in conflict with one another, has been a classic preoccupation of personality theory.

This same split is manifested in the differences that exist between the notions of personality and character: the former being viewed more as external and socially and

environmentally oriented; and the latter being viewed more as internal and morally and spiritually oriented. Gordon Allport explains this split in terms of the original Latin and Greek meanings of the terms, as well as their subsequent impact on American and European psychology:

No less fascinating than the term **personality** is the term **character**. The two are often used interchangeably, although the first is of Latin derivation, the second of Greek: meaning engraving. It is the mark of a man - his pattern of traits or his life-style... European psychologists, however, seem to have a preference for **character**, while American psychologists favour **personality**. There is an interesting reason for the difference... The former term (personality) suggests appearance, visible behaviour, surface quality; the latter (character) suggests deep (perhaps inborn), fixed, and basic structure. Now American psychology has a preference for environmentalism; its behaviouristic leaning leads it to stress outer movement, visible action. European psychology, on the other hand, tends to stress what is inborn in the nature of man, what is deeply etched and relatively unchanging.³

This same distinction is evident in occidental and oriental philosophy. While there are obviously many exceptions, generally speaking occidental philosophy has been externally and environmentally oriented, concerned largely with asserting human and technological control over nature. Oriental philosophy, on the other hand, has been more internally and spiritually oriented, concerned largely with exploring those deep caverns and vast spaces which exist within human beings themselves. In the vernacular of American and European psychology, the occidental preoccupation suggests a greater focus on "personality", whereas the oriental preoccupation suggests a greater focus on "character".

Over the last two thousand years, both "personality" and "character" have acquired a variety of meanings. These meanings are very much in evidence in most disciplines, but particularly in philosophy, theology, law, sociology and psychology. In

philosophy, for example, personality has been used as a synonym for selfhood, especially as it relates to the idea of perfection and something of supreme value. In theology, both character and personality are conspicuous: character referring to an individual of good moral standing or worth; and personality referring to members of the trinity, that is, the three forms of appearance or persons in the same essence. In law, personality is often used to refer to any individual enjoying legal status, either separately or as a member of a social or community group. And in the therapeutic arts and sciences, personality is generally deemed to be the sum total of all inborn or acquired traits and characteristics.

With the advent of modern psychology and psychoanalysis, interest in the notions of personality and character intensified considerably, so much so that Jan Christiaan Smuts recommended the creation of a new discipline called "Personology" to deal with it:

As the key to all the highest interests of the human race, Personality seems to be quite the most important and fruitful problem to which the thinkers of the coming generation could direct their attention. In Personality will probably be found the answer to some of the hardest and oldest questions that have troubled the heart as well as the head of man. The problem of Personality seems as hard as it is important. Not without reason have thinkers throughout the ages shied off from it. But it holds precious secrets for those who will seriously devote themselves to the new science or discipline of Personology.⁴

With this growing interest in personality has come a renewed interest in the discrepancy between the "essence" of the individual and his or her "role" in society. Regardless of whether it is Freud, Adler, Jung, Maslow, Allport, Linton or others, concerted attempts have been made to understand how and why individuals "behave" the way they do, as well as how they go about organizing their lives to form an overall pattern. Psychologists and psychiatrists often liken this process to peeling an onion, whereby the successive layers or "roles" of the individual are progressively removed until the real self is revealed.

Throughout this monograph, the term personality will be used to embrace both the essence and the role or the internal and external dimensions of the individual. In other words, character will be viewed as a component, albeit an exceedingly important component, of personality. While this is somewhat inconsistent with the scholarly literature, and particularly the historical separation between personality and character, it is consistent with the all-embracing meaning which the term personality is acquiring in the modern world. For example, in his fascinating book *The Cultural Background of Personality*, Ralph Linton defines personality as "the organized **aggregate** of psychological processes and states pertaining to the individual."⁵ In a similar vein, Gordon Allport defines personality as "the dynamic organization **within the individual** of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought"⁶

The following definition from the Encyclopaedia Britannica serves a useful purpose in this regard, since it brings out many of the fundamental aspects of personality we will be concerned with in this monograph:

"the unique organization of psychophysical traits or characteristics, inherent and acquired, that distinguish each individual and are observable in his relations to the environment and to the social group."⁷

This definition serves a valuable purpose in a number of ways. First, it emphasizes the psychophysical traits and characteristics that distinguish each individual and are observable in his or her conduct. In so doing, it embraces the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of the human personality and places the focus directly on those ways of thinking, feeling, acting, behaving, belonging, and especially being, that are basic to the personality of every individual. Second, it emphasizes the distinctiveness of every individual, since, in the final analysis, every human being is "one of a kind" as

manifested by his or her actions, attitudes, beliefs, patterns, values, and ways of perceiving the world. Third, it emphasizes the organization of all the traits and characteristics of the individual, both inherent and exhibited, thereby suggesting that there is some internal process of evaluation and ordering going on as well as some central organizing principle or principles around which individuals orchestrate their behaviour. And finally, it takes into account both the internal and external dimensions of the human personality, particularly as they relate to the self as well as to other human beings and the whole realm of nature. Momentarily we will have the opportunity to probe more deeply into these attributes and characteristics. Here, suffice it to say that they are of utmost importance to the notion of the cultural personality.

If personality is a difficult concept to pin down, so also is culture. For like personality, culture possesses an equally long history of different meanings and definitions. And clearly whatever definition or meaning we employ is bound to have a profound effect on the personality prototype to be derived from it.

A review of the literature suggests that there is a vast array of different definitions of culture which could be used to form the foundation for the cultural personality.⁸ Fortunately, these definitions can be classified according to the basic theme that is inherent in them. This makes it possible to reduce a very unwieldy number of definitions to a much more manageable set of "concepts" of culture. For present purposes, the most relevant of these are: the philosophical; the artistic; the humanistic; the anthropological; and the cosmological.⁹ Interestingly, each of these concepts corresponds to a very specific time period: ancient and medieval; renaissance; romantic; modern; and post modern. It pays to examine each of these concepts in turn, not only because they provide the historical antecedents and theoretical foundations on which the cultural personality is

predicated, but also because they contain clues which are invaluable in unlocking the secrets of the personality prototype we are endeavouring to uncover.

The philosophical concept of culture is one of the oldest. It derives from the Romans, and particularly Cicero who said "culture is the philosophy or cultivation of the mind". Clearly Cicero's intention was to equate culture with the intellectual development of the individual. What is interesting for our purposes is not only the emphasis on intellectual development, but also the emphasis on culture as a **process of cultivation**. It is a process of cultivation which requires constant nurturing and attention, as well as the proper nutrients and ingredients, if it is to grow and flourish effectively.

The advantages of this particular concept of culture for the cultural personality are obvious. By focusing attention on the intellectual development of the individual, it places the spotlight squarely on one of the most important personality prerequisites of all, namely the need to develop the mental capabilities of the individual, and with it, the ability to think logically, clearly, concisely, and coherently. In a world where thinking is often cloudy and confused, this certainly represents an essential dimension of personality development.

Like the philosophical concept, the artistic concept has a long history. It can be traced back to the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, where culture was equated with the Muses, and particularly those of epic and lyric poetry, music, tragedy, sacred song, dance, and comedy. It is a concept of culture which is still very much in vogue in many parts of the world.

Whereas the emphasis in the philosophical concept is on the development of the intellectual capabilities, the emphasis in the artistic concept is on the development of aesthetic capabilities. Clearly this brings into play a broader range of skills and abilities, since the development of one's aesthetic capabilities requires not only mental ability, but sensory, emotional and spiritual ability as well. The object here is not so much pure thought or intellectual prowess, but rather the expression of qualities which relate more to the affective as opposed to the cognitive side of the personality.

When culture is defined in artistic or aesthetic terms, it brings into focus two dimensions of the personality which are of particular importance for the future. The first is creativity. Without doubt the development of one's creative abilities is of critical importance, regardless of one's profession or station in life. Clearly it is going to take much more originality, inventiveness and ingenuity, that is to say creative capability, on the part of every individual to live in a world characterized by revolutionary and pervasive change. But if it is essential to develop one's creativity to the fullest extent, it is equally essential to develop one's aesthetic sensitivities and sensibilities, as well as the ability to express pent-up feelings and emotions. For given the stresses and strains of living in the modern world, it is clear that individuals who are not sensitive to the dynamic changes that are taking place in the world around them or are incapable of expressing their innermost feelings and emotions, will increasingly turn to negative and more violent ways of venting their frustrations.

Following closely on the heels of the artistic concept of culture is the humanistic concept. Here culture is viewed not so much as the arts, but rather philosophy, literature, history, the arts, the sciences, and indeed, the entire legacy from the past or heritage of humankind. In an historical sense, the principal exponent of this broader, more

humanistic view of culture was Matthew Arnold, the famous nineteenth-century British educator, scholar, and social critic.

For Arnold, culture was the pursuit of perfection, or as he termed it, "the cultivation of sweetness and light". It was sweetness and light which was acquired through the relentless quest for knowledge, wisdom, understanding and erudition. Such a quest must always be dynamic rather than static, "a growing and becoming rather than a having and a resting". This state of steadily- evolving perfection is best achieved, according to Arnold, through the harmonious development of all the human faculties:

perfection - as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it -is a harmonious expansion of **all** the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, **and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest.** Here culture goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.... It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in the endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.¹⁰

Just as Arnold was concerned that culture should be seen in a dynamic rather than static way, so he was concerned that culture should be understood as an **active** rather than a **passive** activity. While cultivation of sweetness and light tends to suggest a process that depends more on acquisition than action, absorption rather than giving, Arnold was careful to point out that this should merely be the first step in a long chain of events aimed at taking sweetness and light out of the hands of the elite and sharing it with the whole of humanity. As an educator, he felt strongly that society had an obligation to provide the best possible education to the largest number of people:

the moment culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to **see** and **learn** this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it **prevail**, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest... it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light...

Men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the **best** knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light.¹¹

If the humanistic concept of culture has much to recommend it, so also does the anthropological concept. In a conceptual sense, the breakthrough came here when Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, one of the world's first anthropologists, broke with the long tradition of defining culture as intellectual development, the arts, or the finer things in life, and defined culture as everything that is created and experienced by a society. In his *Origins of Culture*, published in 1871, Tylor penned what has since become a classic definition of culture:

Culture, or civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that **complex whole** which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.¹²

Ever since it was first propounded, this much more expansive way of looking at culture has had a profound effect on scholarly and popular thinking. Directly or indirectly, it has contributed to two fundamental developments which have the greatest implications for the cultural personality. First, it has contributed to the shift that has taken place from an absolute to a relative view of culture. Ever since Tylor, and following him,

Boas, Mead, Benedict, Herscovits and others, cultural values and practices have been deemed to be much more relative than absolute, a function of a specific time and place as opposed to some idealized set of qualities or ideals. Second, and equally important for our purposes, the anthropological understanding of culture has contributed substantially to a much more comprehensive view of culture. Whereas all previous concepts of culture were partial, notes in the composition, here at last was a much more all-embracing understanding of culture. This is where the concept of culture really starts to get interesting for present purposes.

So evocative and compelling has the anthropological concept of culture become that more and more public leaders and professional groups are falling prey to its power. This was confirmed recently when the member states of Unesco unanimously endorsed the following definition of culture at the Second World Conference on Cultural Policy in Mexico City in 1982:

Culture ought to be considered today the collection of distinctive traits, spiritual and material, intellectual and affective, which characterize a society or social group. It comprises, besides arts and letters, modes of life, human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs.¹³

This view that culture is the totality of human and societal experience and not some specific dimension of it is rapidly working its way into popular thinking. When people talk today about being "the products of their culture", they mean by this that they are the products not only of their educational and artistic activities as Arnold defined it, or of their intellectual development as Cicero defined it. On the contrary, they mean they are the products of everything that is contained in their society, including economic practices, political processes, social realities, religious institutions, technological developments, and

indeed all of the other elements and ingredients that go into making up their culture. In other words, they are the products of what Tylor and others have called "the complex whole".

We could go a long way towards embracing this significantly broader concept of culture if it was not for one fundamental problem. It is a problem that has to do with the way in which Tylor and other anthropologists perceive and define "the whole".

It would be foolhardy in today's world to embrace any concept of culture which does not open up a commanding place for the natural environment at its very core. And herein lies the problem, not only with Tylor's concept of culture, but with every anthropological conception of culture. Either nature is ignored entirely as standing outside the domain of culture, or it is tacitly assumed to provide the overall container within which culture is located. In either case, it yields a concept of culture which, despite its numerous attractions and emphasis on the whole rather than the parts, is not really consistent with the ecological reality.

It is easy to see how anthropologists fell into the trap of becoming so preoccupied with the human species and its creations that they either ignored, implicitly assumed, or took for granted the entire realm of nature. After all, anthropology is by definition concerned with the output and activities of the human species; it is left to other disciplines such as biology, botany, zoology, and ecology to concern themselves with the natural environment and the comings and goings of other species. Moreover, through the progressive development of technology, which many believe is the crowning achievement of the human species, it is often assumed that nature can eventually be brought under human control and humankind can be liberated from its age-old dependence on the natural

environment. Given these assumptions, it is easy to understand why some people believe that nature will eventually be eliminated entirely from the cultural equation.

In retrospect, it is apparent how erroneous these assumptions have been. For one thing, nature is certainly not being brought under human control. For another, technology is having a devastating effect on the natural environment. Under these circumstances, it is clear that nature and the natural environment cannot be assumed or taken for granted in the cultural equation. On the contrary, they must be confronted and incorporated fully into the cultural equation. This can easily be confirmed by looking at any African, Asian, Latin American, European or North American culture. Even the most cursory or superficial examination of these cultures will reveal that nature and the natural environment are, and always will be, active and indispensable agents in cultural change. In fact, it is through continuous, intensive and vigorous interaction with the natural environment that all cultures originate. It is this fact, more than any other, that makes it imperative for us to examine one more concept of culture.

Seen in its simplest terms, the cosmological conception of culture defines culture as a "worldview" or "an ordered whole"¹⁴. While at first blush this particular perception of culture seems to share certain similarities with the anthropological one, on closer inspection it is quite different in two very fundamental respects. Whereas Tylor and other anthropologists define "the whole" in such a way that it either excludes or takes for granted the entire realm of nature, the cosmological conception of culture defines "the whole" as **everything that exists in the universe** - animal, vegetable, and mineral as well as human. This all-embracing understanding of the whole, or what some prefer to call the "cosmic whole", includes not only the human species but all other entities with which the human species cohabits the universe. Perhaps Goethe expressed this best when he said "he

who wills the highest, must will the whole; he who treats of the spirit must presuppose and include nature"¹⁵.

It is not only a different perception of "the whole" which differentiates the cosmological concept of culture from the anthropological one. Whereas the focus of the anthropological concept is on the **complexity** of the whole, largely for the purpose of differentiating between degrees of cultural sophistication, the focus of the cosmological concept is on how the whole is **ordered**. In other words, the preoccupation of the cosmological conception of culture is with the values, value systems, and central organizing principles which determine how the whole is structured and put together. It is this fact which gives the cosmological conception of culture its concern with "worldview" or the way in which cultures are composed and position themselves in the world. Pierre Pascallon explains:

Every culture, every people, every society must (discover and) rediscover its own interior cosmology, must arrive at a coherent account of its being in the world, must be able to locate itself in a recognizable world and find for itself the organizing principle of its world.¹⁶

It is clear that a very specific personality type is inherent in each of the concepts of culture we have examined. For example, the philosophical concept produces the intellectual, the educator, or the scholar. Here, as we observed earlier, the emphasis is on the development of one's mental, conceptual and analytical abilities. Similarly, the artistic concept produces the artist. Here, the emphasis is on the development of one's sensorial, emotional and aesthetic abilities. Likewise, the humanistic concept produces the humanist, or the "cultured" person. In this case, the emphasis is on familiarity with the legacy from the past, and with it, cultivation of the capacity for refined judgement and critical discrimination.

Each of these three personality types possesses certain attributes which are essential to the overall understanding of the cultural personality. By endorsing the need to think clearly and concisely, and to react creatively, imaginatively and compassionately in a variety of situations and circumstances, these three personality types contain specific clues which are helpful in unlocking the ultimate secrets of the cultural personality. Nevertheless, they all suffer from one very obvious shortcoming. They all represent highly restrictive, partial, or limited approaches to what is essentially a multidimensional, open-ended and limitless problem. No one understood this better than T. S. Eliot:

We may be thinking of learning and a close acquaintance with accumulated wisdom of the past: if so, our man of culture is the scholar. We may be thinking of philosophy in the widest sense - an interest in, and some ability to manipulate, abstract ideas: if so, we may mean the intellectual... Or we may be thinking of the arts: if so, we mean the artist and the amateur or dilettante. But what we seldom have in mind is all of these things at the same time. We do not find, for instance, that an understanding of music or painting figures explicitly in Arnold's description of the cultured man: yet no one will deny that these attainments play a part in culture....

People are always ready to consider themselves persons of culture, on the strength of one proficiency, when they are not only lacking in others, but blind to those they lack. An artist of any kind, even a very great artist, is not for this reason alone a man of culture: artists are not only often insensitive to other arts than those which they practise, but sometimes have very bad manners or meagre intellectual gifts. The person who contributes to culture, however important his contribution may be, is not always a "cultured person".¹⁷

The anthropological concept of culture helped immeasurably here. By defining culture in a much more expansive way, it broadened the orbit of cultural concern far beyond philosophy, the arts, or the legacy from the past to include virtually every domain of life, from eating to sleeping, work to leisure, ideals to ideologies.

When the anthropological concept of culture is applied to the individual, the resulting personality type is "the complex whole". This has a number of advantages over the previous personality types, since it focuses attention squarely on the whole person and the totality of human experience, not some limited aspect of it. Here, the individual is seen as the sum total of all the economic, social, political, aesthetic, humanistic and philosophical experiences encountered in life, not as the product of a highly specialized set of skills, experiences or abilities. Moreover, the individual is also seen as being complex, which is as it should be in view of the myriad upon myriad of experiences which punctuate his or her life.

While this personality type has a great deal to recommend it, it also ultimately breaks down as a prototype capable of guiding human behaviour in the future. And it does so for precisely the same reason that the anthropological concept of culture broke down as a concept for explaining the real character of culture. Not only is it too human centred and therefore incapable of embracing nature and the natural environment as an integral and indispensable part of all cultural life, but also it places the focus on the complexity of the human personality which, despite its relevance to the nature of contemporary life, is not the most essential requirement for effective personality development in the future.

When the cosmological concept of culture is used as the basis for the human personality, the resulting personality type is the whole person as an "ordered whole". In this case, the emphasis is squarely where it belongs: on the cosmic character of the whole, as well as on the way in which all the component parts of the whole are combined to form a harmonious and integrated entity.

Clearly this personality type is not the philosopher, the artist, the humanist, or even the individual as "a complex whole". Nor is it a "new age individual" or up-dated version of "renaissance man". Rather, it is a personality type concerned first and foremost with the way in which all the various components of being are galvanized and coalesced to form a coherent unity. In the final analysis, isn't this really what personality development is all about? Despite what modern economic, political, educational and technological leaders would have us believe, shouldn't we really be concerned about blending together life's infinite ingredients and experiences in such a way that they form a total tapestry or seamless web?

In effect, what we are talking about here is the individual's total worldview. For just as every culture exudes a worldview which is based on its unique structure, position, and outlook on the world, so every individual possesses a worldview which is based on his or her unique nature, position, and outlook on the universe. Robert Redfield expressed it best when he said:

"World view" attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else. It is the properties of existence as distinguished from and related to the self. It is, in short, a man's idea of the universe. It is that organization of ideas which answers to a man the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things?¹⁸

Questions as fundamental as these are surely the most important questions of all. Not only are they the questions that every individual must confront regardless of his or her station in life or geographical situation in the world, but also they are questions which lie at the very heart of the human condition.

It was questions such as these that Albert Schweitzer had in mind when he talked about the importance of a personal worldview and the need for **elemental thinking**. For Schweitzer, not only do all individuals manifest their worldview in the way they choose to live their lives and express themselves in their works and deeds, but also all individuals are compelled to wrestle with a whole series of fundamental questions related to the meaning of life as well as their role and purpose in the world:

Elemental thinking is that which starts from the fundamental questions about the relations of man to the universe, about the meaning of life, and about the nature of goodness. It stands in the most immediate connection with the thinking which impulse stirs in everyone. It enters into that thinking, widening and deepening it.¹⁹

While the cultural personality is concerned with addressing all the specific, practical questions which must be addressed in life, such as where to live, where to work, who to live with and what to work at, there is a realization that these questions are fundamentally linked to a set of deeper and more profound questions related to the individual's worldview. It is for this reason that the cultural personality is concerned with the nature of reality and the fundamental meaning and purpose of life, as well as what one sees when one looks outward onto the universe and inward into the self.

In the end, then, the cultural personality is concerned with the whole person in this deeper and more metaphysical sense. Despite the importance of this particular personality type for the present and the future, however, we seem to be moving farther and farther away from it rather than closer and closer towards it. And herein lies the fundamental problem. The dictates and demands of contemporary life are such that they are causing people everywhere in the world to become more and more caught up with superficialities of life and less and less concerned with those deeper and more profound needs which are the essence of life itself. The further we drift away from the idea of the

whole person, however, the more fractured and fragmented our lives become. It is as if our lives, like our personalities, have been pulled and stretched in so many different directions that we have lost our ability to unify them and give them meaning.

Many may think that this cosmological conception of the individual as an ordered whole is a new idea. Perhaps it is in some respects. However, in other respects, it is quite old. It can be traced back to ancient times, to the Greeks and their preoccupation with "the kosmos" or "the universe as an ordered whole", and "the logos" or the discourse or logic behind how the whole is put together. Whereas the Greeks were concerned with the universe as an ordered whole, our concern is with the individual as an ordered whole. It is to this concern that we can now direct our attention.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY

The time has come to put some flesh on the bare bones of the cultural personality. What actually do we mean by this captivating idea? What are its main characteristics, its fundamental attributes?

While there are many characteristics and attributes which give the cultural personality its specific shape and identity, in the final analysis, the cultural personality is **holistic, centred, authentic, unique, creative, altruistic, and last but far from least, humane**. Let us examine each of these characteristics in turn. In the process, flesh will start to appear on the framework of the cultural personality.

First and foremost, the cultural personality is holistic. By this is meant that the cultural personality is constantly endeavouring to mould all the component parts of being into a single, integrated entity. To achieve this, according to Jan Christiaan Smuts, is to achieve the highest state of personality development:

Personality then is a new whole, is the highest and completest of all wholes, is the most recent conspicuous mutation in the evolution of Holism... (it is) the supreme embodiment of Holism both in its individual and its universal tenderness. It is the final synthesis of all the operative factors in the universe into unitary wholes, and both in its unity and its complexity it constitutes the great riddle of the universe.²⁰

To be holistic, then, is to be constantly striving to see, feel, experience and comprehend the unity or oneness of all things, or, as Goethe expressed it, "to live in the whole". It matters little that holism in some ultimate, metaphysical sense may be unattainable: it is always possible to add new information and insights to the ever-

expanding dimensions of the whole. What is important is to be continuously and systematically engaged **in the search** to achieve this ideal, and to this end, relentlessly acting to fuse the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of being to form a seamless web. In the final analysis, this is what the cultural personality is all about. It is about perpetual acts of integration and synthesis aimed at melding all the diverse fragments of being together - the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective, the material and the non-material, and the self and the other - to form a harmonious whole. John Cowper Powys recognized the fundamental importance of this when he said:

The whole purpose and end of culture is a thrilling happiness of a particular sort - of the sort, in fact, that is caused by a response to life made by a harmony of the intellect, the imagination, and the senses.²¹

Just as the cultural personality is engaged in the constant search to discover the inherent wholeness in the self and in the world, so it is constantly endeavouring to recognize this same wholeness in other people. For the cultural personality, people are not defined by their colour, age, profession, status, geographical location, or any other single characteristic. Rather they are defined in terms of their wholeness, taking all of their diverse attributes, strengths and frailties into account. In other words, they are defined as total human beings and treated accordingly. If judgements are to be made at all, they are always made on the basis of the whole person and never on the basis of one or two selective traits or distinguishing characteristics.

Since holism is in effect "the tendency in nature to form wholes that are more than the sum of the parts by creative evolution"²², it is appropriate to ask what it is that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts for the cultural personality. This "extra something" has been variously described as a value system, a soul, a spirit, or a philosophy

of life. Since it is through this process that the cultural personality becomes centred in the world as well as in the self, it requires a certain amount of explanation.

As with personality development of any type, the starting point for the development of the cultural personality is with life's everyday experiences. These experiences are not only exceedingly diverse, but also largely undifferentiated. They invade the individual at all times, as well as from all directions.

With the passing of time, the cultural personality begins to make associations and connections between the myriad upon myriad of experiences which are encountered in everyday life. These associations and connections form the basis of values, since they involve comparisons between one type of experience and another. Here is where assessments are made of life's different encounters, and priorities are established among these encounters, thereby making it possible to rank them differently in the total scheme of things. Just how important culture is in this process of value formation was revealed by Mircea Malitza when he said, "culture is the crucible from which values emerge, where preferences are formed and the hierarchy among them is established."²³

According to Albert Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, values are important because they provide "foci for patterns of organization for the materials of culture... and give significance to our understanding of cultures." They go on to observe:

..... values provide the only basis for the fully intelligible comprehension of culture, because the actual organization of all cultures is primarily in terms of their values. This becomes apparent as soon as one attempts to present the picture of a culture without reference to its values... The account becomes an unstructured, meaningless assemblage of items having relation to one another only through coexistence in locality and moment... a mere laundry list.²⁴

What is true for culture is also true for the cultural personality. For just as there are collective values in this larger cultural sense, so there are personal values in a more restricted, individual sense. And it is these values which help to give shape, substance, character and integrity to the cultural personality.

Without doubt, values make it possible for the cultural personality to sort out what is relevant from what is irrelevant, what is valuable from what is valueless and what is meaningful from what is meaningless. Without this, as Kroeber and Kluckhohn so rightly observe, life really does become little more than a laundry list, an assemblage of activities bearing little or no relationship to one another, let alone the wider community within which they are situated. Without values, there is no means of separating truth from falsehood, good from bad, justice from injustice, morality from immorality.

For the cultural personality, there are three aspects to this question of values which demand reflection and attention. First, there is the conflict between personal and societal values. There are bound to be times when there will be fundamental differences between the personal values of the individual and the collective values of society, particularly in those areas where there may be limitations or shortcomings in societal values which the cultural personality is concerned with addressing. Second, there is the discrepancy between absolute and relative values, or values which are designed to manifest some sort of universal truth in contrast to values which are a function of a specific time or place. Here, the cultural personality is careful to avoid falling into the trap of thinking that values for one person must necessarily be values for all people. And finally, there is the realization that values must be constantly attended to if they are to be cultivated properly.

In the process of cultivating a viable set of personal values, the cultural personality becomes aware that values are not only the essential rudiments of a fully-developed personality, but also sources of integrity and inspiration. As a result they should be savoured and celebrated at every opportunity:

There is a sense in which the whole of human culture is a struggle towards the higher values. Can there be any greater expression of culture than art? Art surely lifts us up, although it would not be likely to exist without us... We were meant to actualize the higher values, and incidental to this task is the privilege of enjoying them.²⁵

It is through the process of struggling to formulate, reformulate, and refine values that the cultural personality becomes aware of a deeper development that is starting to take place in the fertile soil of the self. It has to do with the formulation of a set of central organizing principles around which personal values are galvanized and coalesced.

These central organizing principles may be based on love, beauty, truth, integrity, creativity, caring, or any other worthwhile human attribute. Since they are finely honed over long periods of time, they have a seasoned quality, stability, and solidarity about them. Nevertheless, no greater mistake could be made than to assume that they are fixed, immutable and unchanging. On the contrary, they are constantly being broadened, deepened, and refined in order to remain in tune with the dynamic nature of society. For just as the world is constantly coughing up new problems, challenges and possibilities, so the cultural personality is constantly redefining and reformulating its central organizing principles in order to bring them into line with the ever-evolving needs of humanity.

It is important to emphasize that these central organizing principles are what make it possible for the cultural personality to feel simultaneously rooted in the self, as well

as flexible, adaptable and responsive to the never-ending changes which are taking place in the world at large. By providing the fundamental focal points around which experiences and values are organized and arranged, these central organizing principles provide coherence, connectedness and continuity in space and time. While they mature and ripen over time depending on individual needs and preferences, they nevertheless remain the benchmarks and touchstones which are imperative to the effective functioning of the cultural personality in the real world.

It is through the progressive refinement of these central organizing principles, or what some call the creation of a viable value system, that the cultural personality begins to fashion a very specific philosophy of life. In his book *Cosmic Understanding*, Milton Munitz explains why it is so essential to have such a philosophy:

When acquired, such a philosophy provides a framework of basic principles that helps guide a person's reactions to the crises and opportunities of life, to the universal facts of human existence - being born and dying, being a member of society, being part of a wider universe. To have a set of basic guiding principles, whether accepted from some external source or worked out for oneself, is an inescapable requirement for a human being.²⁶

What is significant about this philosophy for the cultural personality is how distinctive it is. Having taken the time and trouble to wrestle with all the diverse elements which go into making it, it can scarcely be otherwise:

A philosophy of one's own, grown tough and flexible amid the shocks of the world, is a far more important achievement than the ability to expound the precise differences between the great philosophic schools of thought...

The art of self-culture begins with a deeper awareness, borne in upon us either by some sharp emotional shock or little by little like an insidious rarefied air, of the marvel of our being alive at all; alive in a world as startling and mysterious, as lovely

and horrible, as the one we live in. Self culture without some kind of **integrated** habitual manner of thinking is apt to fail us just when it is wanted the most. **To be a cultured person is to be a person with some kind of original philosophy.**²⁷

It is through hammering out this philosophy that the cultural personality begins to comprehend what it means to be centred in the self as well as rooted in the world. This is because there is growing awareness of the fact that a central rudder has been created which provides strength, durability, and a clear sense of direction to the life course. John Cowper Powys uses a botanical illustration to bring this point home with startling clarity:

Slowly, as life tightens the knot of our inner being, our outer leaves, like those of a floating water-plant, expand in the sunshine and in the rain of pure chance; but we still are aware of the single stalk under the surface, of the single root that gives meaning to all.²⁸

It is doubtful whether the cultural personality can ever become fully conscious of the single root which provides centredness in life without becoming "authentic" or true to the self. It is this requirement that Thomas Carlyle had in mind when he penned his famous *Law of Culture*:

Let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments, casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may.²⁹

There are two aspects of this law which deserve our attention. First, there is the idea of the growth and development of the personality itself, not only in terms of the infinite expenditure of all those energies which are required to achieve maturity and full

growth, but also in terms of the struggle that must be constantly waged to achieve real authenticity. It is cast in the form of a struggle because that is precisely what it is; it is a struggle that must be continuously waged within the self as well as with the world at large to "become what thou art". To do this is to resist the pressures of imitation and conformity and compel oneself to come to grips with one's real essence and fundamental purpose in life. Surely this is what John Calvin had in mind when he talked about fulfilling one's destiny or calling, as well as what Joseph Campbell had in mind when he talked about "following one's bliss", or never taking the easy way out but always striving to achieve one's full potential.

This struggle to realize one's full potential must surely be one of the most difficult challenges of all. It means plumbing the depths of one's being to confront the real self and achieve genuine identity, rather than giving in to what others might wish or succumbing to the dictates of society. Such a challenge is totally independent of one's station in life or geographical location in the world. It relates as much to the impoverished farmer in Africa and Asia and the landlord in Latin America as it does to the wealthy businessman in North America or the housewife in Europe.

There is another aspect to the great *Law of Culture* which also demands our attention. It has to do with the limits of authenticity, where one person's quest for authenticity ends and another person's begins. What happens, for example, when one person's quest for authenticity impinges on or interferes with the rights and freedoms of others? For the cultural personality, this always sets in motion the search for an alternative way - a way that preserves the right for authenticity without running roughshod over the needs, rights, and privileges of others. It is for this reason that the cultural personality deals with everything in context rather than in isolation. The quest for authenticity is never used

as a licence for doing whatever one wants in life, or for achieving things at the expense of other people.

It is difficult to see how the cultural personality can achieve authenticity without becoming unique or one of a kind.

While it is often said that every individual has a double living somewhere else in the world in a purely physical sense, this is certainly never true in a cultural sense. In a cultural sense, all individuals are totally different and truly unique. From the moment they enter the world, their lives are filled with a continuous flow of situations, challenges, ordeals and opportunities which are totally different from those of other people. Not only are there enormous variations in the way in which people interact with friends, family, relatives, strangers, and the natural environment, but also there are significant differences in the myriad upon myriad of special features and particular circumstances which govern their lives.

In the process of weaving together life's infinite elements to form an ordered whole, the cultural personality slowly but surely creates a life that is without duplication elsewhere in the world. This fact is worthy of reflection. It should be celebrated in good times as well as bad, in moments of pleasure as well as times of adversity. Not only does it speak volumes about the need that exists in every individual to be distinctive and different in his or her own right - to have a personal identity and life that is readily differentiated from that of any other - but also it supplies much of the fuel that is required to propel people to higher and loftier heights.

It is the ability of the cultural personality to meld together life's innumerable fragments and elements to form a life that is distinctly different from that of any other individual which makes the cultural personality not only unique, but creative.

As profuse and unpredictable as life's events and experiences may be, it is not the events and experiences themselves which make life a creative act. Rather, it is the way in which they are spun together to form a coherent unity. For in the process of weaving together the infinite strands of life's untold profundities and mysteries, the cultural personality is compelled to exercise an incredible amount of creativity. It is creativity which derives from the inalienable right of all individuals to fashion life in accordance with the demands and dictates of their own experiences. Every individual, regardless of educational background, professional circumstances, social situation, religious persuasion or spiritual necessities has the right to fashion life in such a way that it is highly creative in its design, development and execution.

While the type of creativity we are talking about here may not be the kind of creativity that is often associated with artists, intellectuals, or scientists, it is creativity nonetheless. It probably will never manifest itself in the production of rare paintings, unusual compositions, fine books, or famous inventions, that is to say, in creation of great works of art, science or scholarship capable of withstanding the test of time. Nevertheless, it is creativity nonetheless, since it involves taking the infinite building blocks of life and arranging them in such a way that the result is a life that is without parallel elsewhere in the world.

It follows from this that life is dynamic rather than static. It is in a constant state of evolutionary flux, not only in the way in which experiences and values are

constantly being arranged and rearranged, but also in the way in which the central organizing principles and underlying philosophy of life is perpetually being enlarged, reformulated and recreated. Ralph Linton, writing about the relationship between culture and personality, refers to this dynamic property this way:

Personalities are dynamic continuums, and although it is important to discover their content, organization and performance at a given point in time, it is still more important to discover the processes by which they develop, grow and change...³⁰

Each individual is born with a unique configuration of physical and psychological potentialities, and from the moment of birth finds himself in interaction with his environment. **The process of personality development is one of continual assimilation and organization of the experiences which he derives from this interaction.** As each new item of experience is integrated it becomes a factor in later interactions with the environment, and consequently in the production of new experience.³¹

It is this dynamic property which renders to the cultural personality an ability to continuously adjust to a world that is in perpetual motion. While it is important to develop this ability in the short run, it is even more essential to develop it in the long run. For every individual must confront the realization that a kind of "psychological death" or "static malaise" can set in at any age of life if the appropriate precautions are not taken to prevent it. Regardless of whether the individual is in the prime of life, mid-career, early retirement, or the final stages of life's ever-unfolding mystery, there is the perpetual risk of becoming so mired in the muck of reality that it is impossible to extricate oneself and get back on course. If the creative and dynamic capabilities of the personality are not swung fully into action here, what results is a deadening process which slowly but surely sucks every ounce of energy and vitality out of the life process.

The cultural personality is not only fully aware of this but is constantly and methodically taking steps to overcome it. It does so by drawing on its own inner reserves and innovative abilities to ceaselessly create new challenges and opportunities. No sooner is one challenge met or opportunity realized than others are put in their place.

It is unlikely that the cultural personality will achieve this without acquiring one of the noblest human characteristics of all. We are referring of course to altruism, or the ability to give to others and make commitments to causes which are greater than the self.

It was altruism that Matthew Arnold had in mind when he spoke of the need to take education and learning out of the hands of the elite and share it with the whole of humanity. Likewise, it is altruism that Pitirim Sorokin had in mind when he penned the following passage:

If humanity mobilizes all its wisdom, knowledge, beauty, and especially the all-giving and all-forgiving love and reverence for life, and if a strenuous and sustaining effort of this kind is made by everyone, then the crisis will certainly be ended and a most magnificent new era in human history will be ushered in. It is up to mankind to decide what it will do with its future life course.³²

Throughout history, there have been numerous examples of individuals who have set aside their own personal ambitions and interests in order to devote themselves to the service of others. In our own century, the examples of Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa come quickly to mind. Each in his or her own way gave up promising careers and personal aspirations in order to dedicate themselves to serving society on a global scale. As impressive as these examples are, they should never be allowed to obscure the fact that there are people working at every level of society, and in every conceivable part of the world, to promote the interests of humanity as a whole.

For the cultural personality altruism is not seen as an alternative to egoism. Rather, both characteristics are seen as dual aspects of the same reality. While the cultural personality is very much interested in the development of the self, this is not seen as an end in itself, but rather as a means to serving broader interests and the needs of humankind as a whole. Why is this so essential? It is essential because, as Samuel Butler so wisely observed, the works of all individuals, whether they are in literature, music, pictures, architecture or anything else, are always portraits of the self. And the more people try to conceal this, the more clearly their characters will appear in spite of it.

While altruism is a fundamental characteristic worthy of much thought and reflection, it is not sufficient in and of itself to ensure that the cultural personality is humane.

It is far from easy to determine how to address this final and most important characteristic. Perhaps the best place to start is to return to the idea of the harmonious unification of all the characteristics and attributes which in totality comprise the cultural personality.

In the process of uniting all of these characteristics and attributes, the cultural personality is forced to develop many of the sensitivities and sensibilities which are needed to become fully human and truly humane. It is here that the heart, the soul and the senses are fused with the mind, the spirit, and the intellect; egoism is tempered with altruism; beauty, truth and creativity are brought into line with equality, justice and integrity. The result is an individual who is not only more settled in the self, but also more compassionate and respectful of the needs and rights of others.

It is difficult to see how the cultural personality can become humane without plunging deeply into questions of morality. Viewed from this perspective, the current moral malaise that is sweeping the globe must be viewed as a cause for concern. For in the act of attempting to assert human dominance over nature and making gods of technology and economic growth, are human beings not in danger of losing those moral convictions and ideals which lie at the very heart of the human personality?

Perhaps what we need most is the development of a secular moral code capable of assigning to human beings all those fundamental responsibilities which have been traditionally assigned to God. Of what would these responsibilities consist? Surely they would consist of showing compassion and concern for the sick, the poor, the disadvantaged, and the elderly; lakes, rivers, oceans and streams; flora and fauna; other species; and other planets and galaxies. Such commitments, particularly if they were taken seriously and addressed fully, would quickly compel the cultural personality to develop the sensitivities, sensibilities and capabilities which are needed to become compassionate in the fullest and most complete sense of the term. For in the process of accepting these responsibilities, the cultural personality would be compelled to develop those deeper and more lasting moral values, principles, and practices which are needed to become fully committed to the wider cosmic reality and all that is contained in it. This would help to ensure that the cultural personality is not only holistic, centred, authentic, unique, creative and altruistic, but also humane.

There is no more fitting way to end this chapter than to quote from Prem Kirpal, one of India's most talented and creative individuals. Not only does the following poem embody many of the qualities and characteristics which combine to form the cultural personality, but also it strikes at the heart of what the cultural personality is really all about:

The abiding quality of life-time
Conferred by God on each alive
Is comprised of care of each other,
Quest of love and peace of mind,
Quietness of spirit, and sheer delight
Of being oneself and belonging to all,
Loving and loved in life-time,
Experiencing bliss and ecstasy
With Serenity and Creativity!
May such Quality of Life
Embellish all in time to come
For a great new world of Humanity!³³

THE CULTIVATION OF THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY

Of all the possible points of penetration into the problem of cultivating the cultural personality in fact, none may offer more promise as a point of departure than cultivation of "the art of seeing".

Cultivation of this particular ability requires constant attention and careful nurturing, since it requires the development of a number of interrelated capabilities: the ability to see things and see them whole; the ability to detect patterns, themes, and interrelationships among the component parts of the whole; the ability to broaden and deepen vision in all directions in order to come into closer and closer contact with the cosmos and the self; and finally, the ability to make intelligent choices and enlightened decisions about the future life course.

Why is it so essential for the cultural personality to develop this particular capability? It is essential because if we have lost one thing in the modern world, surely it is the ability to see things clearly and in proper perspective. Our existing perceptions seem so fragmented, distorted, specialized and short-sighted that they lack wisdom, understanding and common sense. When Fritjof Capra observed that all the difficult economic, environmental, social, political and human problems of our times are really "different facets of one and the same crisis, and that crisis is essentially a crisis of perception",³⁴ he surely underlined the quintessential importance of "the art of seeing" as a basic prerequisite to effective problem solving.

Ken Wilber was preoccupied with this same problem in his recent book *Eye to Eye*. There, he talks about developing the three eyes of perception as the key to

knowledge and understanding. First, there is the "eye of the flesh" which discloses "the material concrete world of our senses" and therefore the way we "perceive the empirical world of objects in time and space". Second, there is "the eye of reason" which discloses "symbols and images" and thus the "foundations of the psyche". And third, there is "the eye of contemplation" which discloses "direct knowledge of spiritual or translogical realities".³⁵

Cultivation of the art of seeing was also uppermost in Goethe's mind when he said "it was with the eye more than with all the other organs that I learned to comprehend the world."³⁶ He was obviously focusing attention on the critical importance of sight as a fundamental prerequisite for coming to grips with the nature of reality as well as with the self. For how we perceive the world and all that is contained in it is of singular importance in determining how we assess and evaluate problems as well as how we choose to live our lives. It is to the development of the art of seeing, therefore, that we must direct our initial attention if we are to piece together a portrait of how the cultural personality is cultivated in fact.

There is much to be learned about the art of seeing from the artist. Since every work of art is an organic whole, perspective is of crucial importance to the artistic process. And the artist, always conscious of this, is constantly moving around a work of art and back and forth from it in order to see it from the best possible perspective. It is through this process that the artist begins to comprehend the holistic and multifaceted nature of reality, and with it, the need to examine reality from a variety of perspectives rather than from a single perspective. This multidimensional capability is of paramount importance to the cultivation of the art of seeing. For it means that many diverse viewpoints are needed if the true nature of reality is to be revealed.

In the process of constantly moving around a work of art and back and forth from it, the artist reveals something else about the nature of reality which is of fundamental importance to the art of seeing. It is the interconnected nature of reality, and with it, the fact that solutions to problems are not always where they are expected. For example, the solution of a problem of too much fullness in the face may lie not with altering the shape of the face, but rather with changing the colour of the hair. This is yet another valuable lesson in perspective, for it means that the interconnectedness of problems must always be taken into account if effective solutions to these problems are to be forthcoming.

There is one final lesson to be learned from the artist. It has to do with where the viewer positions himself or herself in relation to the problems being viewed. Look at a problem from one point of view and it looks like a mountain. Look at it from another, and it looks like a hill. Look at it from yet another, and it disappears entirely. And what is true with respect to the spatial position from which problems are viewed is equally true with respect to the temporal context within which they are analyzed. A change in the time horizon within which problems are analyzed can radically alter their relevance or significance. This is yet another valuable lesson in perspective. For it means that where the individual chooses to situate himself or herself is of crucial importance in determining the ultimate nature of reality.

These lessons are extremely pertinent to the art of seeing. Regardless of whether it is a painting, a play, a composition, or a manuscript, it is not the individual objects, notes, scenes, melodies, or chapters which are of greatest relevance. Rather, it is the work of art **as a whole**. In effect, every work of art is a holistic entity in which the whole takes precedence over the parts. Excesses and imbalances among the parts are permitted, yes, but only in relation to the whole and never for their own sake. And what is

true for works of art is equally true for people. Every individual is an organic whole in which the whole takes precedence over the parts.

If artists have a great deal to contribute to the cultivation of the art of seeing, so do scientists. Through their intensive investigation into all manner of things, from the smallest inanimate objects to the largest planetary and galactic systems, scientists also have a great deal to contribute to the evolution of this essential perceptual capability. By progressively expanding and intensifying the dimensions of seeing, they make it possible to view reality in a systematic and disciplined way rather than in a spontaneous and random way. The result is a fuller and richer understanding of reality, as well as a deeper and more profound comprehension of the cosmos.

If there is much to be learned from scientists about the art of seeing, there is also much to be learned from psychologists and psychiatrists. Whereas scientists stretch the dimensions of sight outward from the smallest and most minute objects to the farthest reaches of the universe, psychologists and psychiatrists push the dimensions of sight inward into the self. The one is as indispensable as the other. If it is essential to learn more about the nature of reality and the universe in an objective sense, it is equally essential to learn more about the self in a subjective sense. Just as the aim of science is to uncover the nature of external truth, so the aim of psychology and psychiatry is to uncover the nature of internal truth.

If it is the aim of psychologists and psychiatrists to stretch the dimensions of sight inward into the self, it is the job of historians and futurists to stretch the dimensions of sight backwards and forwards in time.

Why is it so essential to cultivate a capacity for looking backward into the past and forward into the future? It is essential in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of reality, and with it, the way in which the past impacts on the present and the future.

In an historical sense, there is a rich mine to be tapped here. It is essential to plumb the depths of this inexhaustible reservoir of accumulated knowledge, wisdom, insight and understanding, or what Jung called "the collective unconscious". For not only is there a colossal amount to be learned from the past, but also it is necessary to avoid the pitfalls of the past and learn from our mistakes.

If the ability to travel back in historical time is essential in a collective sense, it is equally essential in an individual sense. Every individual possesses a personal history which includes an infinite variety of encounters and events, trials and tribulations, challenges and accomplishments, successes and failures. This vast reservoir of experience is a treasure-trove to be savoured in good times, but perhaps more importantly, to be learned from in times of adversity. For it is through this process of assessing and reassessing their past that individuals learn to confront the realities of their own experience and take control of their lives.

Just as it is necessary to train the eye to travel back along the continuum of time, so it is necessary to train the eye to travel forward along the continuum of time. Whereas the former requires an ability to see and learn from the past, the latter requires an ability to anticipate and prepare properly for the future.

The one is as difficult as the other. While it is exceedingly difficult to understand the past, particularly in a way that is meaningful, honest, and true, it is equally difficult to anticipate and prepare properly for the future. Predictions are precarious at the best of times, and much more so when the world is in a state of revolutionary change and dynamic flux. Nevertheless, it is crucial for people to be as concerned with the future as the past, with the work of futurists as well as the work of historians. As John McHale so astutely observed, "people survive, uniquely, by their capacity to act in the present on the basis of past experience considered in terms of future consequences."³⁷

It is clear from all this that the art of seeing should be cultivated to the point where it acts as a window on the universe as well as on the self. In order to do this effectively, it should be extended as far as possible in all directions: past, present and future; external and internal; spatial and temporal. Not only must it be finely tuned to the infinite mysteries of the cosmos, but also it must be clearly focused on the most mundane details of everyday life. In other words, it must be concerned with the perpetual enlargement of vision, as well as the progressive refinement of vision.

The cultural personality seeks to develop and refine the art of seeing not as an end in itself, but rather as the first step towards cultivation and refinement of all the sensory capabilities. For what is true with respect to the art of seeing is equally true with respect to the art of hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and sensing. Cultivation and refinement of each of these sensorial qualities requires the same kind of constant care and attention that cultivation of the art of seeing requires. For aural acuity, tactile sensitivity, olfactory capability, taste discrimination, and intuitive understanding are equally essential if the object is to expand knowledge and understanding of the external world as well as the self.

John Cowper Powys expressed this thought admirably when he said, "the very essence of culture is the conscious development of our awareness of existence".³⁸

It is difficult to see how the conscious development of our awareness of existence can be attended to effectively without a comprehensive training in the arts. For education in the arts is quintessential to the opening up of our creative faculties as well as the development of our sensory capabilities. Through music, there is exposure to sounds, rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and composition. Through dance, there is exposure to touch, balance, movement, muscle control, and physical co-ordination. Through the visual arts, there is exposure to texture, mass, structure, shape, form, and proportion. And through drama, there is exposure to tragedy, comedy, satire, humour and pathos. Not only do individuals learn more about the self and the world through intensive education in the arts, but also they learn to deal creatively and constructively with the countless problems and possibilities encountered in everyday life.

What education in the arts does for the development of the senses and creative abilities, education in health and physical fitness does for the development of the body. Without adequate training in terms of diet, nutrition, disease prevention, and proper exercise of the various components of the body, the body will not function properly. Regardless of whether it is through callisthenics, Tai Chi, Yoga, a vigorous walking program, swimming, or any other physical activity designed to loosen muscles and lubricate the limbs, care should be taken to ensure that the body is kept in sound physical condition and prime working order.

The cultural personality is careful to attend to the cultivation of its mental capabilities every bit as much as its physical capabilities. Clearly, development of these

capabilities requires the ability to cut through the shell of illusion in order to get to the basic principles, premises, and assumptions which underlie all things. Far too often, too much attention is directed to outward appearances, thereby leaving too little time to get to the real essence of things. As a result, we usually end up dealing with secondary symptoms rather than generic causes.

It is through cultivation of the senses, the body, and the intellect that the cultural personality begins its ascent into some of the more profound and hidden dimensions of the self. In much the same way as the art of seeing opens a window on all of the other senses, so the senses, the mind and the body open a window on the heart, the soul, the emotions, and the spirit.

The development of each of these human faculties is attacked with the same vim, vigour, vitality and determination as the development of the senses, the body, and the intellect. The goal is always self-improvement or self-actualization, to use Maslow's evocative phrase.

Considerable care must be taken to ensure that the idea of self-improvement is not confused with the idea of perfectibility. For the cultural personality, perfectibility is something worth striving for, but is ultimately unattainable. In the first place, it demands perfect knowledge and understanding, which, as we have been at pains to point out, stands well beyond the capabilities and potentialities of the cultural personality. For regardless of how much the cultural personality sees, senses, feels, or knows, it is always possible to see, sense, feel, and know much more. This is why "the whole" is always defined in dynamic rather than static terms, as an open agenda rather than a closed system. Moreover, the cultural personality is always aware of its own **imperfectability**. Thus, while perfectibility

is a goal worthy of pursuit, the cultural personality is always conscious of the inherent limitations and shortcomings which stand in the way of ever actually achieving this.

It is through recognition of the necessity and inevitability of imperfectability that the cultural personality slowly but surely develops the sense of humility, awe and appreciation which forms the basis of cosmic consciousness. Clearly, this cosmic capability lies at the very heart of the cultural personality. It is external in the sense that it radiates outward in order to embrace ever-expanding dimensions of the universe. It is internal in the sense that it penetrates deeply into the psyche in order to embrace all that it is possible to know and understand about the self. As a result, it stretches as far as possible in all directions, even though it is never possible to know what exists at the outer edges of the universe or the inner edges of the self.

Some contend that cosmic consciousness is such a rarefied affair that it can only be experienced by very select individuals. In his book *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, the Canadian medical doctor, Richard Maurice Bucke, distinguishes three types of consciousness: **simple consciousness**, or awareness of one's bodily organs as well as the things that go on around one; **self-consciousness**, or awareness not only of one's bodily organs and the immediate external environment but also awareness of oneself as a distinct entity apart from all the rest of the universe; and **cosmic consciousness**, or awareness of the cosmos as a whole.³⁹ Having set out these three different types of consciousness, Bucke goes on to describe cosmic consciousness in more detail:

Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment of **illumination** which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence - would make him almost a member of a new species. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation, and

joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important both to the individual and to the race than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these come, what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have this, but the consciousness that he has it already.⁴⁰

Using the impersonal rather than personal pronoun to describe his own particular encounter with cosmic consciousness, Bucke goes on to describe the intensity of his own experience with this fascinating phenomenon:

His mind...was calm and peaceful. He was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment. All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city; the next, he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightening-flash of the Brahmic Splendor which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thenceforward for always an aftertaste of heaven. Among other things he did not come to believe, he saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love and that the happiness of every one is in the long run absolutely certain. He claims that he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study, and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught.⁴¹

According to Bucke, eventually the human species **as a species** may be able to achieve this utopian state of affairs, even though it is limited to a very few select individuals at present. Whether or not this ethereal state of affairs may ever actually be attainable, are there not grounds for asking if the experience of cosmic consciousness is not far more common than is generally realized? While cosmic consciousness may be a highly

personal affair which defies scientific quantification or interpersonal comparison, who has not experienced the feeling of Brahmic splendour or bliss which Bucke describes at one time or another, where the sense of ecstasy and serenity which comes from some unique encounter with other people or the natural environment is so profound and intense that for the flash of a second there is a feeling of immortality and the entire universe and all of humanity seem united as an ordered whole? Surely cosmic consciousness is more commonplace than some people are willing to admit.

Was it cosmic consciousness that Herman Hesse had in mind when he wrote the following passage in the *Glass Bead Game*?

World history is a race with time, a scramble for profit, for power, for treasures. What counts is who has the strength, luck, or vulgarity not to miss the opportunity. The achievements of thought, of culture, of the arts are just the opposite. They are always an escape from the serfdom of time, man crawling out of the muck of his instinct and out of his sluggishness and climbing to a higher plane, to timelessness, liberation from time, divinity.⁴²

In the process of striving to achieve this desirable state of affairs, the cultural personality comes face to face with the holistic nature of life in particular and the cosmos in general. When Goethe said, "he who wills the highest, must will the whole", he put his finger on the crux of the matter. For in the process of willing the highest, the cultural personality not only comes face to face with the holistic nature of life and the universe, but also with the means of uniting all the various human faculties and capabilities in a symbiotic and unitary relationship. The senses, the body, the intellect, the mind, the heart, the soul and the spirit become one, so to speak, indispensable ingredients in the total make-up of the individual. Surely this is what Jan Christiaan Smuts had in mind when he made the following observation:

The great practical problem before the Personality is thus to effectuate and preserve its wholeness through the harmonizing of its several activities, and the prevention among them of any random discord or sedition, whereby one or other might be enabled to assume ascendancy over the rest and so prepare the way for the disintegration and destruction of the whole...

In proportion as a personality really becomes such, it acquires more of the character of wholeness; body and mind, intellect and heart, will and emotions, while not separately repressed but on the contrary fostered and developed, are yet all collectively harmonized and blended into one integral whole; the character becomes more massive, the entire man becomes more of a piece; and the will or conscious rational direction, which is not a separate agency hostile to these individual factors, but the very root and expression of their joint and harmonious action, becomes more silently and smoothly powerful; the wear and tear of internal struggle disappears; the friction and waste which accompany the warfare in the soul are replaced by peace and unity and strength; till at last Personality stands forth in its ideal purity, integrity and wholeness.⁴³

It is difficult to see how the cultural personality can stand forth in all its ideal purity, integrity, and wholeness without evolving a comprehensive, compassionate and enlightened worldview. In the process of developing this worldview, the cultural personality learns to take a passionate and consuming interest in everything. To do this effectively requires detailed exploration of all things, large and small, esoteric and commonplace, popular and serious. Nothing is rejected, ignored, or taken for granted, since everything that is germane to the human condition and the cosmos is examined in great interest and great depth. Whether it is the arts, the sciences, religion, politics, philosophy, economics, or the environment, all fields of knowledge and all disciplines are openly and actively cultivated because they contain valuable clues to the effective formulation and implementation of this highly personal way of looking at life, other people, other species, the universe, and the cosmos as a whole.

Cultivation of this highly personal worldview will require the development of educational and learning processes which are at variance with those that are in vogue today. Whereas most contemporary educational and learning processes are focused on the mastery of a single discipline and acquisition of a narrow set of specialized skills, the educational and learning processes advocated here are predicated on exploration and discovery of all disciplines, as well as acquisition of a very diverse set of skills and abilities. Not only is this more in keeping with the true nature of the cultural personality, but also it is more in tune with the newly-emerging global reality.

Development of this significantly broader approach to education and learning will be no easy matter. All people are products of their culture to the point where they take many aspects of their culture for granted and accept them without reservation or qualification. To develop an educational and learning system which is finely tuned to the realities of the present and demands of the future does not necessarily mean rejecting those aspects of one's own culture which are taken for granted. Rather, it means critically examining every aspect of one's own culture to determine what is relevant and what is not. One of the very best ways of achieving this is to juxtapose and compare one's own culture with the cultures of other countries. For intercultural comparison is one of the best means of exposing the strengths and shortcomings of one's own culture, as well as those aspects of one's culture which are most germane to the human condition.

However difficult it is to stand outside one's culture in order to evaluate it with an objective and critical eye, it is even more difficult to stand outside the self in order to view oneself in a detached and truthful manner.

If only we could see ourselves as others see us! If we could, we would be able to deal with our problems and our lives far more effectively. Things which are so patently obvious to others are often so clouded and obscured to the self. To see ourselves as others see us - our strengths and shortcomings, our insecurities and instabilities, our problems and possibilities - would be to take a giant leap forward in developing a fuller and more complete understanding of the self. Perhaps this is why the cultural personality is always engaged in actively searching out the opinions of others, as well as using other people as a mirror for the self. For as difficult as this art of self-assessment is, it is quintessential to the effective cultivation of the cultural personality.

It is through the ability to see the self as others see it, and to evaluate the self with a discerning and critical eye, that the cultural personality comes face to face with its real essence. What is it in the final analysis that gives the cultural personality its real meaning and identity? In the end, it is the sense of fulfilment that comes from taking the time and trouble to develop a total worldview that is consistent with the nature of reality and the dictates of the cosmos. By its very nature, such a worldview is indigenous rather than imitative. Not only is it hammered out on the anvil of personal experience, but also it is highly original and authentic in every way. In effect, it is fashioned not by allowing others to dictate what is important or how to live one's life, but rather by deciding for oneself what is important in life as well as how to live one's life and accept full responsibility for it.

In the process of hammering out this highly personal worldview and accepting full responsibility for it, the cultural personality recognizes that it has mastered not only the art of seeing, but more importantly, the art of being. The reason for this is now crystal clear. In the act of dealing with all the trials and tribulations which manifest themselves in the external world of reality and the internal world of self, the cultural

personality is compelled to cultivate those capabilities, sensitivities, and sensibilities which are most needed to live life as an integrated, ordered, and harmonious whole.

THE CONDUCT OF THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY.

If it is essential to come to grips with the **cultivation** of the cultural personality, it is equally essential to come to grips with the **conduct** of the cultural personality. Whereas the former is concerned with theory and the realm of ideas, the latter is concerned with practice and the realm of action. While the one is equally as important as the other, in the end, it will probably be through deeds and actions rather than thoughts and ideas that the cultural personality will make its mark on the world.

If the cultural personality is to take its rightful place alongside other personality prototypes as a guide to human deportment and behaviour in the future, it will have to set a forceful example for others to follow. Such an example will have to evolve from the highest ideals of human conduct, as well as inspire the noblest forms of human action.

Providing exemplary conduct in the age in which we are presently living will be no easy matter. In fact, it will probably be the most difficult challenge of all, since the problems and temptations of living in a secular, materialistic, and media-dominated age are so great that exemplary behaviour may be denied to all but the most courageous and committed.

Strong ethical leadership is the key to this exemplary behaviour. It grows out of the realization that ethical values have the greatest importance for our lives as well as for societies, and therefore demand our highest priorities. Albert Schweitzer explains it this way:

We may take as the essential element in civilization the ethical perfecting of the individual and of society as well. But at the same time, every spiritual and every material step in advance has a significance for civilization. The will to civilization is then the universal will to progress which is conscious of the ethical as the highest value for all. In spite of the great importance we attach to the triumphs of knowledge and achievement, it is nevertheless obvious that only a humanity which is striving after ethical ends can in full measure share in the blessings brought by material progress and become master of the dangers which accompany it. To the generation which had adopted a belief in an immanent power of progress realizing itself, in some measure, naturally and automatically, and which thought that it no longer needed any ethical ideals but could advance to its goal by means of knowledge and achievement alone, terrible proof was being given by its present position of the error into which it had sunk... But what is the nature of the attitude toward life in which the will to general progress and to ethical progress are alike founded and in which they are bound together? It consists in an ethical affirmation of the world and of life.⁴⁴

For the cultural personality, human conduct is first and foremost an ethical undertaking and responsibility. It involves not only recognition of the ethical foundations of social behaviour in general and personal behaviour in particular, but also acceptance of the fact that there are ethical dimensions and consequences to everything we do. Regardless of whether it is confronting ourselves, dealing with others, making consumer choices, participating in political processes, or interacting with the natural environment, there are profound ethical implications to all our actions.

Commitment to the existential conviction that in committing ourselves we are committing the whole of humanity would seem to provide a logical point of departure here.

Adherence to this conviction should cause the cultural personality to think long and hard about the ethical consequences of actions. This would quickly necessitate a kind of "reverential thinking", a willingness to consider the impact of actions not only for the self,

but also for other human beings, other forms of plant, animal and mineral life, and ultimately, the cosmos as a whole. Reverential thinking of this type would compel the cultural personality to probe deeply into matters of the heart, the soul and the spirit in order to evolve modes of behaviour which do as little damage or injury as possible to everything that stands outside the self.

For the cultural personality, reverential thinking is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a the first step towards reverential action. It is action which is predicated on a willingness to accept responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. If consumption practices are deemed to be disrespectful of the natural environment or wasteful of resources, they are not condoned regardless of how they might satisfy personal needs. If success means running roughshod over the rights and privileges of others, it is not pursued regardless of how it might advance personal interests. If standards of living in one part of the world are enjoyed at the expense of people living in other parts of the world, they are not sanctioned regardless of how fulfilling they might be. In each of these cases, and others too numerous to mention here, the cultural personality is careful to choose a course of action which does not involve exploiting others or the natural environment in order to satisfy the needs and interests of the self.

Albert Schweitzer was one of the greatest proponents of reverential action. To him, all life was precious, and therefore had to be protected at all costs. Let us quote again from Schweitzer, since he has much to pass on which is pertinent to the conduct of the cultural personality in the real world.

Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life. Reverence for life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, assisting and enhancing life, and that to destroy, to harm or to hinder life is evil...

A man is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succor, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living. He does not ask how far this or that life deserves sympathy as valuable in itself, nor how far it is capable of feeling. To him life as such is sacred. He shatters no ice crystal that sparkles in the sun, tears no leaf from its tree, breaks off no flower, and is careful not to crush any insect as he walks.⁴⁵

It would be foolhardy to contend that the cultural personality can always be a tower of ethical strength or moral perfection in this sense. What the cultural personality is always striving to achieve is a way of living based on fulfilling personal aspirations without usurping the needs, rights, and privileges of others. If this cannot be accomplished with one mode of behaviour, as indicated earlier, the cultural personality sets in motion other modes of behaviour capable of achieving it.

In attempting to glean a clearer understanding of the ethical ideals which lie at the heart of the cultural personality, it may be helpful to examine the two Chinese notions of "face". The first is **mien-tzu**, and the second is **lien**. Listen as Hu Hsien-Chin elaborates on these two notions. Their relevance for the cultural personality is immediately apparent:

(**mien-tzu** is) a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation. This is prestige that is accumulated by means of personal effort or clever maneuvering. For this kind of recognition ego is dependent at all times on the external environment. The other kind of "face", **lien**, ... is the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation: the man who will fulfil his obligations regardless of the hardships involved, who under all circumstances shows himself a decent human being. It represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly within the community. **Lien** is both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalized sanction.⁴⁶

While the cultural personality is obviously an admixture of both, it is clear where the emphasis really lies. It lies with **lien**. For while the cultural personality is concerned with personal success and fulfilment as much as anyone else, this is not accomplished at the expense of others. Whatever can be accomplished by maintaining ethical integrity is accomplished; whatever cannot be accomplished by maintaining these ideals is rejected.

It is out of commitment to ethical ideals, rather than slavish adherence to the norms and mores of a particular culture, that the cultural personality seeks to fashion its conduct in the world. The goal is always working out for oneself the type of conduct that is appropriate under the circumstances, not following some prescribed course of action or preordained set of rules.

It is commitment to this goal which causes the cultural personality to transcend the limitations and shortcomings of cultures when they are inappropriate. This makes the cultural personality a "culture-maker" rather than a "culture-taker", since the norms, ideological beliefs, and systems which underlie a culture are constantly being analyzed and assessed. Edward Hall explains:

One cannot normally transcend one's culture without first exposing its major hidden axioms and unstated assumptions concerning what life is all about - how it is lived, viewed, analyzed, talked about, described, and changed. Because cultures are wholes, are systematic (composed of interrelated systems in which each aspect is functionally interrelated with all other parts), and are highly contexted as well, it is hard to describe them from the outside. A given culture cannot be understood simply in terms of context or parts. One has to know how the whole system is put together, how the major systems and dynamisms function, and how they are interrelated.⁴⁷

Whenever the norms, ideological beliefs, and systems of a culture are based on faulty assumptions, or conflict with the interests of the culture as a whole, the cultural personality is anxious to confront and change them. Whether or not it is possible to be successful in this depends on a variety of circumstances. For as Goethe observed in a letter to Schiller: "Your own epoch you cannot change. You can, however, oppose its trends and lay the groundwork for auspicious developments."⁴⁸

In the process of laying the groundwork for auspicious developments, the cultural personality is compelled to become extremely "cause oriented". Rather than calculating everything on the basis of how it advances personal ambitions or career aspirations, the cultural personality evaluates everything in terms of how it advances particular causes. If something doesn't advance a cause to which the cultural personality is wedded, it is not pursued regardless of how it satisfies personal objectives or career interests.

And what are these causes to which the cultural personality is so deeply and irrefutably wedded? In one form or another, they are causes concerned with resource conservation, ecological sustainability, liberty, freedom, human dignity, and equality regardless of social status, religious persuasion, economic circumstances, gender, or geographical location in the world.

A seminal step in this regard was taken with the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Included among many articles aimed at recognizing and ensuring the rights of all people were two articles designed to protect the cultural rights of the individual and increase citizen participation in cultural life:

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 27

(1) Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

⁴⁹

It is through sensitivity for the rights and privileges of others, and more generally helping people to become full and active participants in the cultural life of the community, that the cultural personality seeks to have a lasting impact on the world. Clearly, this involves fighting for justice in all its diverse forms and manifestations: economic, social, political, legal, environmental, and religious. Whereas socialists view this fight largely in terms of economic, social and political justice, the cultural personality views this fight in terms of justice in all its diverse manifestations. For socialists, the challenge is to eliminate all forms of economic, social and political exploitation. For the cultural personality, the challenge is to eliminate all forms of exploitation: institutional, bureaucratic, political, social, economic, environmental, and indeed any form of exploitation which robs people of their ideas, insights, achievements, dignity, or integrity.

In the process of fighting to combat all forms of exploitation, the cultural personality is slowly but surely strengthening its commitment to the higher ideals in life. Here again, Schweitzer has something extremely pertinent to say:

The ripeness that our development must aim at is one which makes us simpler, more truthful, purer, more peace loving, meeker, kinder, more sympathetic. That is the only way in which we are to sober down with age. That is the process in which the soft iron of youthful idealism hardens into the steel of a full-grown idealism which can never be lost.⁵⁰

Pitirim Sorokin was equally aware of the importance of such ideals, as well as the need to ensure that they are properly situated in a cosmic context. Speaking of the need for a heightened sense of human consciousness, he observed:

The most urgent need of our time is the man who can control himself and his lusts, who is compassionate to all his fellow men, who can see and seek for the eternal values of culture and society, and who deeply feels his unique responsibility to the universe.⁵¹

Foremost among this commitment "to see and seek for the eternal values of culture and society" is the commitment to dissemination of the cultural heritage of humankind. The more the cultural personality transcends the limits of particular cultures, the more it gains an understanding of the vast reservoir of knowledge, wisdom, artefacts, insights and ideas which comprises the universal legacy of humankind. In much the same way that it is anxious to gain access to this indispensable treasure-trove in order to educate the self, so it is equally anxious to share this precious resource with each and every member of the human family.

It is here that the cultural personality parts company with the cultural purist and the cultural imperialist. Whereas the latter are concerned with asserting the superiority of one culture over another, largely for the purpose of imposing the values and principles of one culture on another, the former is concerned with sharing the fruits of all cultures with the whole of humanity. In other words, the cultural personality is concerned with those acts

of benevolence and generosity which promote real trust and reciprocity in the world. The great Indian poet and sage, Rabindranath Tagore, foresaw this need when he said, "We must prepare the field for the co-operation of all the cultures of the world where all will give and take from each other. This is the keynote of the coming age."⁵²

In the end, it is through co-operation and sharing, rather than through competition and hoarding, that the cultural personality seeks to make its mark on the world. The object is always to create the conditions for a better world - a world characterized by dignity, equality, justice and freedom for all members of the cosmic family. Such a world requires a continuous outpouring of those qualities that are most deeply etched on the cultural personality: compassion, caring, concern for others, and most of all, human love and affection. Without these, the cultural personality is but a pale shadow of its self.

There is one final matter which must be addressed. It is the matter of the **positioning** of the cultural personality in the real world. For, as we observed earlier, where the individual positions himself or herself is of crucial importance in determining the ultimate outcome of events. Presumably this is what Kant had in mind when he said:

If there is any science man really needs, it is the one I teach, of how to occupy properly that place in creation that is assigned to man, and how to learn from it what one must learn in order to be a man.⁵³

There is much to be learned about the problem of positioning from people like Gandhi and Mother Theresa, as well as from other great leaders who have had a profound impact on the global situation. Whether Gandhi and Mother Theresa set out to change the world is impossible to know. What is known, however, is the fact that they had an incredible impact on the course of history and world events by deliberately positioning

themselves in a very specific locality working with local people. They did not go tearing around the world attempting to improve conditions for everyone. Rather, they stayed largely at home, allowing the force of their personalities and the passion of their convictions to speak for them.

There is much to be learned from these two individuals which is germane to the conduct of the cultural personality. Rather than setting out to influence the course of history or world events, the cultural personality is constantly striving to put into practice in every day life those ethical, spiritual and human qualities which are necessary to inspire others and produce concrete results. The focus is not so much on "thinking globally but acting locally", although this is very much part of it. Rather it is on "thinking cosmically, but acting personally". To do so is to allow the individual to rediscover within the self the "reflection of the cosmos and its supreme unifying principle."⁵⁴ Surely this is what Goethe had in mind when he said "live in the whole, in the good, in the beautiful." For the cultural personality, this is what life and living are really all about.

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APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD CULTURE PROJECT

The World Culture Project is a ten-year undertaking designed to promote the fact that culture has a crucial role to play in global development and world affairs. It is being undertaken to coincide with and commemorate the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997). For purposes of the Project, culture is defined in its broadest cosmological sense as "a worldview" in general and "ordered whole" in particular.

The Project has been subdivided into two basic components: an International Component; and a Canadian Component. The International Component is designed to develop the cosmological conception of culture in broad, general terms, as well as to apply this all-encompassing conception of culture to a series of complex and persistent global problems. The Canadian Component is designed to develop the cosmological conception of culture in specific, concrete terms, as well as to apply this comprehensive, dynamic and egalitarian concept of culture to a set of similar Canadian problems. In effect, the Canadian Component is a mirror image of the International Component. As a case study, it offers a unique opportunity to examine the theoretical and practical implications of the cosmological conception of culture for a country that may be called upon to play a seminal role in the new millennium.

Consistent with the division of the Project into these two basic components, two major monographs will be prepared, published and distributed each year, one for the International Component, and one for the Canadian Component. A great deal of background research will be undertaken in connection with each monograph, and numerous

discussions and dialogues will be held with recognized authorities in the field. The titles of the monographs are:

International Component

The Character of Culture (1988)
The Politics of Culture (1989)
The Cultural Personality (1990)
The Community Culturescape (1991)
The Challenge of Cultural Development (1992)
Cultural Sovereignty and Change (1993)
International Cultural Relations (1994)
Cultural Education (1995)
Cultural History (1996)
Cultural Visions of the Future (1997)

Canadian Component

The Character of Canadian Culture (1988)
The Politics of Canadian Culture (1989)
The Canadian Cultural Personality (1990)
The Canadian Community Culturescape (1991)
The Challenge of Canadian Cultural
Development (1992)
Canadian Cultural Sovereignty and Change (1993)
Canada's International Cultural Relations (1994)
Canadian Cultural Education (1995)
Canadian Cultural History (1996)
Visions of Canada's Cultural Future (1997)

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APPENDIX B

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