

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

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by

H. G. J. EVANS

*Professor and Head
Department of Modern Languages*

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CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

VICE-CHANCELLOR, EXCELLENCIES, DEANS OF FACULTIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have been here far too long to give you a real Inaugural Lecture. But the Senate directive which started all this, by granting ONE such Lecture to each Faculty per annum, assigned to the incumbent a Faculty rather than a personal or even departmental duty. In choosing my subject, therefore, I have looked for something that might interest every University man or woman, and tried to treat it from a broad humanistic point of view. Accessorily, I hope my choice will help convince everybody that "Modern Languages" is not just teaching Languages.

Culture and Civilization. This is going to be a survey of the semantic history of these two words, culminating in a conflict between their earlier, humanistic meanings and the modern, scientific meanings which have resulted from their recent take-over and equation by anthropology, ethnology and sociology. This will be followed by reflections on the process and my conclusion will be, broadly speaking, a defence of the old meanings.

The origin of the dichotomy lies in the Latin language and in Roman civilization (or culture). In Latin, "colere" first meant "to cultivate the land," and "cultura," derived from the verb through its supine "cultum," meaning "the cultivation of the land." But it soon acquired several figurative meanings, and notably "to cultivate the mind," as in Cicero's "cultura animi philosophia est."

In English, the original meaning of "cultura" passed into compound words like "agriculture," "horticulture," etc., and the figurative meaning into the doublets "culture"/"cultivation," culture being the result of the cultivation of the mind. As could be expected, French followed Latin more closely. Littré's Dictionary of the French Language (1863-1873), still the living source of most modern French dictionary-making, lists the following acceptations: first, the tilling of the soil; secondly, cultivated land; thirdly, the art of cultivating plants; fourthly, (figuratively) cultivation ("culture"), of letters, the sciences, the arts; instruction,

education. However, for the first time in France in the eighth edition of the Dictionary of the French Academy (1932), we read, following the usual humanist definitions: "In an extended meaning, culture is now sometimes synonymous with 'civilization'."

The same somewhat reticent acceptance of the modern scientific meaning of "culture" is observable in the ordinary usage of the English language, at least in Britain, where, as in France, observes Jan Huizinga as late as 1936, "it is *not* unconditionally interchangeable with civilization."

What, then, is the humanist, pre-scientific, history of the word "civilization" in French and in English?

It is also derived from the Latin model, with the words "civis" (citizen), "civitas" (city), "civilitas" (civility), through the medieval Latin "civitabilis" (worthy of being granted citizenship). In French, the adjective "civil" appeared long before the verb "to civilize" or the noun "civilization," with the general meaning "pertaining to the city" and further defined by contrastive pairings with "military," "religious," "political" and "criminal," which also related to "the city" but in different ways. Figuratively it came to mean "courteous," "well-mannered," "polite," "polished," "urbane." Thus, in pre-scientific language, the figurative meanings of "cultured" and "civil" rested on a contrast in the original material meanings of their source-words in Latin between the countryside and the city, rural and urban life. "Culture" was felt to be analogical with the act of tilling the soil, "ploughing the lonely furrow," and "civility" with the act of living together in cities. Hence, while "culture" in its figurative sense tended to be conceived as an individual effort towards self-improvement, akin to the farmer's life, "civility" came to refer to a collective state or accomplishment, a product of city sociability. Through a further deepening of their meanings, the former word became associated with the inner life of the individual, the latter with the development of the community.

These were the common meanings of the two series even before the eighteenth century coined the word "civilization." Dr Johnson did not like it, as Boswell tells us: "I found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his Folio dictionary. He would not admit 'civilization,' but only 'civility.' With great deference to him, I thought 'civilization' from 'to civilize,' better in this sense

opposed to 'barbarity,' than 'civility.'" This confirms, I believe, the flavour achieved by "civil" and "civility" in Johnson's time, I can readily understand why he preferred the suffix *-ity* to the suffix *-ation*, since *-ity*, like its Latin parent *-itas*, denotes a state, a quality, and *-ation* (like *-atio*) an action, a process. Dr Johnson was above all a man-about-London-town who could not conceive of any improvement in the quality of human life beyond what obtained within a radius of one mile or so around Saint Paul's about the year 1760. To him, the coupling of *-ation* to his dear *civil* must have looked and sounded like harnessing four untamed horses to a state carriage, a threat to the integrity and splendour of aristocratic, humanistic, graeco-latin classicism in its mellow English maturity.

And yet, if ever a single word was capable of expressing the whole spirit of an age, including its contradictions, it was the word "civilization" during the late eighteenth century in Western Europe. Recorded first in Ash's Dictionary in 1775, and, in French, in the Dictionary of the Academy of 1798, it immediately took on a double meaning: first, the very one for which Johnson preferred "civility," that is, the state of being civil or civilized (*civile* in Italian to this day), and secondly, the act of civilizing, of making civil. The age of the Enlightenment was, contradictorily, conscious of its high state of civilization and convinced that civilization was just beginning. Hence the success story of the word "civilization" in the latter half of the century. Hitherto, man had been either savage, barbarous (and good, but a *tabula rasa*) or corrupted by irrationality. Sure, there had been some great moments, Pericles, Augustus, the Quattrocento, the Grand Siècle, but brief candles in a tale told by an idiot, tiny drops in an ocean of injustice, absurdity and cruelty. The application of reason to human affairs was going to change all that. Personal culture, largely classical and inward-looking in the traditional educational system, would yield to the spirit of the *Encyclopédie*, the Social Contract and the Rights of Man. Revolution was on its way, man was ready to take-off for the lay Millenium.

The disappointments of the nineteenth century and of our own have not entirely washed away the eighteenth century prestige of the word and concept. "Civilization" retains the meanings I have just outlined in contemporary dictionaries of English and French.

Thus, in their ordinary, non-technical or non-scientific usages, "culture" and "civilization" refer to well-defined and separate areas of meaning. Together, they cover the whole of what some social scientists call the "superorganic," that is, all the activities of man which are not genetically determined. Within this whole, "culture" refers to the cultivation of the individual mind, and "civilization" to the collective advancement of mankind. In ordinary speech, a man or woman is said to be "cultured" if he or she is, I would say, well-read, reflective, critical, inquisitive, introspective, and original in his or her appreciation of, and relationship with, both fellowmen and nature. As Edouard Herriot once said, "culture is what remains when one has forgotten everything," a personal vision of self and world, even of course if such a vision is conditioned by society.

On the other hand, a person may be said to be "civilized," but only, I think, if he belongs to a civilized community, which he needs in order to be able to exercise civility. Whereas a cultured man is above all an individual, a person, the civilized man always bows to a social consensus, but in a variety of ways by which the consensus is enhanced and exalted, thus figuring as a symbol of society's ideal image of itself. Here the semantic weight is on society, not on the individual, and the important question that then arises is: what makes a society civilized?

Speaking from a humanist point of view, I would suggest that a civilized society is one in which social relations are free and easy, non-violent and voluntary. Of course, no society has ever fully measured up to this definition, but we have seen how the word "civilization," when it came into existence in the eighteenth century, included the notion that it was a process, an ideal, and a reality only among the "happy few" of the age. "Civilization" expresses the belief that man is perfectible through the free exercise of his faculties.

Now to recapitulate a little before we go on. As a result of normal, social semantic evolution from the Latin watershed, the words "culture" and "civilization" acquired distinctive, useful meanings not only in French and English, but also, with modified forms, in most other European languages historically linked with Latin. Now for the story of how these two precious words were high-jacked by the intelligentsia, frog-marched into their eggheads, landed in the secret underground laboratories

of the then budding social sciences, to be there subjected to merciless syncretic tests and fusionary experiments, before being finally flung back at dictionary-makers with a peremptory report that they really meant the same thing, and would they please copy and use "culture" in preference to "civilization". As a result, at the present moment, "culture" (or "civilization") has an anthropological meaning in most dictionaries, side by side, or rather after, its ordinary and humanistic meanings, and "civilization," which is not liked by anthropologists, retains its humanistic meaning in ordinary speech. But such is the power of science in the contemporary world that the anthropological meaning of "culture" seems on the way to driving out its humanistic meaning, not, I hope, as bad currency drives out good currency.

The principal agent and brain behind this brilliant piece of sleight-of-speech was, first, German scholarship with its "kultur theories" in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, relayed in the last three-quarters of a century by the Central Intelligence Anthropology in the U.S. The principal target and victim was the Enlightenment and what it stood for.

The "kultur theories" were, in the words of A. G. Meyer, the "ideological expression of, or reaction to, Germany's political, social and economic backwardness in comparison with France and England" at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Apart from rising, autocratic, superficially westernized Prussia, Germany was then a patchwork of small, weak, squabbling states, loosely united by a common language spoken in many different ways, but whose people were acutely conscious of a long and rich ethnic tradition. France was then the richest, most populated country in Europe, not an ethnic group like the Germans, but the slow and patient creation of a long line of kings aided by a powerful, dedicated class of jurists and administrators, a state and a people but not a nation, longing to throw off the shackles of its now obsolescent institutions and unleash its energy in a new nation-building, development-oriented adventure. It looked towards England for technological know-how and new methods of government, and the two countries, although rivals and often enemies, together represented and symbolized the imperialism of rationality and progress, in other words both a model for future prosperity and a threat to the security of other nations.

The German "kultur theories," and similar thinking later in Russia, reflected this *ambivalent* image of the advanced Western tip of Europe in the eyes of the rest of the continent and indeed the world. Let us not forget that the most influential rationalist of all times is Immanuel Kant, whose work embodies the deepest and soundest critique to date of the scope and limits of scientific, rational thought. Borrowing the French word "culture" and mutating it into the German "kultur" (first with an initial c and later with a k), Kant and his followers of the *Aufklärung* defined it as "the growth of rationalist and utilitarian philosophy, the flourishing of political and economic institutions," and the task they set for Germany was to emulate the French and English achievements of "kultur" so defined. To the men of the *Aufklärung*, "kultur had a universal, patently international flavour," and the more advanced nations or states could be regarded as models and pathfinders for backward Germany: the radical followers of Kant, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, supported revolutionary France and hailed Bonaparte as the spreader of "kultur" over all Europe.

Thus, it was paradoxically a civilization loyalist, a distinguished German Uncle Tom, who created the initial, far-reaching confusion between the word "civilization" and the word "culture," since what he did in effect was to call civilization culture. It is strange that such a vigorous coiner of new philosophical words for his original concepts should have been so squeamish, faced with these two terms. Perhaps his German super-ego censored the use of "Zivilisation," because it looked and sounded too French, and freudishly substituted for it "kultur," still a foreign word, but one which, especially with the k, was immediately at home in the German language and destined to enjoy a phenomenal fortune in the socio-linguistic history of Germany and—back in its anglo-French form—of the rest of the world.

As is well known, the idyll between the German intellectuals and the heir to the French Revolution, later to be known as Napoleon, or Bony, was short-lived. After Jena, when the *liberation* of Europe became the *occupation* of Europe, Germany rallied round Prussia and founded its resistance on a new kind of intensely nationalistic *kultur theory*. Kultur came to mean, according to A. G. Meyer, "qualities, achievements, behaviour patterns which

were local or national in origin and significance, unique, non-transferable, non-repetitive, and therefore irrelevant for the outsider. . .The stress on such unique culture patterns as against the economic, political, scientific or philosophical achievements of Western civilization can be regarded as an attempt to compensate for a deep-seated feeling of inferiority on the part of German intellectuals once they had come in contact with the advanced nations. . .These *kultur* theories, then, are a typical ideological expression. . .of the rise of backward societies against the encroachments of the West on their traditional culture. They consist in asserting the reality of something which is about to be destroyed."

This second wave of *kultur* theories sharply brought into focus a distinction dear to the German mind, that between *Geist* and *Natur*, spirit and matter. With Hegel, the word "geist" all but superseded the word "kultur," but, to quote A. G. Meyer again, "*geist* was excessively laden with unstated methodological premises; *culture* served far better as a concept through which to view the social structure and institutions, behaviour patterns, ideologies and ethos of a given society in their totality and interdependence." This means that German philosophy was moving away from its traditional idealistic dualism towards a more modern scientific, monistic attitude. But not without bitter and often successful resistance. The distinction between "culture" and "civilization" continued to appear useful and relevant to many German philosophers as a means of expressing the antinomy of quality versus quantity, or of "the inwardnesses, the humanisations, as opposed to the factual, the concrete and the mechanical arts." However, it is interesting, and even amusing, to observe that the two words were apt to be made to permutate in expressing this antinomy. For instance, Humboldt uses "civilization" for "qualitative improvement" and "culture" for control of nature by science and what he calls "kunst," whereas Alfred Weber uses the same words with opposite meanings. But on the whole, the word "kultur" gained ground, for reasons probably connected with the achievement of German unity and the need to found this unity on something more durable and reliable than Bismarck's political genius, in other words on German specificity, hence the *Kulturkampf*. At the same time, in scientific circles, the word was divested of its idealistic undertones and was made "clean" for international scientific use when the new social sciences began

their search for a word to define their area of investigation. "Back from Germany," says the French historian Fernand Braudel; from an admirable and admired Germany, that of the first half of the 19th century, *culture* returned to France with a new prestige and a new meaning. Now the modest second became, or tried to become, the dominant word in the whole of Western thought. By "culture," the German language means, after Herder, intellectual and scientific progress, which it even readily detaches from any social context. By "civilization," it tends to mean the mere material side of the life of man." Thus reduced to a clearly subordinate role in scientific language, "civilization" was ready for absorption by "culture." My next exhibit will show how this was done.

It is generally agreed that the first "anthropological" or "ethnological" definition of "culture" outside Germany is that offered by Edward Burnett Tylor (*Primitive Culture, Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*, 1871). Here it is:

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

In this seminal text, Tylor refuses to choose between the two terms. As one of the founders of modern anthropology, he is well aware of the need in his time for an all-embracing term capable of comprehending the entire vision he has of the field of his subject. He is impatient with the humanist distinction between culture and civilization because it divides that field into two according to criteria which he can only regard as unscientific, or at best if he is broadminded, as pre-scientific. English usage at the time would predispose him in favour of "civilization" as against "culture" to designate the whole field (indeed, the title of his last great work, published ten years later in 1881, is: *Anthropology: an Introduction to the study of man and Civilization*). But he knows about the extraordinary fortune of the word "kultur" in Germany and he has a healthy respect for German scholars. So he admits culture into his definition side by side with civilization, thus acting as a Trojan Horse in the conquest of the English language by "kultur." An innocent Trojan Horse? Maybe, if he hadn't put "culture" first, with "civilization" as a mere alternative.

Henceforward, British anthropologists, etc., will often continue to use the two words indifferently, which doesn't really say much in favour of their sensitivity to language, but in America, where the influence of German science has been stronger, and whither many German scholars emigrated during the Nazi regime and after the Second World War, "culture" gradually drove out "civilization" in scientific language.

"To summarize the history of the relations of the concepts of culture and civilization in American sociology," wrote Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952, "there was a first phase in which the two were contrasted, with culture referring to material products and technology; then a phase in which the contrast was maintained but the meanings reversed, technology and science being now called civilization; and, beginning more or less concurrently with this second phase, there was also a swing to the now prevalent non-differentiation of the two terms, as in most anthropological writing, culture being the more usual term, and civilization a synonym or near-synonym. In anthropology, whether in the United States or in Europe, there has apparently never existed any serious impulse to use culture and civilization as contrastive terms."

This represents the high-water mark of what I would call the "supermarket" or "we-got-everything" approach to "culture." Since then (1952), while this virus invaded ordinary speech, and made the word "culture" almost an expletive, there have been signs of a reaction in scientific circles, with the growing distinction between "culture patterns" and "social structures" which has motivated and signalled the separation of anthropology and sociology, leading to a further break-up until Edgar Morin (1969) distinguishes five meanings to the word "culture," "that ensnaring, vacuous, somniferous, traitorous word": a first anthropological meaning, "in which culture is opposed to nature," a second anthropological meaning, in which culture is "everything that has meaning," an "ethnographic" meaning, opposing the cultural to the technological, a "residual sociological" meaning made up of the waste-products of all the other social sciences, and finally the old humanist meaning. This is the inevitable, if limited and belated, backlash against the former totalitarianism, and the confusion it has created will take a long time to clear. For the time being, social scientists of the various disciplines

must use "culture" either in the supermarket sense, with many of the shelves now empty, or in a variety of restrictive senses, with ensuing mutual and general incomprehension.

I think this is a highly unsatisfactory situation, which I shall venture to criticize, first from a humanist point of view, and secondly, with due respect and caution, on scientific grounds.

As a humanist, I cannot but contrast the logical simplicity, the analogical creativeness, the functional clarity and precision, the sense of continuity evidenced in the pre-scientific history of our two words, with the insensitive, elephantine, muddled and muddling approach of the scientists to these two noble words which were not their property. By the time of the Enlightenment, and after nearly two thousand years of evolution, "culture" and "civilization" expressed two capital complementary concepts relating to man's ideal image of himself as a person and as a kin. These figurative meanings of the two words had evolved from a perception of fundamental human experiences, the ploughing of Mother Earth and the comity of men in cities, and their linguistic forms signalled this origin to the discerning, thereby enriching the concepts with the eloquence of time-hallowed symbols.

The post take-over struggle of the anthro-ethnologists to inject meaning into their concept of culture is far less inspiring. What it seems to have achieved is inflation without expansion, followed by deflation without appreciation. Of the 160 or so definitions of culture listed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952 and uneasily classified by them into nine categories, not one that I can see is more than a paraphrase emphasizing one or more aspects of Tylor's original definition. When one considers that Tylor's definition was probably premature as a scientific statement, founded as it was on the random, descriptive findings of ethnographers who noted everything they saw, rather than on a clear vision of what the science of man could be, one cannot help deploring all those flying-squads of ethno-anthropologists squirting foam into the white elephant.

To make my point more clearly, let me quote Kroeber and Kluckhohn's own suggested definition of "culture," which purports to be the quintessence of the 160 or so definitions which

* A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture—a critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge, Mass., 1952.

they had so painstakingly, "heroically" as one of their commentators says, collated :

"Culture consists of patterns, explicit or implicit, *of and for* behaviour, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts ; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and their attached values ; culture systems may, on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (p. 181).

I shall take each salient point of this definition and follow it with Tylor's rendering of the same point and my own comments :

Patterns (Tylor : complex whole) ; *explicit and implicit* (nothing in Tylor, but surely it would have been naive to expect all "patterns" of human behaviour to be explicit) ; *of and for behaviour* (nothing in Tylor, but what does the distinction between "patterns of behaviour" and "patterns for behaviour" mean? Perhaps, but very obscurely, patterns *of* behaviour are *explicit* and patterns *for* behaviour are *implicit*. Tylor does not mention "behaviour," but all the words in his list imply human behaviour, without restricting culture to behaviour, whereas Kroeber and Kluckhohn do, controversially in my view, since I am not aware that all anthropologists are behaviourists) ; *acquired and transmitted* (Tylor : acquired by man as a member of society. He does not say "transmitted," but surely if you acquire something as a member of society, someone or something has transmitted it to you) ; *by symbols* (Tylor's whole list of words : belief, art, law, etc., obviously implies symbolisation. But is it wise to restrict the acquisition and transmission of culture, as Kroeber and Kluckhohn do, to symbolisation? When I am told "Thou shalt not lie," where is the symbol? Linguistic signs are not in themselves symbols. A symbol, in the words of Charles Morris, is a kind of sign "produced by its interpreter which acts as a substitute for some other sign with which it is synonymous." If we use the word "symbol" accurately, then there are things in all cultures which are not symbols, and, more importantly, there are cultures which are radically hostile to symbolism.)

Constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups (Tylor: by man as a member of society); *including their embodiments in artifacts* (Tylor: art; but do Kroeber and Kluckhohn mean that all artifacts are embodiments of patterns of human behaviour? If so, they must imply that the most secret human thoughts and feelings are forms of behaviour, and then "behaviour" becomes practically synonymous with "culture" and we are back in square one. But if not, then what artifacts?); *the essential core of culture* (nothing in Tylor, but surely any definition of a concept aims at its essential core and leaves out the inessential); *consists of traditional ideas* (Tylor's list of words are all "traditional" ideas); *i.e. historically derived and selected* (nothing in Tylor, but is there any need to explain "traditional"?); *and their attached values* (Tylor's words all potentially include the concept of value, but do all ideas have values attached to them? Reality judgments are also part of culture); *culture-systems* (Tylor: complex whole, or if "systems" here means something different from the "patterns" in the first line, why not explain the difference?); *may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action* (nothing in Tylor, but it is obvious: (i) that culture does not fall ready-made from heaven, and (ii) that any "further action" of man is conditioned by the culture he already has.

There was a lapse of eighty-one scientific years between Tylor's definition and that just quoted and analysed; the first was a pioneering effort, the second was arrived at after an exhaustive scrutiny of all that had been written on the subject in the intervening years. Far from improving on the former, I submit that the latter reveals a complete standstill in real conceptualisation and a heartrending deterioration in style.

Even if one concedes that style does not matter in science, although Condillac once said, aptly I believe, that "a science is a well-constructed language," both Tylor's Old Testament and Kroeber and Kluckhohn's Gospel would appear to betray serious scientific shortcomings.

Firstly, they do not *prove* that a culture as they understand it is a "complex whole" or "pattern" or "system." As a working hypothesis, it might have been useful to *presume* that cultural elements interact with one another, but we are not told that it is a working

hypothesis, and in any case it is a far cry from a reasonable expectation of relationships within a culture to the bold overall assumption that all elements of a culture integrate into one structure, as Sorokin well illustrates with his concept of cultural "congeries," that is to say of extraneous elements blown into a culture like drifts in a snowstorm. The tidy conventional view of a human culture as a neat homogeneous pattern is surely not borne out by modern research.

Secondly, one finds little awareness in these two definitions (nor in any one of the 160 others) of a problem which seems to me fundamental in determining the scope of the science of culture. I refer to the distinction between what W. Dennis (1942) calls "autogenous" and "sociogenous" personality manifestations, in other words between forms of behaviour which develop as a result of biological maturation and those which are directly transmitted by society. This distinction was intuitively known to classical humanism and expressed in the famous nature-nurture dichotomy. But it seems to have been left to biologists like Konrad Lorenz to draw attention to the uncertain line that divides nature from nurture when he writes in his book on *Aggression*:

The motive power, [which translates human reason into actions,] originates in mechanisms of instinctive behaviour much older than reason and not directly accessible to rational self-observation. It is these mechanisms which are the sources of love and friendship, of all emotional warmth, of the appreciation of beauty, of the need for artistic creation, of the insatiable inquisitiveness which leads to scientific knowledge. The dynamics of these deepest layers of man's personality does not differ much from the instinct of animals; but on this foundation, human culture has built up all that enormous superstructure of social norms and rites, the functions of which are so closely analogous to those of phylogenetic ritualisation. Whether they have evolved through phylogenesis or culture, norms of behaviour represent motivations for each normal human being and are apprehended as values.

It would have been prudent, on the part of scientists embarking on a mapping-out expedition of their field or reflecting on the

results of nearly a century's work, to have referred explicitly to this crucial distinction and its implications, instead of scrambling for everything they could lay their hands on.

Until they sort it all out and find new words to denote their more sophisticated newer concepts, it may *not* be just a game or intellectual exercise to meditate over our two terms with the means at our disposal. Two or three years ago, when we were making the Syllabus for the Jos Campus, there was a course tentatively called "African Studies." Nobody liked that title, and when someone proposed "African Culture and Civilization" instead, it was approved without discussion, even elatedly, but we did *not* proceed to divide the syllabus concerned into "culture" and "civilization." This rather suggests that we were intimately convinced that there is a difference between culture and civilization and that somehow the difference is important, but that we did not quite know what it is.

My approach in further teasing the two notions will be unblushingly intuitive and impressionistic as well as suitably cautious in claiming originality and penetration.

I propose to retain the essence of the old humanist dichotomy but to try and adapt it to the present situation of man, which seems to me to be characterized by the opposite features of oneness and diversity. Thus I shall consider "civilization" to refer to what is most universal in human life (without entirely divesting it of its applicability to individuals) and "culture" to that which diversifies human groups and individuals (without ignoring that culture is also cohesive on its own plane). I think I can do this with a good conscience, that is to say without feeling the pangs of ethnocentric guilt, a *sine qua non* condition that I could not have fulfilled even a few years ago. I would not be so rash as to claim complete freedom from ethnocentricity, but it is a fact, I believe, that recent ethnology has fundamentally reformed the old pseudo-evolutionistic perspective of history and pre-history according to which all past states of human societies were seen as stages in a sole process of development tending towards a unique goal, namely Western civilization regarded as the ultimate achievement of man. Such a perspective, although it did improve on the yet older view that Western civilization was the only civilization and that all other so-called cultures were in fact uncivilized and somehow sub-human, still denied non-Western cultures their specificity and

reduced them to the function of rejects or partial rejects in an evolution commanded by the iron law of the survival of the fittest. While not completely excluding this neo-Darwinian factor from human history, the new ethnology conceives all cultures, including Western cultures, as modes of life which are or tend to be adequate to their ecological situations and levels of material development and these in turn as "qualitatively distinct functional levels." In other words, different cultures are different solutions to the problem of survival, and their diversity is genuine, valuable and indeed indispensable for the continuation of human progress. Against this background, the use of the word "culture" to designate that which diversifies human groups cannot be said to imply or connote a hierarchic view of cultures.

A second relevant point about modern ethnology is that it regards progress throughout human history as the result of contact and cross-fertilization between cultures, whose contributions are seen to be in direct relation with the differential gaps which separate them, according to Lévi-Strauss for instance. In this perspective, Western civilization is considered to have benefited from a large number of such successful cross-contacts, even to the extent that it is improperly called Western and should, like other civilizations, be regarded as the common heritage of man, each Western nation having its own specific culture like other human groupings. It would be easy, but it would take too long, to demonstrate the truth of this conception, which is now public knowledge anyway.

One of the important consequences of it, from my point of view, is that it validates the use of the word "civilization" that I have proposed and explains the various resistances it has encountered from the advocates of the word "culture." So long as "civilization" was equated with Western civilization conceived as the exclusive achievement first of England and France, then of Europe and later still of Europe and America, it was an ethnocentric term, culturally dear to, roughly, the white man and consequently repugnant to the rest of the world. But if we regard it as the common unifying property and goal of mankind, as the ever-created product of a "jeu en commun," to use Lévi-Strauss's phrase, a sort of card game in which all cultures participate with their several hands, then the word may find a new and potent meaning in its age-old dialogue with "culture."

It is true that Lévi-Strauss, in 1960, did not believe it had much significance in that sense. "The notion of world civilization," he then wrote, "is scanty and schematic . . . Its intellectual and emotional content does not offer much density." But the world has changed since 1960, and I do not know whether Lévi-Strauss still holds that view fifteen years later. But I am indebted to another French scholar, Professor Paul Ricoeur, for a more recent analysis of the concept which I think worth reporting. While readily conceding that the most obvious aspect of world civilization is merely technological, Ricoeur writes: "*The focal point of the spread of technology is the spirit of science itself. . . . Every man, in the presence of geometrical or experimental proof, is capable of reaching the same conclusions, provided he has the necessary training.*" Surely we can agree with Ricoeur that this kind of rationality can generate deep loyalties across the heaviest national curtains among great men and ordinary people alike.

The second feature of universal civilization, according to Ricoeur, is what he calls rational politics: "Side by side with an obvious diversity of political systems, we see developing a singular political experience and even technique. The modern state, as a state, has an identifiable universal structure. . . . Hegel was the first philosopher to have shown that one of the aspects of the rationality of man and so one of the aspects of his universality, is the development of a state endowed with lawful powers and capable of implementing its will through the machinery of a civil service. Even when we strongly criticize bureaucracy, technocracy, we aim only at the pathological forms of a rational phenomenon."

Thirdly, universal rational economic policy. "Beyond the well-known ideological antagonisms, economic techniques which can truly be said to be universal are developing: statistical evaluation, market research and control, planning policy remain comparable in spite of the opposition between capitalism and socialism. One can speak of an international economic science and technology, built into divergent economic objectives, and creating, whether we like it or not, patterns of convergence the effects of which appear to be inevitable."

Fourthly, and often regrettably, we can observe the uniformisation, on a world scale, of daily life, man's food, clothing, housing, working and leisure habits.

On the whole, and in spite of the enormous problems created by this trend, Ricoeur thinks that the balance-sheet is positive: "There has occurred a mutation in the attitude of mankind generally towards its own history: the accession *en masse* of men to certain values of dignity and autonomy is an absolutely irreversible phenomenon, which is a good thing in itself. We observe the appearance on the world scene of vast numbers of human beings until now silent and crushed; an increasing number of men are conscious of making their history, of making history." Because we are constantly reminded of the conflicts created by this worldwide interlocking of people, ideas, things and services, we are apt to overlook the stubborn will to integrate and come to terms which underlies the whirligig of current affairs. This is a rational will, and it constitutes a value.

But we now know that this universalistic civilization is the common heritage of man, a product of the fusion of earlier civilizations. Every human group is capable of, and eager for, civilization, as soon and so long as its survival is no longer at stake and surplus energy is available. Similarly, an individual is civilized and behaves accordingly insofar as his income exceeds his liabilities, as Mr Micawber well knew.

Conversely, it is when a human group, or an individual, are somehow conscious that their liabilities exceed their assets that they turn their back on civilization and lock themselves up in culture. Civilization is a luxury which man cannot always afford. Culture is what a man, or a group, intuitively knows as his or its last spiritual dime, the ultimate heirloom that preserves gentility, the enchanted enzyme of palingenesis.

Why does such a civilized man as Ezekiel Mphahlele write this in 1974:

Black critics and practitioners of imaginative literature have become more and more critical of... traditional high-ground humanism... derived from Hebrew, Greek and Roman traditions: the assumed triumph of the individual, the clarity of truth, the existence of transcendental beauty, the shining virtues of rationality, the glory of democratic freedom, and the range of christian and platonic assumptions that tend to form stubborn threads in the warp and weft of white tradition as a systematic and abstract universalism.

Why, because he feels in his core that his people's human integrity is unbearably suppressed. The same protest, on a larger, louder and even deeper scale, is uttered every day in the very heart of that universalistic civilization which Mphahlele tactically rejects as a killer of his culture. Much of the culture we teach in our Department is radically subversive of the Enlightenment ideal, not only the contemporary stuff, but going far back into the nineteenth and even the eighteenth centuries: I need only mention the name of Rousseau to illustrate this point. Nearly all the intellectual movements of our time in the West are based on a passionate rejection of the fundamental values of the Enlightenment, down to the very notion of rational communication through language. This is the cultural reaction of people, mostly young people, who feel threatened in their humanness by the excesses of scientific universalism. The May 1968 movement in Paris was a spontaneous combustion, a tribal orgy, a rite of cultural spring. But they had their forebears, these Don Quixotes of the barricades, in Michelet's medieval witch, who enlisted the Devil against the iron rule of church and baron; in Joan of Arc, who defeated the political plots of the great against her people; in Victor Hugo's Gavroche who fell on an earlier barricade; in the popular culture generated by 1793, 1848 and 1871; in thousands of ordinary Frenchmen who refused to enter Malraux's "Maisons de la Culture"—cultural palaces—because they did not see *their* culture in them. France, who takes such pride in her universalist mission and is often disliked for it (sometimes genuinely, but sometimes—let us be fair—because her power no longer matches her messianism), has the most iconoclastic intellectuals, the most idiosyncratic peasants, the most tax evaders, the most closed family life, the most xenophobic waiters, the deepest prehistoric caves, the kinkiest-looking cars (as well as some of the most functional), and the most diversified cuisine, and landscape, in the Western world. In France, civilization and culture clash as nowhere else.

Nearly everything I have experienced in my life about myself and other people has led me to believe that the culture/civilization antithesis is a radical and universal one. I have tried to explain it to my satisfaction in terms of other well-known polarities, such as the classical and Nietzschean Dionysiac-Apollinian, the platonic Many and One, the Christian body and soul, the Cartesian matter and thought, Spinoza's Immanence versus Emerson's

transcendence, Geist and Natur, the Bergsonian concept of closed and open religion and morality, the Freudian pleasure and reality principles, the Jungian intro- and extra-versions, the democratic liberty and equality, the genetic white and grey matter, marxist dialectical materialism, and many others. I have looked into the works of modern sociologists, anthropologists and ethnologists, and have been disappointed at finding a proliferation of entities which could not be reduced to any significant binary couplings of mental factors. Such are A. W. Small's (1929) "sixfold interest" (health, wealth, sociability, knowledge, beauty, morality), W. I. Thomas's "four wishes" (for new experience, for recognition, for mastery, for security), McDougall's "nine native bases of the mind," too numerous to quote, or Max Weber's "four kinds of action," rational, axio-rational, affective and traditional, while F. Tönnies' interesting distinction between communities and societies is finally irrelevant, since his "communities" are not human in the full sense of the term. I have also noted that modern social scientists prefer structural to psychological interpretations of the characteristics, variations and specificities of cultural phenomena. But I remain convinced that the ultimate secret of man's behaviour and being must lie in the nature of the species, which has not changed during man's known history, and therefore in his genetic constitution, which must include fundamental ways of apprehending his environment and the universe, in other words a basic psychology co-eval with the life of the species. The fact that none of the pairs that I have mentioned seems to coincide exactly with my own suggested contrastive pairing does not mean that its further elucidation should be abandoned. For one thing, the riddle is too fascinating, and for another, cultural psychology *does* throw some confirmative light on the culture/civilization pair.

Until quite recently, the relationship between rational and non-rational thought was regarded as evolutive: we all remember poor Lévy-Bühl's finally self-discarded concept of pre-logical and logical mentality. The more modern view is that they co-exist in adult civilized man, with a mutual functional relationship. What used to be called pre-logical thought is now called *physiognomic* perception and cognition. "The evidence seems to be conclusive," says Fearing (1952) "that there is a type of cognition in which the individual is in immediate contact with the external world, that in its simplest form it is probably the same for all men irrespective of

culture, and that symbolic processes, including language, are not necessary for it to occur, although when linguistic patterns are available, they may be utilized to express it, probably in the form of metaphor. Important characteristics of this experience are the blurring or abolition of the subject-object polarity, and the high degree to which the object is endowed with dynamic-affective qualities." According to R. Redfield (1952-53), other important features of physiognomic cognition are: an attitude of mutuality and "participant maintenance," rather than exploitation, of man towards not-man, and a belief that the universe is morally significant.

I suggest that this kind of mentality informs and sustains, not only child and primitive thought as was once fondly believed, but a great deal of modern art, literature and behaviour. Again, it would be easy, but time-consuming, to demonstrate this. What it means is that, within the mind of modern *homo sapiens*, there exist side by side two ways of knowing the world, the one rational, theoretical, accumulative, exploitative, the other physiognomic, pragmatic, introspective, participatory and mutualistic. These two ways, which would appear at first sight to be exclusive of each other, are not experienced as contradictory, although they may be causes of stress or conflict, by highly civilized and cultured human beings, who can be seen, every day of their lives, acting on one and the other, successively and sometimes simultaneously, so spontaneous are the pulsions derived from both. What is it, for instance, that makes an engineer, a chemist, a mathematician, a stockbroker leave his machines to go and view an exhibition of surrealist paintings and then commute to his Elizabethan farm house or Georgian cottage home? Or a member of the most rarefied, hermetic intellectual coterie surround himself with the latest gadgets and read the reports of the Club de Rome? Civilization and culture, culture and civilization.

On second thoughts, these examples are too graphic, in that they might suggest that the activities and thoughts of man are neatly divided into two water-tight compartments. Although I do believe that the two fundamental impulses are there in a functional or dialectical or pathetic or tragic (who knows?) relationship, I am even more convinced that they are confusedly mingled in their products and effects at all levels, cognitive, affective and conative. That is what makes human nature so exciting, and why

we often learn more about it from a poem or a novel than from a scientific treatise. Everything we feel, think, do or make is a mosaic, a jigsaw of our two selves. Perhaps what we apprehend as perfection in a work of art or ataraxy in a mental state is the result of a proper balance between the two. Perhaps also, in our moments of great stress and imbalance, we are saved from the one by the other, as for instance when we are just arrested from jumping out of the wide open window of rationality into a giddy vacuum by a timely surge of memories from the depth of our being, or when the womb-like security we derive from our familiar demons is just balked from smothering us by a caesarean irruption of fresh air from the wild. Who will tell us in exactly what proportions the utilitarian and aesthetic are blended in the paintings of Lascaux, the cathedral of Chartres, a Benin or Ife bronze or a Boeing 747? Nor should we make exclusive claims either for culture or for civilization in deciding where values come from. Lorenz, a truly modest, unsectarian man, says that they cannot come from science. In his view, Kant's categorical imperative could never carry concrete, existential allegiance. I wonder. The exercise to the bitter end of reason, experienced as a god-like endowment, *is* and *has been* the main motivation of some of the finest men who have lived. But by and large I would agree with Lorenz that mankind as a species derives its standards from instinctual pulsions buried in its genes, while civilization's function is to create awareness and invent means whereby our innate propensities may more and more effectively be applied.

Ladies and gentlemen, I should have liked to deal more fully with this problem of the relationship between the culture pulsion and civilization pulsion, since its elucidation might well provide a solution to the dysfunctional crisis which we observe nearly everywhere in the modern world. I hasten to add that I would not have presumed to do so in any but a conjectural manner, and with a deep sense of my inadequacy in the face of the modern cultural "bang"—had my time not been up.

What I hope to have done this afternoon, in a preliminary sort of way, is to have helped to persuade you that the age-old humanistic distinction between "culture" and "civilization" remains semantically valid in our time, and possibly illuminating. If you leave this theatre feeling that it is worth trying patiently to apply these two concepts in your own lives in order better to know

which human emotions, thoughts and actions, or what parts of them, are motivated by the one or the other, and if this effort conduces you to cherish both even more, without substituting the one for the other in your self and world-scrutiny, then perhaps a small contribution will have been made to the furtherance of the noble, immemorial task assigned to us by Socrates, NOSCE TE IPSUM, know thyself, so essential if we wish to be truer to ourselves and to others.

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