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CULTURE AND THE FULFILMENT OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY*

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There is one fact at the origin of human consciousness: the feeling for novelty. Consciousness turns man into a being sensitive to novelty.

The more extraordinary the novelty, the stronger it imprints itself upon human consciousness. The entire development of human consciousness depends on this basic fact. The new, extraordinary fact sets going the attention of the primitive man and causes him to think. It causes him to think, all the more so as for primitive man, this new fact isps often as not a threat to his existence. For primitive man, to understand the novelty, to assimilate it within his own consciousness means not only compliance with curiosity but also carrying out a useful vital action.

Because culture is a personality. It is however a prototype-personality and not a concrete one, such as that of the individual. The variety of structure offered by the concrete personality is not to be found in culture. Culture has an ideal structure: it is rather a potential reality. It is more than the statistical average of the concrete personalities inside a people: it is the ideal personality to which each concrete personality contributes as a component. The worse torn in their souls by the pains of doubt and the absurdity of experience are concrete personalities, the more lively become their aspirations after unity. The deeper a people's feeling of the world's disharmony in their consciousness, the more propitious becomes that consciousness to welcoming some culture. For culture, like personality, spells spiritual balance.

One often speaks of European culture, in the singular, and of national European cultures in the plural. How should we understand the relationship between these words in the singular and in the plural? We ought to construe it as a relationship of organic growth. European culture is but one; on the other hand it has undergone various stages. Each major stage has found its crystallization in an easily recognizable form of national culture. Each form used to be definitive for the time and milieu in which it appeared; but after the exhaustion of the time

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