

Summary

Culture can be grasped in a philosophical way by considering its general meaning and then by analyzing its four fundamental constituents: 1) theoretical and scientific cognition; 2) practical cognition, taking on the form of morality and customs; 3) poietic cognition, expressed in art and technology; and 4) religion itself as a personal fact essentially connected with the three previously mentioned constituents.

A general understanding of culture already existed in Greek and Roman antiquity and in its essentials it has lasted to the present day. Culture in the most general sense of this word concerns man, perfecting himself in his various activities and productions. Greek παιδεία and Roman *cultura* adopted by Christianity were enriched by Christian trends, which united the world of nature with the world of the spirit.

In modern, post-Kantian times culture was regarded as the fulfillment of human "values". The very understanding of "values", however, is varied and vague. This is why we should rather base our considerations on the Classical tradition of understanding "culture-civilization", in which we can see the connection between nature and man who responds in a human way, that is, rationally, to the "call" of nature.

This rational human response to the call of nature appears primarily in the very fact of man's cognitive "coming into contact" with the existing world. In the act of cognition the initial reception of cognitive and rational contents occurs. Man, in cognizing the world he encounters, makes a selective interpretation of some "elements" of the surrounding

world and in himself constructs "images-concepts" of cognitively apprehended things. The very fact of cognitive reception that takes place in forming cognitive content is the "intellectualization of nature", the giving of a new "spiritual" mode of existence that is "mine" to the cognitively apprehended contents of things. It is the forming of an intentional order of existence (existence in the cognizing subject through the cognizing subject) of the contents of real being cognized by man. As a result of the cognitive reception of the content of existing reality (nature), the most primary fact of the coming into existence of culture occurs; This is because all man's cultural activities and cultural products pre-suppose as their "point of departure" the fact of cognitive reception of the content of reality, that is, the fact of the "intellectualization of nature". Due to the act of cognition, and thereby the formation of an intentional order of being, we can release human rational activity and through it call culture into existence. Culture perfects both man himself, as the source of culture, and human cultural products, spiritual and material, which allow man to develop.

After outlining the general, basic understanding of culture and the domains of culture – its four constituent parts (theoretical-scientific culture, practical and poietic culture and religion), the author discusses particular areas of human culture in the subsequent chapters. The first domain is cognition as a fact of both the spontaneous and reflected reception of reality itself (being) in acts of cognition. Although cognition itself is inseparably connected with the fact of sign creation, it is not restricted to conventional signs of language; nor is language an *a priori* for cognition. The process of cognitive sign creation occurs in the very acts of cognition. Signs, however, are always connected with the "denoted thing" itself, for cognition is the interiorization of the reality of being. The apprehension of being in acts of cognition is an essential "threshold" that has to be crossed in cognition. The apprehension of being becomes a fact through the apprehension of its act of existence, which is always the existence of a determined essence of being. We associate the fact of apprehending being from the aspect of its existence (a "vertical" dimension of being) and its essence (a "horizontal" aspect of being, conditioning a natural classification) with the facts of early

religious cognition and also scientific cognition. A particularly important matter is human – cognitive – contact with reality, that is, with being as existing, especially being existing as a human being-person. In this primary contact – of cognitive intuition, we can already distinguish the fundamental elements of the very fact of religion. Scientific cognition, on the other hand, is the development of the ability to differentiate between beings, and is connected with the very fact of a primary natural classification. Scientific cognition, as activity that has become specialized through determining the object, aim and methods of cognition, is a basis for the formation of a human cultural niche in which man can live in a rational way. The culmination of theoretical cognition is philosophy conceived as the fundamental, sapiential understanding of reality, that is, the kind of understanding that excludes the absurd in the cognition of the real world and at the same time excludes the absurd (that is, the separation of being from non-being) in the very process of cognition.

The second great field of man's rational cultural activity is his practical cognition, connected with the realization of good in human rational activity. The realization of good is a domain of human morality, which is a characteristic feature of human activity. Morality as the realization of good (and in the negative sense of the word – doing evil!) concerns every human act and is thereby of particular interest for the philosophy of culture. What is morality itself and how does it appear in practical cognition? These problems are analyzed in chapter 4, which is fundamental for the understanding of human culture.

Although practical cognition is the work of the intellect, it differs from theoretical cognition by its attention to detail, specificity and its link with the emotional sphere (both affective and volitional). The aim of practical cognition is the release of human activity; it is connected with the realization of a good recognized and chosen by the acting subject. The release of human activity, although it often occurs spontaneously, is, however, conditioned both by the specific nature of cognition and of emotional reactions. This is why the very understanding of activity is conditioned by the awareness of the set of those features that integrate human rational activity, deriving from practical cognition. A characteristic feature of human activity is that it is neither necessary

nor determined. As opposed to "what happens within me" when I carry out my actions as a determined biological nature that is subject to the necessitating laws of biology (a chemical metabolism), my conscious and free activity, that is, specifically human activity, is not determined and not necessary but free. I observe in my everyday experience that I can, that I do not have to, and that I want to act in a particular way. Thus, this type of human activity presupposes a specific structure of man's rational nature, which is "open" and not determined to the same kind of activity. The fundamental moment for activity is, therefore, the self-determination that occurs in the act of decision. Every human being is doomed to deciding, for even the resolution not to make a decision is also a human decision, just as carrying out acts of obedience to another person is a decision. Thus, if human activity is the result of decision, then decisional cognition is the characteristic type of cognition that every human being must accomplish when he acts. In the act of decision all human faculties (cognitive and emotional) necessary for carrying out activity itself combine into one source of activity. The act of decision itself is that type of human act in which we ourselves freely (through an act of wanting) choose one practical judgment from among many ones showing us methods of realizing good, and through the content of a practical judgment (freely chosen), we determine ourselves to concrete activity. Thus, in relation to the material presented in a practical judgment, by choosing we actualize ourselves and determine ourselves to a particular type of activity and make ourselves the real source and efficient cause of our activity. This is why the act of decision is essentially a moral being and forms the human order of morality, just as it constitutes the human order of activity. Morality is the relation of concordance of our conduct with the norm of this conduct. The norm of conduct is constituted by the objective arrangement expressed in the structure of persons and things in so far as it is cognized by man, that is, expressed in theoretical judgments. Those theoretical judgments about the structure of people and things constitute man's personal convictions. Contents of practical judgments, which we constantly experience, can be in accordance or not in accordance with such theoretical judgments, that is, with a personal conviction about the nature of persons and things. If,

therefore, we freely choose a practical judgment, the content of which is in accordance with the arrangement of theoretical judgments (our convictions), and through such a judgment we determine ourselves to activity and actualize ourselves as the source of really human activity, we are in a proper order of activity, that is, in a positive order of morality. If, on the other hand, we act differently than we think (we act not in accordance with our objective convictions), we are in a negative order of morality, since we act differently from what we think. In such a case an inner disorder ensues and a kind of inner "division" occurs, since the practical judgments chosen by us (by which we determine ourselves to action) are not in accordance with the arrangement of theoretical judgments about the nature of things and persons. Thus, all human activity is inwardly linked with morality and morality constitutes the essential characteristic feature of human (conscious and free) activity. Customs are the social consolidation of human modes of behavior in the context of local culture.

Thus, the problematic of practical cognition and morality connected with it constitutes the feature common to all human beings of culture created. We cannot separate any human activity from moral order.

The third field of man's cultural creativity is the domain of poietic cognition, sometimes called artistic, technical cognition. Just as the domain of practical cognition is connected with theoretical cognition, so too the domain of creativity presupposes theory and moreover is also linked with the domain of man's practical cognition. We must, however, add some clarification of the specificity of this type of cognition (poietic cognition) in order to become aware of the nature of creativity itself and its products. The point of departure for the analysis of this problem is the fact of human cognition, mainly cognition of the conceptual kind, since it can most easily show the specificity of this domain of culture.

If, therefore, we draw attention to the fact that our concepts, through which we apprehend the content of the thing which is cognized (in a selective and incomplete way), can be reflected upon and objectified (in order to achieve a reflected cognition), then the essential moment of poietic cognition occurs when we order our reflected cognition (concept) to its realization in activity, that is, when we make our concepts the

exemplary cause of our products. The constitution of the concept as an exemplary cause characterizing poietic cognition can take place either spontaneously or reflectively, through "creative work". Spontaneous and reflective poietic cognition always has a "mimetic" nature in the wide sense of the word "mimesis", not as simply an imitation of reality but as the derivation of all contents (expressed in art) from reality. The concept as the exemplary cause of production itself, reflected in creative work, is constructed from "broken" elements of reality previously apprehended in theoretical cognition. An essential moment of this creative work is to find oneself a criterion that will combine the previously "broken up" elements of content into one work of art. Such a criterion fulfills the essential elements of transcendental beauty conceived as *id quod visum placet*. The formation of a constructional outline of the concept in the mind as the effective cause of the product has a denotative nature of being, that is, the nature of an intentional being in the primary sense of the word. On the other hand, the various "incarnations" of the "intention" (the concept as an effective cause) in material beyond the intellect has the nature of "secondarily intentional" being, that is, a denotative means of being, the understanding of which can ultimately be referred to the mind of the creator.

The analysis of creativity itself is necessarily connected with the analysis of beauty. This connection was always recognized in the tradition of classical philosophy. Beauty, in fact, revealed from the aspect of the object-product and also from the aspect of the creator himself, as expressed in the definition *cuius ipsa apprehensio placet* is the ultimate foundation of poietic order. Thus, truth, good and beauty as transcendental qualities of being constitute the essential fibre of human culture. The fourth "value" of specifically human culture is "sanctity", based on religion. It is the full harmony of human activities in relation to the Transcendent Being. Religion appears as the personal bond of relations between the human person and God, who is recognized as the primary source of being, as the ultimate goal of human activity, through the interpretation of the rationality and intelligibility of being. The fact of religion must be distinguished from forms of religion, which are connected with culture and its development.