

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

A STUDY OF

HUMANISTIC PEDAGOGY

1918 -- 1939

A Prospectus by

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The Philosophy of Culture

**A Study of Humanistic Pedagogy**

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**Working Divisions**

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## Introduction: The Outlook of Humanism

Humanism holds that the animal, man, makes himself human by using mind to order the universal flux that he finds both within and about him.

By thinking men order nature and themselves; and the ordering thoughts are their culture. As the anthropologists say, culture is a whole way of life; but, as the classicists say, culture, nevertheless, has a qualitative structure: for instance, forced to choose between preserving either the concept "cigarette" or "number," prudent men would select the latter. Thus, the philosophy of culture concerns the principles of selection that prudent men should apply to their whole cultural heritage in order to structure it for the optimum benefit of its holders.

Since neither God nor nature sponsor man's knowledge, culture is as insecure as the mortals who hold and form it; and this insecurity makes education the sole guarantor of the laws that men have given nature and themselves. The successive generations maintain and extend the world to the degree that each assimilates and develops the structured ideas which make the world intelligible. Unless men are trained to appreciate and improve the cultural means by which predecessors created their inner and outer environment, the continued existence of these orders will be endangered; and, although the future is always uncertain, insufficient

cultural training will increase the probability of man's destruction of his own creations.

Humanistic pedagogy tries to insure that each generation receives a cultural training adequate to maintain man's progressive self-liberation. The philosophy of culture establishes the goals of this pedagogy; and wherever culture is transmitted from the more mature to the less mature, humanists find a potential for educating men.

I propose to study how humanistic pedagogy developed during the inter-war years. During this time humanists perceived a cultural crisis caused by certain radical defects in the structure of valuations inherited from nineteenth century thought. Part I of the study will describe the humanistic interpretation of this cultural crisis that had been long developing and which the Great War made manifest. In a second movement, humanists re-examined the philosophy of culture in the light of twentieth century science and developed new principles of cultural selection which, they hoped, would give human life more stability, purpose, and potential. Thus, there were humanistic developments in physics, biology, psychology, and technical philosophy; and Max Scheler, Ernst Cassirer, John Dewey, Jacques Maritain, and Jose Ortega y Gasset led many others in applying a new philosophy of culture to the problems of humane living. These developments will be the subject of the second, longest Part of the dissertation. Lastly, humanists proposed and attempted various programs to transmit a more perfectly structured culture from the mature

to the immature. In Part III I shall survey some of these efforts to actuate humanistic educational theory.

Taken together, I believe these three parts will constitute an incomplete, but substantial study of humanistic pedagogy during the inter-war years. Given the unsatisfactory -- nay, nonexistent -- literature on the subject, the proposed study should constitute a useful contribution to knowledge. What kind of contribution that might be, I try to indicate below with a more detailed outline of each chapter.

### Part I: Humanistic Pedagogy in a Naturalistic World

At all times the purposeful maintenance of the cultural heritage has been a basic activity of humanists. The ability to give purpose to the process depended on the philosophy of culture, which assigned different values to different ideas. During the nineteenth century the intellectual basis for this normative structuring of knowledge seemed to disappear when the biological, social, and psychological sciences overcame the distinction between a law for man and a law for thing. Rather than the sense of duty created by a philosophy of culture, the new social sciences confronted men with a sense of objectivity and inevitability. A vision of an objective, inevitable development was not one to evince the sublime in men. The naturalistic attitude derided concern for the spirit as an obsession with illusions, and proved its worth by providing ever better material conditions. However, some doubted whether men could live by bread alone; and, if they could not, what would happen to the ideological part of life when

normative thinking had been decimated by the scientific attitude?

Moralists had long been calling for a transvaluation of all values in order to combat matter-of-fact naturalism. The Great War gave this call a ring of urgency. Humanists responded. The cultural fatalism of Marxian and Darwinian materialism, the apparent undercutting of reason when the human sciences revealed its rationalizations, and a sense, nevertheless, of a potential for advance in the human soul, if only it could remain human: these provoked humanists to restate the permanent problem of maintaining culture through normative action in terms that were adequate for "their time." They agreed that unless men gave more care to the place of knowledge, reason, and value in the conduct of life, the continued self-liberation of the human spirit was doubtful.

Thus, in Part One I shall describe the humanistic statement of the crisis in culture during the inter-war years. The essay should show how humanists viewed nineteenth century cultural history, it should analyze what they feared in their own spiritual situation, and state what they felt was necessary to avoid the intellectual dangers confronting them. This last topic will lead into Part II, for it will introduce the two basic problems the philosophy of culture tried to solve: namely, to secure its intellectual moorings by achieving scientific respectability without losing its normative orientation, and then, to develop a convincing, normative structure for the culture that would better minister to human needs.

At this stage, a fairly complete bibliographical listing will indicate more of my intentions than would the fabrication of an elaborate outline; and so the reader who is satisfied

with the above exposition and is curious about the likely contents of Part II, may feel free to skip the concatenation of books below: (\* = important)

Irving Babbitt:  
Rousseau and Romanticism 1919  
 \*Democracy and Leadership 1924

Joseph Wood Krutch:  
Our Changing Morals 1925  
 \*The Modern Temper 1929

Walter Lippmann:  
Liberty and The News 1920  
 \*Public Opinion 1922  
The Phantom Public 1925  
American Inquisitors 1928  
 \*A Preface to Morals 1929

John Dewey:  
 \*Reconstruction in Philosophy 1920  
Human Nature and Conduct 1922  
 \*The Public and Its Problems 1927  
Individualism Old and New 1929

John Cowper Powys:  
The Meaning of Culture 1929

Frank N. Notch:  
King Mob 1930

T.S. Eliot:  
Selected Essays 1935  
 \*After Strange Gods 1934

Wyndham Lewis:  
Time and Western Man 1927

F.R. Leavis:  
Mass Society and Minority Culture 1930  
Culture and Environment 1933

Leonard Woolf:  
After the Deluge 1929  
Quack, Quack! 1935

Jose Ortega y Gasset:  
 \* The Modern Theme 1923  
 \*\*The Revolt of The Masses 1930  
Essays in Obras Completas

Jacques Maritain:  
Thémas, ou les Entretiens d'un Sage  
et de Deux Philosophes Sur Diverses  
Matières Inégalement Actuelles 1921  
 \*Reflexions sur L'Intelligence 1924

Paul Valéry:  
 \*Discours de Réception a l'Academie  
Française 1927  
Regards sur le Monde Actuel 1931  
Variété, premier volume 1931

Julien Benda:  
 \*La Trahison de Clercs 1927  
Discours à la Nation Européenne 1933

Albert Schweitzer:  
 \*The Philosophy of Civilization 1923

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|--|------|
| Max Scheler:   |      |
| <u>Krieg und Aufbau</u>  | 1916 |
| <u>On The Eternal in Man</u>                                   | 1921 |
| <u>*Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre, 4v.</u> | 1924 |
| Karl Jaspers:  |      |
| <u>Man in the Modern Age</u>                                   | 1931 |
| Nicholas Berdyaev:   |      |
| <u>The End of Our Time</u>                                     |      |
| <u>The Fate of Man in the Modern World</u>                     |      |

Any suggestions as to greivous omissions or unwarranted inclusions on this list will be appreciated. In the essay I shall not attempt to show that each of these men were humanists, but will synthesize from their writings something of an ideal type denoted "the humanist statement of the cultural crisis." Exposition of the thought of particular humanists will be left to Part II in which the contributions of Dewey, Ortega, Maritain, Cassirer, and Scheler will again become relevant.

## Part II: The Philosophy of Culture: 1918-1939

As the previous Part will show, humanists feared that when evolutionary thinkers successfully treated man as the object of natural science, they vitiated normative thought. With respect to the question of what should be done with the cultural heritage, it appeared that those who wished to renounce most of it as pre-scientific fancies had a dangerously strong argument. Certainly a critical philosophy of culture could not flourish until it justified its place in a scientific era; yet to many it was clear that such a flourishing philosophy was needed.

Science, itself, provided the basis for a re-invigorated philosophy of culture. The weakness of humanism had been its incompatibility with the evolutionary sciences which showed that man was at the mercy of nature's shaping forces.



Important movements in twentieth century science demonstrated the opposite relationship: man's mind shaping the image of nature on the basis of which he could act. The more alert humanists were quick to take up developments such as relativity physics, vitalistic biology, and gestalt psychology, and to use them to strengthen the foundations of the philosophy of culture. In technical philosophy the movement of phenomenology altered the conception of "fact" in a way which made it much more difficult to argue that some methods were primarily scientific and others slothfully were not. The first three chapters of this Part will show how these developments helped create an intellectual mood conducive to philosophizing about culture.

In the remainder of Part II I shall discuss some major contributions to the philosophy of culture. How Max Scheler applied the phenomenological method to ethics, philosophical anthropology, and the sociology of knowledge shall be the subject of the last half of chapter 3. The remaining chapters will concern four philosophies of culture in which individual thinkers attempted to structure the cultural heritage on the basis of the way each thought man gave order to the world. Thus, Ernst Cassirer studied culture in the light of his conception of man as the maker of symbols, as distinct from animals who merely could recognize signs. John Dewey contended that in discriminating between aspects of culture, we should recognize that man, uniquely, constructs experiences in order to judge rationally the potentials open to him. Jacques Maritain maintained that in structuring culture we

should remember that man is the being capable of recognizing certain universals, in the light of which he can assign all things their proper place. Lastly, Ortega asserted that man was the being who theorized in order to act more effectively; and culture, therefore, should be organized to maximize man's opportunity to develop theories about nature's processes and to construct ideals for his own aspirations. All four applied their systems to politics, art, science, history, and philosophy; and although their theories differed, they were not contradictory; and thus, their principles were complimentary, not conflicting, contributions to the philosophy of culture.

#### 1. The Human Laws of Speculative Physics:

Disagreement still dominates assessments of the significance of relativity and indeterminacy for philosophy. Nevertheless, it is clear that these developments were amenable to the humanistic interpretation that both physicists and philosophers made. In this chapter I shall describe how physical theorists accentuated the role of the knower in knowing, how they showed that the laws of nature were the laws men gave to nature, and proved that there were certain limitations on man's power to give intelligibility to things. Then I shall recount how physicists and philosophers used these arguments as important features in the nascent epistemology of humanism.

Fortunately, a literature suitable for this chapter has developed. The technical papers concerning relativity and indeterminacy, are not particularly relevant to recounting the humanistic interpretation of these developments, (although

they are very relevant to the eventual determination of the validity of the interpretation; but that is a determination I do not propose to attempt). Again, I would appreciate critical comments on my proposed bibliography:

Max Planck:

- \*A Survey of Physical Theory 1922
- \*Das Weltbild der neuen Physik 1929
- Where Is Science Going? 1932
- \*The Philosophy of Physics 1936
- Determinus oder Indeterminus? 1938
- \*Wege zur physikalischen Erkenntnis 1944

Albert Einstein:

- The Meaning of Relativity 1921
- Sidelights of Relativity 1922
- \*Mein Weltbild 1934

P.A. Schilpp, ed:

- Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist 1949

Edwin Schrödinger:

- Über Indeterminus in der Physik 1932
- \*Science and the Human Temperment 1935
- \*Science and Humanism: Physics in Our Time 1951

Werner Heisenberg:

- Wandlungen in der Grundlagen der Naturwissenschaft 1935
- \*Physics and Philosophy 1958
- The Physicist's Conception of Nature 1958

Max Born:

- \*Experiment and Theory in Physics 1943
- Natural Philosophy of Cause and Chance 1948
- Continuity, Determinism and Reality 1955

Sir James Jeans:

- \*Physics and Philosophy 1943

Arthur E. Eddington:

- The Nature of the Physical World 1929
- NEW Pathways in Science 1935
- \*The Philosophy of Physical Science 1938

Ernst Cassirer:

- \*Substance and Function 1910
- \*Einstein's Theory of Relativity 1921
- \*Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics 1936

F.S.C. Northrop:

- \*Science and First Principles 1931
- The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities 1947

C. Lanezos:

- "Albert Einstein and the Role of Theory in Contemporary Physics," American Scientist, 47: 41-59 1959

Gilbert Ryle:  
\*The Concept of Mind 1949  
L.S. Stebbing:  
\*Philosophy and the Physicists 1957  
Stephen Toulmin:  
The Philosophy of Science 1953  
\*Foresight and Understanding 1961  
Adolph Grunbaum:  
Philosophical Problems of Space  
and Time 1964

Some background reading in Charles S. Peirce, Ernst Mach, and Henri Poincaré will be necessary.

## 2. The Value of Gesalt

Vitalistic biology and gestalt psychology also proved congenial to <sup>THE</sup> humanistic temper. In the former it was shown that the vital capacities of the animal entered into the structuring of its "environment" (the world as it can perceive it); and this led directly to ethics, for man was the only animal with vital capacities for moral action. Ignoring these in considering the human environment would pervert the scientific attitude. Gestalt psychology also showed how the perceiver structured the world. This initiative made him responsible for its proper configuration. In this chapter I shall describe these developments, stressing their humanistic contributions to ethics, epistemology, and value theory.

This chapter will be based on the following bibliography:

Baron von Uëxkull:  
\*Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere 1909  
Theoretical Biology 1920  
Hans Driesch:  
\*The History and Theory of Vitalism 1914  
The Crisis in Psychology 1925  
\*Der Mensch und die Welt 1928  
\*Ethical Principles in Theory and  
Practice 1930  
Max Wertheimer:  
\*Drei Abhandlungen zur Gestalttheorie 1925

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|--|------|
| <u>Productive Thinking</u>                       | 1945 |
| Kurt Koffka:                                     |      |
| <u>Beiträge zur Psychologie der Gestalt</u>      | 1919 |
| * <u>The Growth of the Mind</u>                  | 1921 |
| * <u>The Principles of Gestalt Psychology</u>    | 1935 |
| Wolfgang Köhler:                                 |      |
| * <u>The Mentality of Apes</u>                   | 1921 |
| <u>Gestalt Psychology</u>                        | 1929 |
| ** <u>The Place of Value in a World of Facts</u> | 1938 |
| <u>Dynamics in Psychology</u>                    | 1940 |

This chapter will be shorter than the first; and it might be advisable to reverse their position, for the effect of physical theory on humanism occurred mainly through epistemology, which is also the subject of the third chapter. But the content of this chapter may lack the dramatic stature that an opening chapter on relativity and indeterminacy could give to the philosophy of culture.

### 3. Man's Ideas of Phenomena

During the late nineteenth century, Franz Brentano, an Austrian psychologist, led a philosophical school concerned with value theory. Because the impact of the "Austrian theory of value" was delayed until the twentieth century and because it was a prelude to the phenomenology of Husserl and Scheler, this chapter will begin by describing this theory and how it gave rise to phenomenology. The central part of the chapter will deal with Husserl's conception of the phenomenological method, its significance for the philosophy of science, and its re-establishment of idealism in philosophy. In the last part of this chapter I shall follow Max Scheler's imaginative applications of this outlook to questions of ethics, philosophical anthropology, and the sociology of knowledge. His work was cut short by an early death; but, nevertheless, it constitutes one of the major contributions

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to the philosophy of culture during the inter-war years.

Proposed Bibliography:

- Franz Brentano:  
Psychologic von empirischen  
Standpunkt 1874  
Wahrheit und Evidenz
- Christian von Ehrenfels:  
System der Werttheorie, 2 v. 1898
- Alexius von Meinong:  
Psychologisch-ethische 1894  
Über Annahmen 1902  
Zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen  
Werttheorie 1923
- Edmund Husserl:  
\*Logische Untersuchungen, 2 v. 1901  
\*Ideas: A general Introduction to  
Pure Phenomenology 1913  
Cartesian Meditations 1931  
Husserliana, 9 v. 1950-62  
Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund  
Husserl 1940
- Max Scheler:  
\*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und  
die materiale Wertethik 1913  
Abhandlungen und Aufsätze, 2 v. 1915  
\*On the Eternal in Man 1921  
Universität und Volkshochschule 1921  
Nature and Sympathy 1923  
\*Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltan-  
schanungslehre, 4 v. 1924  
Probleme einer Soziologie des  
Wissens 1924  
Man's Place in Nature 1927  
\*Philosophical Perspectives 1929
- Karl Mannheim:  
Ideology and Utopia 1940

There is a Collected Edition of Scheler's works which I hope to be able to use.

#### 4. Neo-Kantianism and Ernst Cassirer

The Marburg school of neo-Kantianism contributed much to the philosophy of culture. Its elder leaders were Hermann Cohen and Paul Natrop, who influenced such leading humanists of the inter-war years as Heinrich Rickert, Arthur Liebert, Ernst Cassirer, and José Ortega y Gasset. In the first part

of this chapter I shall discuss the contribution of neo-Kantianism to humanistic cultural thought. Ernst Cassirer transcended the Kantian interest of the Marburg school by his work on the problem of knowledge and symbolization. His system was based on a conception of man as the maker of symbols, and within this system he dealt with almost all facets of culture. In the main part of this chapter I shall examine Cassirer's contribution to the philosophy of culture, trying to show how he structured the intellectual heritage in a useful way for humanistic pedagogy.

Proposed bibliography:

- Paul Natrop:  
\*Sozialpädagogik 1899  
\*Platos Ideenlehre 1903  
Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Sozial-  
pädagogik 1907  
Vorlesungen über praktische philoso-  
phie 1925
- Heinrich Rickert:  
Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen  
Begriftsbildung 1902  
\*Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissen-  
schaft 1921  
Kant als Philosoph der modern Literatur 1924  
Die Logik des Prädikats und das  
Problem der Ontologie 1930  
\*Grundprobleme der philosophischen  
Methodologie, Ontologie, Anthro-  
pologie 1924
- Arthur Liebert:  
\*Geist und Welt der Dialektik 1921  
Erkenntnistheorie  
Philosophie des Unterrichts  
Die Krise des Idealismus  
\*Der universale Humanismus 1946
- Ernst Cassirer:  
See Bibliographies in  
Schilpp, ed. The Philosophy of Ernst  
Cassirer, and  
Klibansky and Paton, eds. Philosophy  
Cassirer Festschrift.

I intend to study Cassirer's major works and to follow special problems ~~as they arise~~ through his work.

## 5. Kant, Pragmatism, and John Dewey

One of my purposes in this dissertation is to try to treat Dewey in the humanistic realm of discourse that arose in the twentieth century. Although we may agree with Santayana that Dewey had a metaphysics, we should ask whether it was naturalistic. The term "experience" is the key to whether Dewey was a naturalistic or humanistic metaphysician. If we understand "experience" in a sensationalist, post-Lockian, positivistic sense, in which the world writes upon our blank slates, Dewey will appear as a naturalist. But, if we understand "experience" in a post-Kantian sense, in which the experiencer formulates the experience, Dewey will appear as a humanist. Dewey began his philosophical career as a neo-Kantian and he became a "pragmatist," the founders of which, Pierce and James, were anti-positivistic and influenced by Kant.

If a humanistic interpretation of Dewey proves viable, a new reading of his educational thought will be possible. It will show Dewey's educational concern becoming progressively more inclusive and cultural: starting with the child and the school, he turned to democracy and education; and, after careful studies of politics, science, art, culture, and valuation, he returned to education under the heading of "the problems of men and the present state of philosophy." In this interpretation, Dewey's pre-war studies of education will be secondary to his post-war studies of culture and



philosophy.

Proposed bibliography:

- C.S. Pierce:  
Chance, Love, and Logic  
Values in a World of Chance
- William James:  
The Principles of Psychology 1890  
Talks to Teachers 1892  
The Will to Believe 1896  
Pragmatism 1907  
Varieties of Religious Experience 1902
- John Dewey:  
See bibliography in Schilpp, ed.  
The Philosophy of John Dewey

I will stress Dewey's writings from Democracy and Education on, which was as much a prelude as it was a culmination. I also want to see how much of his post-war thinking was foreshadowed in his early essays for The Journal of Speculative Philosophy.

6. Jacques Maritain and Christian Humanism

Maritain is important to humanistic educational thought because he has arrived at generally the same conclusions about culture as other humanists, but via neo-Thomism rather than neo-Kantianism. This different grounding raises a problem, for Maritain frequently criticized other humanists because he disagreed with their premises. Perhaps when I achieve a better acquaintance with his work, I will find he does not fit into the subject. Be that as it may, I now think his different premises produce a view of man like that of many other humanists; and, if this is true, his many sided writing on culture and its relation to human life will contribute to my synthesis of humanistic pedagogy.

Like Scheler, Cassirer, Dewey, and Ortega, the man, Maritain, is of a depth of mind that sets him apart from any school; and so I do not intend to treat him within the confines of scholastic philosophy. I will stress the humanistic and the cultural in his writings, which stretch from 1914 to 1961,

and will look for the principles by which he thinks culture should be organized. As Maritain's work since World War II appears to follow the lines he established earlier, I feel free to treat it as if it fell within my main period.

## 7. José Ortega y Gasset and the Examined Life

Ortega's early works referred mainly to problems of Spain, and I will deal with these only in so far as they illuminate his later, general philosophy of culture. From 1923 until his death Ortega devoted himself to advancing humanistic conceptions of art, history, society, and philosophy, and to strengthening the cultural institutions -- the university, library, theater, and publishing -- which could make his conception operative in human life. I shall stress these contributions to a philosophy of culture, showing especially how his idea of man-as-theorizer enabled him to combine natural science and human duty in one system.

I have written a chapter length essay on Ortega to show how he attempted to make culture a more beneficial force in life by improving its quality and its dissemination. I was concerned mainly with his early and middle periods, and need to do some more reading in his late and posthumous writings, especially La idea de principio en Leibniz. The nine volumes of his Obras Completas are the basis of a bibliography which I can supplement with writings by his contemporaries and followers.

These seven chapters should show that humanists advanced a substantial philosophy of culture during the interwar years. They treated the major issues of the time in a way that enabled men to have a selective attitude about their efforts to transmit the heritage of ideas. Although in school practice the interwar years are remembered as a time of intellectual leveling, we will see that humanistic pedagogy went against this trend with respect to the school and the society at

large. Humanists worked to discover bases for valid distinctions in the cultural heritage; and their revisions re-founded the traditional system of selection: the correct use of mind, the exercise of critical judgment, the pursuit of right reason. It was the capacity for this pursuit that humanists, as always, sought to maintain. They did so not only in word, but by deeds as well.

### Part III: Toward Actuation

As a complement to Part One I will write an essay describing some attempts to implement humanistic pedagogy. There were widespread efforts to improve the university, especially to balance the trend towards specialization by establishing an institution responsible for the valid synthesis of available knowledge. Ortega wrote on this and founded the Instituto de Humanidades in 1947 to fulfill his theory. Max Scheler, Paul Valery, Julien Benda, F.R. Leavis, Irving Babbitt, and Karl Jaspers wrote about the university. There is, I know, a great deal more material, perhaps too much.

A second humanistic educational development may be found in the new ways the press and publishing were used. Several reviews, especially the Nouvelle Revue Francaise and the Revista de Occidente were founded as forums for a universal interest in culture: the indexes of the latter show articles on subjects from science through literature by authors from every part of the world. Critics, both popular and elite, flourished. On one hand Walter Lippmann proposed a fourth branch of government, and on the other, F.R. Leavis wrote a

barbed secondary school text, Culture and Environment. John Dewey's contributions to The New Republic should be noted. The scientists' often misguided efforts to popularize their work went along these lines; and their mistakes have led to one of the new, synthetic disciplines in the university, the philosophy of science.

Another possibility would be an examination of the effect of the Bauhaus on modern architecture and design. I have not gone into this sufficiently to do more than mention it.

The purpose of Part III, whatever substance goes into it, will be to show that the highly developed educational theories described in the main part were not thoughts in a void: They made a difference in the way some men acted, and still should.

#### A Note on my Intended Method:

If any of the chapters I have contemplated above are to succeed, they will have to be tightly organized about a theme. My intention, after considering the source material, is to decide what is the principal contribution of that material to the philosophy of culture, and then to write an essay advancing and defending my interpretation as completely and convincingly as I can. Since I have not arrived at my interpretations, there is no sense in trying to say how each essay will be organized. However, I have worked out the lengths in terms of which I shall think in writing each of the component essays: Introduction, 15 pages; Part I, 50; Ch. 1, 40; Ch. 2, 25; Chs. 3-7, 40 each; Part III, 50; and Conclusion, 20. These total approximately 400 typewritten pages.