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**CRISIS OF CULTURE  
– CRISIS OF COMMUNICATION?**

In the half of XIX century and later a question about crisis of our culture has been intensified. It has begun to be more and more often noticed and discussed. Also an authentic care about , what will happen with our west world has appeared and whether it will be possible at all to overcome that crisis.

This is at the same time a fear for a human being and its skill of communication with others, for possibility of entering in dialogue, or at least of starting it. Although many philosophers have analysed the situation, that has arisen all of them reached a common conclusion, which is, that crisis of culture is connected with an aspirations for generality, for universalism, for finding a common denominator for everything and thereby for object of interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately this is also connected with disappearance of authentic, spontaneous exchanges of thoughts between people, not only between research workers, with politicians, etc, but also between everybody from our population.

That is why it is worth tracing rights of thinkers relating of that crisis and attempts at breaking it. This is interesting also for another reason, than just for curiosity and astorishment (thought from them is born the Platon's philosophy); i.e. to learn and to understand how important in our life is communication and being with other people, how huge meaning it has for our education and casual kindness.

The crisis of culture involves first of all an aspiration for generality and universalism. All becomes standardized and brought to recognizing subject, and about him and his subjectivity one forgets.<sup>1</sup> People try to get to know the nature, so they could close it in easily assimilable frames. Things came to such a point that finding out things (experiencing them) is in reality reduced to bringing them under control and to wield power over them. Object becomes simply a substratum of possession, becomes appropriated by a subject.<sup>2</sup> The situation begins to be shaped in a manner, that all this, what is different from me becomes included in my knowledge and brought to the same one. According to Lévinas this is a culture of Immanence.<sup>3</sup> Husserl presented this matter similarly, suspecting that the reason of the crisis of culture in naturalism, one-sided rationalism and "stray objectivity".

The breakdown of our culture is also connected with changes in interpersonal relationship. Most often these changes result from live computerizing, but also from a flood of so-called mass culture – and of excessive power of a state over a society.

Computers make a man crippled, because they think instead of him, and he himself executes only schematic activities. This way the ability of deducing, of associating facts, and in the end selfreflection disappears. Machines "feed" people taking them away however that, what is most important – the essence of humanity.

Not a less harm the mass – culture inflicts on people. Today everything can be recognize thanks to a television. We observe today a flood of information given in unambiguous manner, what leads up to receiving the information without effort intellectual and mental independences. In this way reality, which we should really participate with full responsibility, becomes something like literary fiction, which is perceived in aesthetical categories.<sup>4</sup> Kołakowski calls such state "a monster – village", in contrast to a real village, which is based on direct personal relationships.

The mass culture leads in consequence up to human being incapacitating, giving him as a result a substitute of reality: random information, partial education; and finally takes a possibility of communication away. The mass society is combined with technical ties, but does not combine people spiritually, leading up to a solitude of soul. A man becomes practically lonely, although is surrounded by the crowd of people. The so – called "race of rats" and fight with others to assure oneself an existence (again comprehended economically) have also some influence on this.

The culture crisis results also from the manner of treating people by state. We are talking generally about denying of an individual and its autonomy, about its physical and moral rape, about Lewiatans patronizing the society and treating an individual in numeric way (we are talking about totalitarian systems).<sup>5</sup> This impersonal mechanisms, engaging a man in a system of dependence: work – product – money, play an important part. Organic social ties become replaced with a compulsion. The society is torn between

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<sup>1</sup> E. Husserl „Kryzys kultury europejskiej i filozofia”, Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej, nr 29, Ossolineum 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Por. M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno „Pojęcie Oświecenia” w: „Dialektyka Oświecenia”, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Por. B. Skarga „Emmanuel Lévinas – kultura immanencji”, Kraków 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Por. L. Kołakowski „Wieża utracona”, w: „Cywilizacja na ławie oskarżonych”, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> S. Morawski „W labiryncie aksjologicznym”, Lublin 1986.

the desire of limiting an influence of state on our life, and on the other hand between considering the state as a guarantee of safety.

In opinion of Fritjof Capra however the cause of the culture crisis is upsetting the balance between jin and jang, i.e. between irrational element and rational element. He appeals to two mentalities: of The West and of The East making aware, that the crisis results from the fact, that takes our culture itself up to jang, losing this way spontaneity and intuition eg. Of India.<sup>6</sup> This cause again the winning of a science a rationalism, consumption, and even furthermore stiff rivalry and aggression. An agreement in such situation becomes rather impossible.

In the face of premises, the crisis of culture can appear as crisis of communication, an agreement. For an objectivism and universalism the whole baggage of subjective experiences, of personal relationship and skill of sharing with other people disappears. People absorbed by appropriating things, that they get to know, or other people, which they think of as similar ones, and not as of individualities, forget about spontaneous relationship, about conversation and mutual passing on the opinions, about discussions carried out in order to more deeper recognition or consensus.

Technical progress limits natural ties between people, replacing them with stiff frames" of electronic contact". There is no place here for mutual understanding and kindness, there is only work and that, what I can achieve by myself. A computer will not however fill in another human being.

Television closes us in walls of our own flat, taking us away a pleasure of conversation with other people. A TV programme – is not subject discussion, and our influence on it is illusory. Substitutes of a dialogue with spectators start to appear: programmes, in which a solution depends on the ringing publics gathered before a glass – screen. In fact a man anyway dies in a crowd and his opinions are not taken under considerations. As a result we become slaves of a television and we limit the possibility of conversation, of a walk, or meeting with people, making everything dependent on TV programme.

There is no dialogue also in totalitarian states, or in the states, where rights are dictated by orthodoxal religions. Everyone there is dependent on the whole machine and is plaited in a crowd of other people, similar to oneself, depressed with constraint of people. Everything there is indisputable more than anywhere else.

Finally communication between different cultures dies. Giving back a primacy only to features of typically countries (a rationalism, an ambition, a rivalry) and an imposition of them to eastern countries will awake more and more greater conflict, instead of understanding and cooperation in the meaning of partnership.

A crisis of dialogue, agreements creeps in different areas of live: from scientific, across personal, to political.

Ones a question comes into being, whether one can remedy this, whether one can prevent to further regress of culture and how to do this?

Those, who analysed a source of the crisis, also put forward postulates, observing of which would result in getting a western civilization off lightly.

Horkheimer and Adorno first of all show on necessity of perceiving individualism and of irrationalism. People, who are characterizes by "inability to hear that, what is

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<sup>6</sup> Por. F. Capra „Punkt zwrotny”.

inaudible and to touch that, what elusive"<sup>7</sup> should give up a stiff rationalism and an objectivism, in order to catch again the truth about the reality. However above one should come back to self-reflection, thanks to which a contact with others will be easier; one should go outside a world of machines and technics, to establish a dialogue, which is so necessary to every human being.

Husserl proposes to create a science about spirit to serve as an antidote on an universalism and a naturalism. The sciences mentioned above will not forget about a subjective subject as a creators of science.

Lévinas proposes a turn to the culture of transcendence as an opposition to culture of immanence. He criticizes mostly bringing everything to the same. He indicates the need of going out to the Other, as to the unreducible creature. Thanks to that a man frees himself from egoism, and thanks to the contact with the Other the dialogue and the conversation are born.

"Conversation is necessary there, where we want to express our own opinions, where an universalism hasn't born yet".<sup>8</sup> That in a source of all interpersonal relationship lies the contact with another person assuring some exchange of opinions.

In Kołakowski's opinion there is another opposition, " to monster – village" which is a real village, where all people participate in a live of the village, which quarantees associating people without a mediation of any institutions eg. Of mass media. In this way a spiritual tie and mutual feelings of responsibility are born, and they are so indispensable in communication.

Jaspers even says, that a dialogue with another man is most important, that we should suffer as a result of the lach shortage of communication.<sup>9</sup> A man becomes fully a human being only upon conversation with others, and desire to loneliness at any cost impoverishes him. Even upon contemplating by oneself the nature, it is necessary to think about sharing its beauty with somebody and informing about it. Also a knowledge has the full meaning only thanks to a tie, that joins people. The dialogue is not easy, as an understanding, a patience and a frankness to people is necessary, but it is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and mutual closeness with others. Everyone should be oneself and should be quieded in conversation by his own experience and individualism, not immersing himself in an egoism at the same time.

As regards Lewiatans, Morawski shows, that also in the state it is necessary to take into account an individual and to respect her autonomy. First of all however it's necessary to make possible to it to decide about its own fate and a fate of the whole country, and this is possible only thanks to the dialogue. What is important: it should be a real exchange of opinions and of proposal, and not another state – wilfulness evolving under the pretence of mediation. The following years show, that a political dialogue is probably the most difficult form of interpersonal contacts , but also one persist in efforts. How many cases could be solved thanks to the usual agreement? But here the will of agreement and going out from blindness and excessive faiths in the rightness of our own opinions would be necessary.

<sup>7</sup> M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno „Pojęcie Oświecenia” w: „Dialektyka Oświecenia”, s. 53, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> B. Skarga „Emmanuel Lévinas – kultura immanencji”, s. 103, Kraków 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Por. K. Jaspers „O mojej filozofii” w: „Filozofia egzystencji”, 1990.

If we treat the crisis of culture as the crisis of communication, the only antidote on this fact is to realize oneself the need of dialogue with another man, as a result of which one can again mould oneself and all the reality. At the same one should realize that such agreement is possible thanks to recording one's own independences and mental individuality, thanks to opening oneself up also for subjectivism of another person. As Jaspers says, philosophy grows from being concerned about live itself<sup>10</sup>, but nobody lives after all on desert island, but instead of that is surrounded by a crowd. That is why it is necessary to learn a dialogue with individuals belonging to this crowd, even just to understand better oneself.

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<sup>10</sup> Por. K. Jaspers „O mojej filozofii” w: „Filozofia egzystencji”, 1990.