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**PORTRAIT OF A MAN IN HUMANITY.
A FEW NOTES ON HOPE IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE**

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Статтю присвячено проблемі надії, яка стосується людини в її найглибшому сприйнятті. Автор представляє точки зору різних філософів на ключові питання людського буття. Надію представлено автором як шлях входження людини в спільноту. Зростання, розвиток і освіта представлені як здатність самореалізації. Стверджено, що культура разом із людською креативністю дають людям здатність виходити за межі матеріальної реальності і гуманізувати довколишній світ.

Ключові слова: людина, людство, гуманність, гуманізм, надія, людська креативність, прагнення знань, прагнення до пошуків правди.

The question of hope refers to a human being in his deepest essence. «A man with hope is not someone who wants to know something, but the one who expects something real; a hoper wants to participate in something that is good for him» (J. Pieper 1981, p. 46). A man is the only creature in a visible world who asks questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Why do I exist? How should I live? Different philosophies answer to these key questions in order to explain human existence, and at the same time, they try to extract all crucial dimensions which create this existence (cf. S. Kowalczyk 1990; E. Starzyńska-Kościuszko 1999). Hope is the basic way to enter the reality of human form and participate in it in a creative way. It covers the entirety of dynamic processes of becoming a grown up person, and at the same time, it informs about the desire hidden in each of us – about the hope of «full being». (cf. M. Jaworski 1992, p. 69).

Every person constitutes its own rich, internally complex and inimitable reality where there is always some place for distinction and individuality. Updating of possibilities, which are a part of human nature, is performed in culture. A man creates culture and he develops himself and is shaped through it. However, there are some difficulties related to realization of the good so the hope stimulates us to face the difficulties that oppose the desired good and motivates us to take specific actions. «It is crucial for human culture not only to become acquainted with the external world but also to become acquainted with yourself. (...) These all things are the base of the culture expressed in the works of art which are paintings, sculptures, architecture, musical compositions or any other creative results of imagination and thoughts» (Pope John Paul II, 2005, pp. 86–87. Another time the Pope said: «Culture is an expression of a human (...). A man creates it and he creates himself in this way (...). And at the same time, a man creates culture in a community with other people. Culture is an expression of interpersonal communication, a common way of thinking and human interactions.» Pope John Paul II, 1979, p. 49). All kinds of human work, as a result of personal actions, constitute the world of culture. Creating culture is a



conscious and rational action of a man. Different cultural creations: language, scientific knowledge, myth, art, religion, they all tend to transform the passive world of common impressions into the world of pure spiritual expression. A man, through all the things he does and all the things taking place inside him, becomes more «somebody». Culture is a human action, the action of intellect, awareness, conscience, will and work (cf. E. Cassirer 1977, pp. 347–349; J. Pasiarb 1983, pp. 14–15). «Thus, the culture includes «growth» of a man, as well as all those things that constitute the world given to a man. It covers human intellectual development, moral progress, and also knowledge of the world and an ability to control it thanks to technology and to make it more pleasant thanks to art in different forms and shapes» (F. Adamski 1999, p. 108). A man creates culture and he creates himself in this way.

Thanks to culture, people know not only the reality of the world, but culture is also a way to self-awareness. This self-awareness shows human distinctions in the world of things, human dignity and value, it helps to discover the world of different values, and thanks to human conscience it is possible to classify those values. This effort to recognize yourself is visible in all kinds of culture. «A man who is open to the future, who formulates distant and significant goals, who searches for the ways to achieve a desired result and who is able to take some actions – even making mistakes – is often *homo esperans*, a man of hope» (J. Kozielski 2006, p. 31). The notion of hope covers permanent development, being open to another person and to the whole reality that surrounds us. So the culture itself is a reality created by a man on the way to his personal experiences and actions, both individual and social ones. A man is never alone during cultural activity. A personal human life – both individual and social ones, both private and public ones – makes «the world of culture» in the most elementary meaning of this notion. A man takes advantage of other people's achievements and he makes human community richer through his own accomplishments. The notion of culture itself is related to, first of all, conscious processing of the things received in a man's nature, as well as in the natures of the things that surround us. Discovering the sense of being human through laborious actions (updating human possibilities) guided by human mind is nothing else but broadly defined cultural creation. The things created by a man are not neutral for people. They reveal a turning character of human activity. A man, changing the world that surrounds him, influences the changes which take place inside him (cf. S. Kowalczyk 1996, p. 54; A. Proniewski 2008, pp. 55–57). Dynamics and great size of the transformations taking place in the world in all aspects of life favour development of different cultural contacts on one hand, but on the other hand, they release various problems and challenges.

Every generation faces an issue to understand the culture created before in a new way and evolves in the time it lives. People of a specific epoch transform the world they were born in «in their own way». It is impossible to shape the vision of better future of the world without hope. «Hope is a condition of any meaning, any aspirations and actions. (...) Life with hope is a form of wisdom» (H. Skolimowski 1993, p. 15). In this perspective, culture defines an interpersonal and social character of human existence, creating connections between people living in one community. It covers forms which express or shape values, and also customs, language, art, literature, institutions and structures of social coexistence. A man expresses himself



through culture, demonstrates his expectations, desires and his taste. Thanks to the culture and in the culture, he preserves himself and his time in works combining spirit and the matter. Therefore, it expresses a man and confirms his humanity. In a social reference, it is a part of a common good and it becomes the basic good of human communities. It is an expression of interpersonal communication, a common way of thinking and interactions. On the other hand, in a national-public perspective it should be seen as a school of real and honest patriotism because the culture is a binder which joins a human community making it a nation. A nation exists «from culture» and «for culture». An individual person and a specific society, and first of all a given nation, shape their attitudes towards the world of values in the context of cultural heritage and this is why, the present time cannot be separated from the past. A man's homeland is not only the territory where he was born and where he lives, but also his cultural space where he can find the values, preserved in the whole tradition, which assign some meaning to his life (cf. U. Ostrowska 2008, pp. 16–19; I. Dec 2008, pp. 38–43). It is the whole heritage which was and is created by a nation as a community through efforts of life and actions, and which finally serves an integral development of a man.

The kingpin of every culture is a human attitude towards the greatest mystery: mystery of God. «A man has the right to have the highest Hope – the Hope which joins a man and human communities with God. It is not about the fact if God exists or if stories about salvation after death are a dream or if they are true – these are the issues of other kind. You can discuss them, you can quarrel about them, you can have different opinions. It is about the right to have such Hope. It is about the fact that nobody can refuse anyone the right to have this Hope (J. Tischner 1981, p. 97). A synthesis of culture and faith is a requirement not only for culture, but also for faith. There is an organic and basic relation between religion, especially Christianity, and culture. Faith is the source of culture, and culture is a coronation of faith. Faith in Christ is a solid basis and the light for different cultural values. As a result, the culture which originated from faith is the task to be done, it is tradition which should be preserved and passed on. It is a peculiar answer of a man given to his Creator for the talents and skills that he has received. The dependence between religion and culture is not unilateral. Culture also influences religious life. Development of culture lets us understand the mysteries of human life better, it can contribute to the fuller interpretation of the revealed knowledge or the religious truths (cf. A. Rodziński 1989, pp. 275–285; W. Kawecki 2006, pp. 67–86). Faith, being a field of culture, goes beyond cultures at the same time, it does not identify with any of them and is independent from all the cultures. The essence of culture is an attitude which, in case of a specific nation, confirms or rejects religious bonds with God through some religious values and anti-values.

Culture cannot stop and content itself to a spacetime perspective. In its nature, it is like a bridge between material-biological life and spiritual life, between temporality and eternity. A man creates culture in specific life conditions: in a community, in specific time and space. That is why, every culture gains social, national and historical dimensions. In this context, great cultural heritage of Europe and nations from other continents grows also, in different ways, from «the roots of Gospel» and is full of Christian values. You cannot ignore a significant role of Gospel



values in the development of this culture in order to understand the European culture (H. Skorowski 2005, pp. 87–107; W. Kawecki 2006, pp. 128–133). «A Gospel does not lead to pauperization and extinguishment of the things that are known and realised in the form of the good, truth and beauty by every person or all people, nations and cultures. It encourages to assimilate and develop these values» (Pope John Paul II 1985, n. 18).

Hope is the hope for today and a better tomorrow of human history, it is the hope for everybody. We all need it, regardless of religion and philosophy of life. In such an interpretation, relation with culture and its permanent improvement are emphasised. Everything is «subject» to a man and his creative idea. A man is no more an anonymous object of development processes taking place around him, but he is revealed in his all integrity as their subject and originator. So «*we all need to build a new culture of life together: a new one, which means the one being able to touch and solve problems related to a human life, existing today and unknown before; a new one, which means more definitely and actively accepted by all Christians; a new one, which means the one being able to stimulate us to a serious and bold act of cultural confrontation with everybody (...) so that they will express the full truth about a man*» (John Paul II, 1995, n. 95)¹. New culture, «novelty of life», is the reality and it is also a challenge for a man. Thus, looking at the basis of modern concern for a man, it is not only about an abstract answer to a question 'who is a man', but it is about the whole dynamism of life and civilization.

Dynamism of hope indicates that «in different parts of the world, where different cultures have developed, people started asking basic questions at the same time which accompanied the whole human existence: Who am I? Where do I come from and where do I go? Why does evil exist? What can I expect after this life? (...) The common source of these questions is the need for meaning which is felt by every person in their hearts from the beginning: because the direction of their lives depends on the answers to these questions» (Pope John Paul II, 1998, n. 1). So in all fields of human life: in science, art, technology, morality and religion, a cognitive moment, a moment of mind appears to be an initial point of understanding of the culture itself. Because every human action is characterised by awareness (cognitive acts) and voluntariness (acts of will guided by the mind). Only interiorized cognitive substance of real existence determines further cognitive processes, specific for science, morality, art and technology. Therefore, any creativity enriches a man – a creator; it releases his specific personal strengths – strengths of cognition, love and freedom thanks to which he goes beyond the matter, he organizes it and controls it with his spirit (cf. M. A. Krąpiec, 1999, pp. 11–112; M. Nowak, 2000, pp. 22–25). Hope is dynamism which always releases some actions and opens new horizons for understanding the meaning of human creativity. The substance of hope, interpreted in this way, will be the future good, a difficult one but possible to be achieved, desired by the will. Therefore, creating culture, searching for the meaning of life, desire for knowledge and finding the truth result from the human nature. Culture is a form of human existence in the world and it introduces harmony and beauty.

¹ «Thus, culture, in its best part, would be a possibility of free and unrestrained access to something meaning who I am and I should be, and to something that others can help me to achieve, in their infinity. Therefore, a crucial role of culture is to organize a *contribution* of «others» in becoming «me». J.-F. Noel, *Anxiety in Present Culture*, translated by M. Żerańska, «Communio» 2008, no. 2 (162), p. 109.



Concern for culture is the concern for a man.

Culture, existing in a close relationship with people and their history, is subject to the same dynamics that can be found in human history. A man is, at the same time, a child and a father of the culture he lives in. Culture and creative work give people a possibility to go beyond the material reality and «to humanize» the world that surrounds them.

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