

separation of successful products from what is a kitsch, daub, trash, mediocrity, a product of graphomania or defective work. Not every painted canvas and not every sheet of paper with writing or even print on it are a "contribution to culture". That is why historians of art, literature or of philosophy usually prefer a narrower, valuating definition of culture, which they see as a collection of valuable products.

According to an objective definition culture consists of men² or their specific traits, behaviour, and skills, especially the skill of behaving according to a certain pattern, the skill of producing specific objects and the skill of using them. Such a conception of culture is characteristic of psychologists.

According to a synthetic definition, culture is a dialectical unity of the world of human activities and the world of products of these activities.³ In this definition we do not oppose man to his products, because specifically human products, like working tools, clothing, houses, industry, works of art belong to the concept of man, as the factors constituting the essence of humanity, with man being present in them more than in his own body. In what sense "more present"? First of all in that we can learn more about man from his products than from observing his own body. This holds true both for individuals and nations. When we say that a cultured man should "know Beethoven", "know Raphael", or "know Hegel", we do not mean the knowledge their doctors had of them, but the knowledge of musical pieces, pictures, and books. Similarly, the concept of "Polishness" is constituted by the products of the Poles over the last several centuries to a much greater degree than by the anthropometric data about the average or commonest shape of the skull, the colour of skin, hair, and eyes.

With such a synthetic, bipolar conception of culture, we can discover that culture is a field of tensions between what can be termed its "subjective side" and what can be termed its "objective side". These tensions result from the objective regularities of the processes of exteriorization and interiorization.⁴

While exteriorizing himself into the object he has produced, man is never identical with his objectification; he transfers into it only a small particle of his personality and not always can he recognize himself in it or be recognized by others. What man produces not always remains his property. It is often taken from him. Likewise, men

² See A. Nowicki: *Kultura i rewolucja*, "Studia filozoficzne", 1975, 1 (110), pp. 167—174 and *Współczesna filozofia włoska*, Warszawa 1977, pp. 86, 544—545. See also M. Rossi: *Cultura e rivoluzione*, Roma 1974, pp. 9—11.

³ See A. Nowicki: *Człowiek w świecie dzieł*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 325—333.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chapters *Interiorization*, pp. 87—116, and *Eksterioryzacja*, pp. 117—126.

cannot always control what they have produced. It happens that the products of human work turn against man. Out of the labour of workers arises capital which makes them its slaves. Nations are arming themselves for their security. The produced multitude of weapons of mass destruction poses a threat of the total annihilation of life on our planet. On the other hand, the processes of interiorization are governed by the laws of fragmentarization and deformation of what we acquire while using the products of culture.

In the sciences of culture, especially in the histories of literature, art, or of philosophy, tensions between the subjective and the objective sides of the material under investigation make themselves felt as methodological controversies between the ergocentric approach, which seeks to investigate the "work itself" isolated from its psychological context, and the biographical approach, for which each work is primarily a source of information about its creator.

Ergocentrism can lead to a subjectless conception of culture, which has a multi-current character and assumes different forms. We shall want to discuss only a few forms here: in painting, history of philosophy, and the theory of social development.

In their characterization of the Renaissance breakthrough in the history of art, historians pointed not only to "the discovery of nature" and the appearance of care about the beauty of the works produced, but also to the Renaissance discovery of man as the creator of his work. Man has a right to seal his work with the individual stamp of his personality, and to sign the work with his own name. It was then that it was noticed that the history of art cannot be reduced to a history of works alone, but that it had to be complemented with the biographies of their creators. Those convictions were forcibly expressed especially by Giorgio Vasari. In the centuries to follow reactionary tendencies were often connected with appeals for the "return to the Middle Ages". Such trends can be found in the 17th-century counter-Renaissance, in some trends of the Romantic reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and later in the Catholic revival of scholastics, in the appeal for the "return to Thomas Aquinas".

Even in our times reactionary tendencies appear not only as more and more powerful waves of irrationalism, but also as typically anti-Renaissance⁵ attempts to oust the subject from, say, contemporary painting.

⁵ See H. Hayden: *The Counter-Renaissance*, New York 1950. The merit of this author is the introduction of the term "counter-Renaissance", indispensable for the investigation of the European culture in 16th and 17th centuries. The term should be understood in a different sense than that in Hayden's work.

It would be in order here to call up an extremely interesting article by Andrzej Oseka with an alarming title *Zanikające "ja"* ("I" on the wane).⁶

As late as until mid-20th century "the element uniting the seeing, integrating the work was the subject, the artist", whereas, remarks Oseka, "in the art developing over the last twenty years, this subject, the artist, is on the wane". Many artists are taking pains to make their works impersonal. "Perhaps", says Oseka, "this is a negation of oneself as the subject, the essential non-acceptance of oneself, human condition, and of that whole tradition of culture, which has elevated so high the figure and personality of the artist". "Objects of art are produced which have no extra-objective reasons (...) They are pure physical entities which intrude themselves upon the imagination of the beholder and shape it, inculcating the belief in the non-existence of I".

We shall now look at the subjectless conception of the history of philosophy. It follows from a definite conception of man, which sees the essence of humanity in that which is general, non-individual, common. In this conception the diversity of men is valued as a negative thing, which should be overcome. Especially in philosophy, diversity of standpoints tends to be explained by the disturbances of the rational process of thinking by "subjectivity", which deprives philosophy of its scientific character. Therefore, if philosophy is to be a science, we must overcome, weed out "subjectivity" and rise in our statements to the level of universal generality and objectivity. In that way, real, living men will cease to be the subjects of thinking which constitutes "scientific philosophy". Philosophy devoid of subjectivism becomes an impersonal composition, a product of the impersonal "reason in general". Such tendencies can be found in Hegel.⁷ Husserl followed a similar path in his *Ideas*, including in the characteristics of the phenomenological method a directive of abstracting from the concrete subject — its place was to be taken by the imaginary, impersonal "transcendental ego".⁸ In the next phase of his development Husserl abandoned this conception and returned to concrete subjects immersed in the *Lebenswelt*.

Another version of the subjectless conception of philosophy was pro-

⁶ A. Oseka: *Zanikające "ja"*, "Kultura" 8 June 1980.

⁷ "A position must be shown", says Hegel, "where 'I' in its individuality resigns of itself. I must be indeed an abolished particular subjectivity; there must exist objectivity which I recognize, which I regard as true, which is recognized as affirmative (...) whereby I, as this very 'I', am negated (...) This is nothing but a position of the thinking reason (...)". G. W. F. Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, quoted after A. Nowicki: *Filozofowie o religii*, Warszawa 1960, vol. 1, pp. 224—225.

⁸ See A. Nowicki: *Marxism and Phenomenology in Contemporary Italian Philosophy*, in: "Dialects and Humanism", 1975, 2, pp. 157—175.

posed by Frege. He starts from an assumption that a sentence has internal sense, independent of the psychological context. While building a sentence count therefore, we can abstract from the subject, who utters these sentences.⁹

From the Marxist point of view, these conceptions are connected with the error of the metaphysical method, which isolates the object of investigations from the context which determines their essence and sense. In the case of philosophy the socio-historical, situational, and class contexts are involved. The sense of a text is determined by the author's engagement on the side of a definite class (this is seen most clearly in the analysis of such words as freedom or justice, which do not have their own neutral sense out of their context) and by situation (the author's approach or departure from a definite position — here the sense of the text can only be grasped in comparison with earlier and later texts).¹⁰

The value of philosophy does not lie in its impersonal, atemporal and ahistorical character. What is most valuable in philosophy always bears a distinct mark of the historical epoch, nation, social class, and personality of the philosopher. That is why manuals of history of philosophy should not confine themselves to reporting the texts of philosophical treatises, but should present them in their real involvement in the most important contexts: the context of historical events, the context of political and class struggle, and the psychological-biographical context. The way of making philosophy scientific does not lead through the destruction of "subjectivity" and elimination of the investigator's personality from his considerations. Rather, it leads through the full revelation of all circumstances and contexts, in which the subject of considerations finds himself. Although his point of view is subjective, the relation between this point of view and the obtained results has an objective character.

In the theory of social development we also find conceptions of subjectless history, in which the direction of development is decided by impersonal, "objective factors". Freedom in such conceptions is considered a subjective illusion. In the history of Marxism, especially in the period of the International II, a significant role, negative in consequences, was played by a mechanistic-determinist interpretation, which reverted to a definition of freedom worked out by Spinoza: "freedom is a

⁹ See G. Frege: *Pisma semantyczne*, Warszawa 1977, p. 117. "If every thought required its carrier, it would be his thought only. There would be no science common to all..." *Der Gedanke. Eine logische Untersuchung* in "Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus", I, 1918, pp. 58—77.

¹⁰ See A. Nowicki: *Sens tekstu filozoficznego w świetle historyzmu Lenina*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis", 136, "Prace Filozoficzne" VII, Wrocław 1971, pp. 3—14.

conscious necessity". In such a fatalistic, subjectless conception of social development there was no room for revolutionary initiative. This made it difficult for the working class to constitute themselves as the real subject of history. The philosophical significance of Lenin's activity lies first of all in that he opposed the active, revolutionary interpretation of Marxism to the economic fatalism of the reformists.

In the lay movement, a relict of the subjectless conception of social development was the so-called indifferentism. A conviction was advanced that the change of social system, the development of industrialization and urbanization, and the eradication of illiteracy released so "powerful" "objective factors" of the secularization of social consciousness that religion would automatically die without the agency of atheists. The chief theoretician of eliminating the lay subject from secularization processes was Władysław Bienkowski.

The foregoing considerations are an introduction to the discussion proper of the forms of the functioning of the subject in culture. This is where we shall attempt to advance a hypothesis that this subject has a polycentric structure.

This hypothesis is connected with the dialectical theory of personality. If one of the most universal laws applying to the whole reality is the law of development through inner contradictions, then we can presume that this law also applies to the manner in which personality functions and is formed. It appears therefrom that the basis of forming our personality is not integration around one centre, but that there are several such centres and that it is the tensions between them that are the source of movement, that release creative energy and stimulate activity.

If the basis of specifically human function is exteriorizing oneself into the objects we produce and this exteriorization lies in stamping the objects with the seal of our personality, then the best, intersubjectively verifiable proof that it really possesses a polycentric structure should be the reflection of our personality in the objects into which we have exteriorized ourselves.

Before we proceed to investigate this reflection we should consider first where this polycentricity comes from and what are the factors polycentrizing our personality. One such factor is heredity. We inherit definite traits and dispositions, not only physical but also psychical, and not only from our father, but also from mother, and also from their parents and from more distant ancestors, then, if there are significant psychological differences between the persons from whom we inherit, tensions should arise between the inherited dispositions. Władysław Witwicki made interesting comments on the subject in his earlier

reviews of painting exhibitions written at the beginning of this century. He points to the fact that in certain historical periods painting develops in a continuous way and those who imitate the predecessors from their cultural sphere are the most successful at that time. This is easiest for those who belong to this sphere also by their descent. The case is different in the turning periods, when the condition for painting to develop further is to break off radically with tradition and to offer something novel and unusual for a given cultural sphere. And those who have an admixture of some foreign blood find it easiest to succeed. Jan Toorop (1858—1928) can serve as an example, having revolutionized Dutch painting at the close of the 19th c. He was born in Java, in his childhood he took Indonesia art to heart, from his father he had an admixture of Norwegian blood, and from his mother—Chinese. Similarly, Belgian graphic art was revolutionized by Felicien Rops (1833—1898), who wrote in the letters to his friends that "at heart he was a grandchild of a Hungarian and a Spanish woman", that "there was in him a yearning for the unrestricted, profligate freedom of the Hungarian steppe", and that, "he had to control himself very much not to kick the fetters of convention which custom makes him wear"¹¹. "He did not go to the steppes", says Witwicki, "but he began to draw a whole series of covers for prohibited books."¹²

Among the personages of Polish culture two most typical examples are enough: an admixture of French blood in Chopin and of Czech blood in Jan Matejko. In Russian culture we find Pushkin with an admixture of Negro blood. The turning point which German philosophy owes to Nietzsche can be attributed to his admixture of Polish blood. Witwicki, who adopted Nietzschean "will to power" (*Wille zur Macht*) as the foundation of his theory of criticism, described Nietzsche as "perhaps the most Polish among philosophers, and the greatest philosopher among the Poles".¹³

These, perhaps dubious, influences of internally diversified heredity are much less important than the diversity of "decisive encounters".¹⁴

¹¹ W. Witwicki: *Wystawa sztychów Ropsa*, "Słowo Polskie", 525, Lvov, 11 Nov., 1907.

¹² *Ibid.* See also W. Witwicki: *Z wystawy obrazów — Jan Toorop*, "Słowo Polskie", 148, Lvov, 28 March 1902.

¹³ W. Witwicki: *Z psychologii stosunków osobistych*, "Przegląd Filozoficzny", 1907, 4, p. 537.

¹⁴ See A. Nowicki: *Incontrologia e transformabilità*, "Misure Critiche", Salerno 1976, 19, pp. 77—88; *Zadania i metody incontrolologii*, "Folia Societatis Scientiarum Lublinensis", vol. 18, Hum. 1, Lublin 1976, pp. 13—19; *O marksistowską incontrolologię, Zarys ogólnej teorii spotkań*, "Studia Filozoficzne", Warszawa 1977, 5 (138), pp. 35—43.

If it is true that the encountered person can — in the process of interiorizing the encounter — transform himself into the subjective element of our personality, then an encounter of several eminent personalities can result in an inner dissociation and tensions consequent on the fact that "we carry in us" people who profess different views and have different attitudes. This applies especially to our teachers.¹⁶ At the time of stabilization dogmatic attitudes are preferred: faith in the authority of one teacher, resignation of independent thinking, declaration of philosophizing not *iuxta mentem propriam* but *iuxta mentem divinissimi Thomae* or *iuxta mentem Duns Scoti*.¹⁷ At the time of the great turn of *Weltanschauung* in the Renaissance (*die grösste progressive Umwälzung* according to Engels¹⁸) "philosophical freedom"¹⁹ was sought in methodological pluralism²⁰. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463—1494), one of the most eminent thinkers in the Italian Quattrocento, asserted that he would not follow just one master, but would regard all philosophers as his teachers.²¹

Having many different teachers (not only in the sense of personal contact with contemporaneous people, but also and above all in the sense of having thoroughly studied the works of representatives of various philosophical trends) turns our consciousness into a field of tensions which set our thought in motion from the inside. Such tensions are easy to discern among the greatest philosophers: with Plato they are tensions caused by the interiorization of contradictions between the views of Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Socrates; with Aristotle — the interiorization of contradictions between Plato's idealism and the materialism of naturalists; with St. Augustine — contradictions between theology and Plato's pagan philosophy; with St. Thomas — contradictions between St. Augustine's authority and Aristotle's pagan philosophy; with Kant — contradictions between Leibniz's dogmatism and Hume's scepticism; with

¹⁵ See A. Nowicki: *Człowiek w świecie dzieł*, pp. 47, 69—71, 75, 92—96, 115, 321, 342.

¹⁶ I have devoted a book to the problem, *Nauczyciele*, Lublin 1981.

¹⁷ These expressions can still be found in the titles of Polish school manuals in the later 18 c. See *Bibliografia filozofii polskiej 1750—1830*, Warszawa 1955, pp. 213—240.

¹⁸ F. Engels: *Dialektik der Natur. Einleitung*, Berlin 1955, p. 7.

¹⁹ Compare the term *philosophica libertas* in Giordano Bruno's writings and *libertas cogitationis* in the poem by a Polish Renaissance poet, Sebastian Fabian Klonowic.

²⁰ See A. Nowicki: *Il pluralismo metodico e i modelli Lulliani di Giordano Bruno*, Wrocław 1965 and *Giordano Bruno*, Warszawa 1979, pp. 50—54.

²¹ G. Pico della Mirandola: *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, ed. E. Garin, Firenze 1942, p. 138.

Marx — contradictions between Hegel's idealist dialectic and Feuerbach's materialist anthropology.

If such tensions caused by inner contradictions were absent, thought would be at a standstill, while a philosopher would duplicate himself in his subsequent works because he would lose the ability of "dividing himself" and of self-critical judgment of his own thoughts. That is why the above-named psychologist, Władysław Witwicki, not only investigated and described inner contradictions of our judgments, attitudes, or views, but also postulated such division of oneself as an indispensable condition of artistic creation and scientific investigation. A good painter must possess the faculty of dividing himself into a creator and a critic who judges every line or patch of paint, each detail and mutual relations between them within a whole. A psychologist must be able to divide himself into the object under observation and the subject who is observing his own psychical states. And the condition of writing good scientific dissertation is having a Mephistopheles in oneself, who will search out for arguments against our theses, and will try to ridicule them and overthrow — such an inner dialogue will protect us from hasty generalizations and make us express our own thought more precisely.²²

If the polycentric structure of the subject is, to a significant degree, a product of encounters and contacts with other people, who gradually transform themselves in the process of interiorization into subjective elements of our personality, then the works of men, especially those we value the highest, are never products of an individual but social ones. And it is not only doctoral dissertations that show the supervisor's coauthorship behind them. Also in mature works, in the masterpieces of literature, music, or painting, and in philosophy and sciences we can discover the presence of many generations of teachers, whose work contributed to the formation of the author's personality.

Works of men are social products not only in their genesis, but also and above all in their historical life. On the one hand, vast circles of those culture-makers, whose achievements the author was able to acquire, participate in the process of nascency of a work. On the other hand, a "ready" work, by entering the process of social circulation, is co-formed by vast circles of recipients who actualize its potential elements, complete what was still not completed, fill "empty slots" by the effort of their reason and imagination, concretize it with their own

²² W. Witwicki: Review of M. Sobeski, *Interludia*, „Ruch Filozoficzny”, III, 3, Lvov, 15 March 1913, pp. 51—52.

interpretations, and also modify this work according to their needs, treating it as a raw material for their creation²³.

A conclusion thus follows that historians of literature, of art, and of philosophy must not confine themselves to investigating the work "itself" in its "final shape", but should, on the one hand, investigate the complex process of the nascency of a given work, and on the other, investigate how, in the process of social circulation over consecutive centuries, this apparently "final" shape undergoes further modifications. It turns out then that the "biographical" context we spoke about earlier is admittedly an indispensable element of the scientific interpretation of the text. It is, however, even more important to analyze a given work in the right social contexts which this work entered in consecutive stages of its historical life.

The investigation of the "posthumous history" of a work of art or of philosophy is not new at all. There are a number of outstanding studies on the problem.²⁴ The novelty lies in something else. The investigations at issue have so far been regarded as a separate discipline, different from investigations proper which sought to grasp the "essence" of the work. This "essence" of the work was assumed to lie in the work itself, the way it was received by consecutive generations having no bearing at all upon its "essence".

If we assume, however, that the historical conception of being — where being is identical with its history: being is not only what it is in a given moment, but also what it was and can be — applies also to philosophical works and works of art, then the "essence" of the work turns out not to have a final shape determined once and for all. Instead it develops and changes with its historical life because it is co-formed by its active recipients.

That explains why it is easier to investigate the ancient, or Renaissance, or 19th-century masterpieces than contemporary works. The case is similar to that of medicine. The "essence" of a drug includes its power to cure. With drugs in use for scores of years, the knowledge about their properties has been accumulated and set in order: we know their "power". With new drugs it is difficult to predict their side effects, which was dramatically demonstrated in the thalidomide case. In the same way, the essence of the work lies not so much in what the work looks like, what structure it has, or what it is made of, but in what is its power of affecting, its recipients, whether it can make them laugh, reflect, or will move them or draw their attention, whether the work sets reason and imagination in motion, whether it can make the recipient transform

²³ See A. Nowicki: *Teksty filozoficzne z punktu widzenia ich przekształcalności*, "Studia Filozoficzne", 1975, 12 (121), pp. 77—90.

himself into an active co-creator "who feels the need to fill empty slots", to interpret, and transform. Whether it can inspire poets, painters, film directors, composers and philosophers.²⁵

A thorough study of Plato's texts is certainly indispensable to know his philosophy. It is not, however, sufficient because it cannot answer the question what power his philosophy has to stimulate the imagination of painters and composers. It is only studies on the posthumous history of Plato, on the paintings by Anselm Feuerbach, a hundred and some dozen drawings by Władysław Witwicki, or on Luis Andriessen's piece *De Staat* that demonstrate that twenty-four centuries after Plato's death his text can still stimulate painters and composers to complement it with picture and sound.²⁶ Similarly, musical pieces by Stefan Niculescu, Bogusław Schäffer, or Hans Zender reveal "the hidden power", *vis occulta*, of Heraclitus' aphorisms, the power to stimulate contemporary composers to try to translate philosophical thoughts into sounds.²⁷ Likewise, to grasp the "essence" of Vanini's philosophy we must know not only the text of his works and not only the biographical context, but also the historical context of the poems by Hölderlin and Lecomte de Lisle, a novel by Jan Parandowski,²⁸ of the sculptures by Eugenio Maccagnani, pictures by Zbigniew Martin, Jan Berowski-Zamojski and Mieczysław Wojtas or of the musical pieces by Hauer and Schäffer.²⁹

Thus behind every individual author of a work of art or scientific work, there is the collective subject which consists of "teachers" in the broadest sense of the word on the one hand, and on the other, of various categories of recipients. And as long as this work is "alive", it does not possess a final shape because it is co-formed by the ever-enlarging "collective subject of culture".

²⁴ E.g. in E. Stemplinger: *Das Fortleben der Horazischen Lyrik seit der Renaissance*, Leipzig 1906; F. Novotny: *The Posthumous Life of Plato*, Prague 1977.

²⁵ See A. Nowicki: *Portrety filozofów w poezji, malarstwie i muzyce*, Lublin 1978.

²⁶ See A. Nowicki: *Sokrates na rysunkach Władysława Witwickiego*, "Meander", 1977, 7—8, pp. 289—306.

²⁷ A. Nowicki: *O "dźwiękowych portretach" Heraklita i Platona w muzyce współczesnej awangardy*, "Meander", 1978, 2, pp. 81—92.

²⁸ See A. Nowicki: *Bruno i Vanini w świetle poezji, dramatu i muzyki*, "Euhemer", 1980, 2 (76), pp. 55—68. The fragment devoted to Vanini plays a significant part in Jan Parandowski' novel *Niebo w płomieniach*. It should be noted that in his portrayals of teachers in this novel Parandowski also included some characteristics of his grammar-school teacher, Władysław Witwicki.

²⁹ See A. Nowicki: *Vanini w muzyce J. M. Hauera*, "Euhemer", 1976, 4 (102), pp. 3—17 and *Ateizm w muzyce. Droga Bogusława Schäffera do Vaniniany*, "Euhemer", 1979, 2 (112), pp. 61—70.

From this standpoint there is not significant difference between such human works as a book and a town. Only, in the case of town, which was being built and developed over many centuries we can see more clearly that it was created by the collective subject, which consisted of people from different social classes, having different occupations and living in different centuries. Even if we speak about the "founders of towns" and at present there are positions of chief architects or town-planners, who plan and co-ordinate the town development, the polycentric structure of the subject creating the town is never doubted.

There is no significant difference, either, between the culture created by professionals, who make their living by literary, musical, or artistic activities, and the folk culture of the anonymous period where behind particular works there is clearly the collective subject that co-created them. The knowledge of the sources drawn from by the professional writer, artist, composer, or film director — excluding drastic cases of piracy — does not diminish the value of an individual's work, but can be considered an additional quality by an educated recipient. It is pleasant to find echoes of reading Homer and Virgil in *Pan Tadeusz*, or see how the "movements of Matejko's hand continue to live"³⁰ in the paintings by Wyspiański, Mehoffer, Sichulski and Bulas. According to the theory of the polycentric structure of the subject, Matejko is present not only in his paintings, but also in those by his disciples because he became an active, subjective element of their creative personality.

Finally, we should discuss — from this standpoint — the relations between the concepts of workers' culture and socialist culture. Sixty years ago there were attempts to oppose "the workers' culture" as a collection of works by individual workers to the "bourgeois culture" created by educated, specialized professionals. In the first confrontation, the novelty of the subject-matter, revolutionary commitment and primitive means of expression created an illusion that it was possible and desirable to reject the whole cultural tradition because a "socialist culture" was born, which was created by the workers themselves.³¹ It was found out quickly that the concept of socialist culture was much broader, ampler and deeper than a collection of products of the amateur creation of the people who, because they belonged

³⁰ W. Witwicki: *Z lwowskiego salonu*, "Słowo Polskie", 440, Lvov, 28 September 1906.

³¹ One of the first Polish papers on workers' culture was an article *O kulturze robotniczej* by my grammar-school teacher, Stefan Bernard Drzewieski (1888—1953). It was published in *Sprawa Robotnicza* (1, 2—3, I, 8 and 21 April 1918), the organ of the Petrograd group of the SDKPiL (Social Democracy of the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania). Drzewieski was then a follower of the *Proletkult*-proletarian culture — and admired the works by A. Gastev, a worker.

to the class compelled to earn their living by hard manual labour, lacked thorough general education and specialist for the artist's profession. What was created in their leisure time, as the product of worker alone, was largely at the peripheries of culture, the folklore of the suburbs, an imitation of second-rate bourgeois models. Much more important for socialist culture were the works by professionals: Gorky, Mayakowski, Pudovkin, Eisenstein.

Among the masses, in the families of workers or peasants there have always been many talents which as a rule could not be revealed or developed in the system of social injustice. An elementary condition for these talents to develop fully is many years of education and then enough free time to develop oneself to creation. The road to building socialist culture does not lead, therefore, through the favouring of amateur creation by uneducated people, which would replace the whole of the hitherto existing culture, but through widespread general education at the secondary level, the accessibility of university education for all who are able and diligent, through the acquisition of the achievements of the existing culture, and through arousing in the vast masses the authentic needs to read good books, see good paintings, to listen to good music, and finally through forming the ability of the active reception of works in social circulation.

We have to do with socialist culture only when its four basic elements coexist at the same time:

- 1) when the relations between men have a really humanistic character,
- 2) when there are no social barriers of participation in culture, that is when the cultural values become social property and all have equal access to them and a real opportunity of using them,
- 3) when new works have contents that are progressive, democratic, internationalistic, and free from irrationalism,
- 4) when the majority of the society transform themselves from the passive object of cultural influences into the active subject of culture (both as the ability of the active reception of cultural values and as the participation in forming them).³²

With such a definition of socialist culture, this concept does not serve to describe the existing cultural reality, but formulates a task to be realized.

We know that with respect to the foregoing four points we are only at the beginning of the difficult road to the culture of a classless society.

³² A. Nowicki: *O kulturę socjalistyczną*, "Oświata Dorosłych" 5 (214), May 1980, pp. 197—200.

Along with the embryos of socialist culture there are powerful relics of feudal and bourgeois cultures in every field.

The collective subject of socialist culture is the working class, not as separate individuals engaged in amateur literary creation, but as a political force which imposes a definite direction of social development. The working class is the only social class interested in the abolition of the millennia-long division of the society into classes.

The thesis that "the working classes are the creators of history" belongs to the most fundamental theses of historical materialism. However, there have so far been no favourable conditions for this thesis to become the object of reliable scientific investigations. The most important difficulties of interpretation concern the following five problems:

1) are the working classes the creators of history because they work and when they work, or because they constitute a political force, which makes history by its revolutionary activity?

2) are the working classes always, in all situations, the creators of history, or is it that they are mostly nothing more than the passive object of economic exploitation, of social oppression and political manipulation, and only in exceptional cases do they transform themselves from the object into the subject of political activity, which changes the direction of historical development?

3) are the working classes the creators of history directly as the collective subject, or indirectly by their representatives and leaders?

4) whether the working classes simply "are" the creators of history or whether they only "can" and "should" be the creators of history, and in order that they actually become the subject of historical changes they need political activity, which only then constitutes them such a historical subject?

5) does the strength of the working classes lie in their mass character, uniformity, anonymity, unification, and subordination to one leading centre, or conversely, the working classes become the real subject of history (and of culture) when they cease to be the anonymous mass, by transforming themselves into the community of diversified subjects or the collective subject with a polycentric structure?

Some readers will certainly have a ready-made answer to the above questions. If so, they should put these answers aside and give some thought to those questions once again. While discussing the first problem it is better not to choose one of the proposed solutions, but rather investigate the complicated dialectic of the two basic forms of social practice: productive work and political activity in their interrelations and contradictions. With question 2 it is proper to concentrate our attention first of all upon the circumstances under which this transformation of

the object into the subject takes place. With question 3 we should reflect upon — and encouragement to such reflections was given recently by the highest authorities as we read in the opening sentences of the speech by the newly elected First Secretary of the Central Committee, PUWP, at the 6th plenum, 6 Sept. 1980 — whether the working classes really need "leaders" in the old, traditional meaning of the word.³³ If the working class is to be the real subject of history, it is necessary to put an end to the mechanism which has so far changed the "leaders" from the exponents of the interests of this class into a separate "ruling" subject treating the ruled as an object. Question 4 calls for consideration on how to restore the primary function of Marxism which is critical towards the existing socio-political reality and setting the directions of action, serving the working classes as their spiritual weapon, which unites them into the subject of the processes of transforming the world. Finally, while analyzing question 5 we must consider the fact that it was long ago that the world's working men's movement rejected the conception of the unconditional subordination of the whole movement to one leading centre, advocated at International III, whereas the polycentric structure was adopted.

Many theoretical and practical difficulties are connected with the problem of the structure of the collective subject in one country. It appears obvious that the present level of development of the productive forces requires central planning and that decentralization with respect to assigning prices disorganizes the market. It is equally obvious, however, that the hitherto existing model of the structure of the apparatus of power should be reconstructed in such a way that the working classes would be the real subject of political activity. The postulate of the polycentrization of the structure of collective subject does not mean sharing power with anti-socialist forces³⁴ but results from a conviction that the people's power should be the power of the people rather than the power of the leader who gradually deprives the collective subject of its rights and becomes the sole subject of socio-political life.

Philosophy of culture cannot be abstracted from current socio-political issues.³⁵ The central problem of this philosophy, that of the subject

³³ A speech by comrade St. Kamia, First Secretary, Central Committee, PUWP, at the 6th plenum, reported in "Trybuna Ludu", 213 (11221), 8 September 1980. "I am not sure, after all, that our party needs what is to be found in the concept of leader".

³⁴ It should be noted, though, that legal opposition is advantageous for the state as a factor of control and criticism.

³⁵ See A. Nowicki: *Nie ma filozofii apolitycznej*, "Argumenty", 27 (943), 4 July 1976 and *Współczesna filozofia włoska*, Warszawa 1977, chapter *Filozofia a po-*

of culture, cannot be analyzed outside its socio-political context. A society which is not the subject of socio-political life, degraded to the status of object, cannot constitute the subject of socialist culture. The socialist cultural revolution requires — as its foundation — a radical reconstruction of political life.

STRESZCZENIE

Kultura jest dialektyczną jednością ludzi i wytworzonych przez nich przedmiotów, w których ludzie są bardziej obecni, niż w swoich własnych ciałach. Dlatego wbrew ujęciom ergocentrycznym eliminującym podmiot z badań nad dziełami (i wbrew logice Fregego eliminującym podmiot z badań nad treścią zdań) należy ujmować dzieła w kontekście ich związków z podmiotami, które je wytworzyły i podmiotami, które je odbierają. Dialektyczna teoria osobowości opiera się na przekonaniu, że podmiot kultury ma strukturę policentryczną. Czynnikiem policentryzującymi są przede wszystkim decydujące spotkania, w których spotkane osoby przekształcają się w podmiotowe składniki osobowości. Między tymi składnikami wytwarzają się kulturotwórcze napięcia wprowadzające myśl w ruch. Te twórcze napięcia — a więc i rozwój — zawdzięczamy temu, że za każdym twórcą stoi zbiorowy podmiot kultury. Do istoty dzieła należy jego życie historyczne, wyrażające się w jego oddziaływaniu na różne kręgi i kolejne pokolenia odbiorców.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Культура является диалектическим единством людей и созданных ими предметов, в которых вопреки эргоцентрической трактовке элиминирующей субъект из исследований над произведениями (вопреки логике Фреге элиминирующей субъект из исследований над содержанием взглядов), нужно рассматривать произведение в контексте их связей с субъектами, которые их создали и с субъектами, которые их воспринимают. Диалектическая теория личности основана на убеждении, что субъект культуры имеет полицентрическую структуру. Полицентрирующим фактором являются преимущественно решающие встречи, при которых встреченные лица превращаются в субъектные элементы личности. Между этими элементами создаются культурообразующие напряжения, приодящие мысль в движение. Это творческое напряжение, а также и развитие, заключается в том, что за каждым творцом стоит коллективный субъект культуры. На суть произведения откладывается его историческая жизнь, выражающаяся его действием на разные круги и следующие поколения потребителей.

lityka, pp. 123—170. The other aspects of pluralism and polycentrism are examined in the four following papers of the same author: *Pluralizm światopoglądowy w kulturze socjalistycznej*, "Euhemer", 1981, 2 (120), p. 117—130; *Aksjologiczne aspekty pluralizmu* in: *Człowiek i świat wartości*, Kraków 1982, p. 505—517; *Metoda inkontrolologiczna w historii filozofii a policentryczna struktura osobowości filozofów*, "Studia Filozoficzne", 1983, 4 (209), p. 87—93; *La structure pluraliste et polycentrique de l'ordre international dans le domaine de la culture* in: *Religious pluralism in Europe among cultures and political systems*. Round Table, Rimini 1983, p. 193—201.