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# CULTURE AND HUMAN IN SEARCH OF THEIR OWN IMAGE AND PATTERN

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As you know, culture is a way of human existence, and there are many other ways, which are determined by specific natural and historical conditions of community existence. In this regard, the main question of culture is "Who is a human?", which is the bearer of consciousness, and "What should this human be?". And if "a human" is the bearer of consciousness, is it also its subject? The degree of responsibility of a human to themselves and to the rest of the world depends on the solution of these questions.

In traditional society, the answer to these questions was obtained directly and visually and was evidenced by a direct action - a ritual. Philosophical reflection, on the other hand, asks questions about the general essence of a human and seeks the basis for an answer in its own space, in the connections of ideas. However, such grounds turn out to be quite shaky, because they are immediately criticized by philosophy itself, and mainly because they rarely stand up to scrutiny in the actual material being of a human. This constant shakiness and incoherence become permanent conditions of self-conscious existence and are manifested in constant anxiety, in the anxiety of philosophical thought about its foundations.

The fundamental incompleteness of thinking, the relativity of the established, the need to constantly go beyond the limits of the conceivable content - a characteristic feature of philosophical reflection. At the same time, it should create some reliable interconnected integrity, some continuum of human existence, where fairly reliable guidelines are indicated. This contradiction determines the entire development of philosophy, which until now is the most important part of culture, since it was philosophy that began to produce general purposeful meanings of human existence, expressed in the forms of a social ideal. Therefore, with all its abstractness, philosophical reflection arises as a way of solving practical problems, as practical philosophy.

It has become that teaching and school are those what give knowledge about what is proper in a human, which makes reflection on this knowledge relevant at all times. According to M.K. Mamardashvili, the whole problem of human in culture lies in the answer to the question: can we be just the way we are, or is it possible for a human to rise above themselves, become better?

The purpose of this article is to find an answer to the question posed - is it possible for a human to rise above themselves and how is it possible?

The question of human, more precisely, what they are, how they should act and what exactly ensures their existence as a human, attracted the attention of philosophers both in the East and in the West.

In the Indian religious and philosophical experience presented in the Vedas and the Upanishads, morality is included in the cycle of "rebirth-life-death-rebirth-life-death-rebirth...".

*Karmic thinking, strongly mythologized, it connects moral causality with the inevitability of reincarnations (rebirths), the nature and direction of which depend on human actions. All imperfections and suffering in the world are the result of each human's own actions, and they themselves chooses the possibility of being in a better or worse position in the future. The need to overcome karma is a constant concern and a task that is difficult to accomplish. And the highest goal of human - merging with the deity, is achieved by ascetic renunciation of the world, "finding oneself" in the form of renunciation of sensual passions, in the form of overcoming the eternal cycle of transformations, in the form of self-deepening, meditation. Thus, a human's self-determination is, first of all, a measure of their efforts aimed at overcoming karma. The image of moral perfection is extreme asceticism.*

*The culture of ancient China was formed in completely different conditions than in the caste society of India and even more so than in the polis society of Greece. Chinese civilization was formed and developed in the conditions of a strictly centralized state, where the place and functions of a human were determined by patriarchal family and state subordination. Hence the close attention to "correct" behavior and "correct" understanding of a human. A "right" human is their right behavior, which, according to Confucius, forms the basis of morality and whose content is observance of tradition and respect for elders, especially in terms of managerial hierarchy. Thus, the measure of a human is "philanthropy" and means the ability to conform to expected (assigned) patterns of behavior in relations with other people according to their social status.*

*In the culture of ancient Greece, especially the classical period, the measure of a human is the measure of their knowledge and the measure of their ability to receive it. And, first of all, knowledge appears as reflection, as a product of independent thinking, reflection on the essence of things. Secondly, acquiring knowledge is the concern and duty of every human, as much as they wants to be. Knowledge is the highest morality, or "virtue," because the possessor of knowledge is able to discern truth, beauty, goodness, and justice, and therefore to act accordingly. The one who is incapable of this cannot be free, because they are a prisoner of their passions, desires, and superstitions. They are actually a slave.*

*It is especially important that knowledge about virtues, about the essence of a human, as understood by, say, Socrates, is not acquired through practical experience, but rather through the analysis of concepts, clarification of their vague meaning. The main method here is precise questioning and persuasive argumentation. This is an intense intellectual work, introspection, control over the course and content of the mental process, which is "knowing oneself" - an independently determined goal of a human, the achievement of which is the main meaning of life.*

*The foundations of morality for ancient culture naturally lie outside its boundaries. They are determined by mythological and religious ideas about world justice and divine wisdom. But the main thing that distinguishes a human from ancient thinking is their independence and ability to make independent decisions, which is most evident in a human's willingness to challenge, fight and emerge victorious. The challenge can be thrown to the gods and even fate - then we have a tragic hero. The challenge can be addressed to opponents and enemies - then before us is a civilian or military hero. An agonizing challenge to an equal and worthy fellow citizen - and then we have a hero-athlete before us. But in any case, the image of a human is determined by the success of their business, which depends entirely on the strength of the spirit and the amount of effort expended.*

*The understanding of human discovered and formulated by antiquity acquires consistent*

development and expression in the humanist culture of the Renaissance and the New Age. Here, the image of a human is already set apart from any external models, teachings and authorities, apart from any ideal supramundane hierarchy. Here, there are no guarantees external to a human and their consciousness for their development as a human. Everyone entered an open unknown and hostile space, in which they made their way independently, relying only on their own individual abilities: intelligence, cunning, dexterity, determination, tenacity, etc. In such conditions, the individual truly did not see the limits of self-identification, self-affirmation. O.F. Losev characterized the Renaissance era with the term "titanism", emphasizing the scale of human's perception of themselves and their capabilities. She saw no height limits for spiritual achievements, but there were no moral limits for her that she could not cross in the implementation of her will.

The fundamental difference between these schematically sketched stages in the civilizational development of the self-awareness of culture and human consists in the fact that the boundaries of the cultural space have always been delineated in some way. For example, the Hellenes believed that they lived in a space of culture organized by their own will, and the barbarians, according to the Greeks, were in an animal community. The Han (Chinese) thought the same about ethnic groups living outside the Celestial Empire. The same can be said about the self-awareness of Christians and Christian culture in relation to pagans. And the peculiarity of the Renaissance was precisely that all boundaries suddenly disappeared and the responsibility for belonging to the human race, which is always shared by the individual with the entire community, suddenly fell on him alone, and they had to set their own guidelines. How can we not remember Dante's line here: "Having passed the earthly path to the middle, I found myself in a gloomy forest...". This civilization, entering the period of development (adulthood), found itself in a space where there are unclear directions. Free, skeptical and critical thought turned away from the former landmarks given by tradition, mythology and religion, and it could not discover new ones in its subjectivity, at least those that would have general significance. The boundless space of freedom, in which the spirituality of the individual found themselves, turned into a desert of loneliness of the spirit, inhabited by frightening mirages and phantoms. The anxiety of existence manifests itself in the figures of Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Doctor Faustus.

In order to understand this stage in the development of cultural self-awareness, a very significant point is that its subject is a very small part of society, namely the educated and creative part of the nobility and urban bourgeoisie.

Therefore, there is a need, firstly, to establish some general guidelines for the movement of the spirit, and secondly, for such generality to be confirmed in a fairly wide social practice. Or, in other words, there is a need to translate the content of the spirituality of human existence from an abstract timeless and extraspatial subjectivity into a being that has a concrete historical dimension.

To a large extent, this task was fulfilled by the Enlightenment. Moreover, it seems to be resolved in two opposite directions. On the one hand, geographical discoveries and the expansion of contacts between ethnic groups and cultures gave rise to the well-known Eurocentric thinking, which divided peoples into "civilized" and "savage" ones. Already this opposition forced to ask questions about the essence of civilization and culture. On the other hand, the realities of European life, its deep social inconsistency and conflict created doubts about the values of civilization.

*Philosophy begins to distinguish culture as its own subject of study, as an evolutionary understanding of nature is formed and strengthened, in which the question of the emergence of human and society must be resolved. But in the same evolutionist thinking, the "natural" human is opposed to the social human, the human of civilization, culture. At the same time, as in Rousseau, who influenced the formation of the philosophy of culture, a "natural" human was understood as a true, genuine human, in contrast to a human of civilization corrupted by conventions and artificial limitations, who is not free in their will.*

*Philosophy as a process of cultural self-awareness has always appeared as humanistic thinking. But the principles of humanism have always been limited in their content by specific socio-historical conditions, so its change has always had a crisis character.*

*That is, a human's awareness of their essence, their place in the world, the ways of their self-realization sooner or later ran into the insurmountable obstacles of the existing paradigm.*

*The main categories of humanistic thinking are "truth" and "freedom". Their content was always connected with the existence and movement of the spirit. Most often, as, for example, in antiquity, they coincide, since the possession of the truth is freedom. The limits that have just been mentioned are primarily the limits of freedom and how they were understood, and how they existed and exist in reality.*

*As is known, humanistic consciousness experienced its first crisis during the period of the collapse of ancient culture. Slavery had exhausted its economic and social resources, and no knowledge, no wisdom, even no power (be it the gods or the state) gave hope for the preservation of not only the traditionally customary, but also the natural image of the world order, which seemed natural. Truth lost its all-embracing cosmic scale, and freedom became more and more ephemeral, collapsing into the expression of property independence. The courage of spiritual search and the hard work of thought, as the main dignity of a human, was replaced by the search for satisfaction from the consumption of spiritual achievements in the education system, which at that time was widely developed. Ancient culture began to lose the possibilities of its reproduction.*

*The culture of the era that succeeded it and in which religious thinking became the dominant type of thinking can hardly be called a humanistic culture, but it made a serious breakthrough in the direction of its self-awareness. The abstract and closed cyclical continuity of human existence was reinterpreted in other categories and received a different topology. Monotheism gave a clear idea of the orientation and meaning of existence, formed an idea of the so-called "arrow of time" and finite (ultimate) goals. Thus, the fundamental prerequisites of historical thinking were laid. Another important circumstance was that Christian thought made the Word the center of attention and, therefore, even in transformed forms of consciousness, turned to its own essence, which made it possible to form an idea of the spiritual image and model of a human. True, the main content of humanistic thinking was essentially eliminated. Both truth and freedom cease to be a matter of human, or at least become abstract conditions of their spirituality. This limitation is overcome by the practical activity of the Renaissance human and a new type of community based on commodity-money relations.*

*The assertion of historical thinking and the accompanying understanding of the direction of humanistic progress in the future is connected with the overcoming of the individualistic ideal formed by the Enlightenment and the imperative principles of Kantian ethics, firmly assimilated by the European thinking of the 19th century. But even more essential was the understanding of the essence and mechanisms of alienation, for which we owe, first of all, to German classical*

*philosophy and the philosophical materialism of K. Marx.*

*As we can see, moral consciousness shows its significance to such an extent that from ancient times to the present, many and many philosophical teachings saw ethics as the root cause of social existence. And all recipes for general happiness and well-being, without which no more or less systematic philosophy can do, had morality as the initial and main component. Modernity not only knows all of them, but has experience in their practical use. However, the anxiety of the perceived existence of culture has not decreased in any way, but, apparently, has increased many times over. Moreover, if once, especially at the beginning of the century, there seemed to be serious grounds and prospects for hopes and even confidence in a possible moral and, therefore, cultural transformation, at the end these grounds proved to be increasingly shaky and even ephemeral, and the prospects, if not blurred, then they lost a lot of clarity.*

*Throughout the century, humanism was the guiding principle of philosophical reflection, artistic and even all social practice. There is no doubt that they were inspired by all the top cultural achievements of this time, but there is also no doubt that the deep destructive processes that developed and are developing in the space of culture are also connected with the humanistic intentions of their subjects.*

*The understanding of the principle of humanism was ambiguous and very controversial, not only in comparison of different philosophical and conceptual approaches, but also within the limits of a certain one. In the most general form, it is possible to distinguish the direction of humanistic thinking, which focused on human as a sovereign individual, and the direction, which saw the main content of humanism in sociality, collectivism and cooperation of people.*

*The first direction developed in the forms of philosophical anthropology, phenomenology and existentialism, the second - mainly in dialectical-materialist philosophy and neo-Marxism.*

*In the first, morality and culture are formed as the self-development of a human's vital forces and become factors that limit this process and formalize it. At the same time, morality and culture could be presented as an expression of volitional acts by which a human overcomes natural necessity and in which they exercises their freedom. From this point of view, the culture created by a human has as its source a certain state of "desperation", which forces a human to make a choice, that is, to act. And only in action is she able to distinguish between good and evil and her attitude towards them. Morality and culture could also be interpreted as being in irreconcilable conflict with the essence of human, which can find true existence only in their overcoming, in the desire to rise above the "too human" (as, for example, in Nietzsche). Or, on the contrary, culture and morality could be understood as a single and painful way of human existence, produced by consciousness (as, for example, in Camus).*

*Another understanding of the foundations of culture offered a direction of philosophical thought, which interpreted it as a space of symbolic systems, which is arbitrarily constructed by consciousness through language structures. Most of all, it is represented by modern analytical philosophy, but it can be broadly characterized as an information-semiotic approach.*

*Human creates their world from autonomous creations of the spirit, symbolic forms, the tool of which is language. The movement of culture in this regard is a transition from one symbolic expression of the spirit to another.*

*Unconscious objectification of feelings acts as mythology, religion serves as a symbolic expression of higher moral ideals, art and science open forms of supra-individual existence by their means. Philosophy is a reflection of the creative spirit on its symbolic activity. However, the*

*limits of the mind are too narrow, symbols are not subject to cognition, but only to interpretation.*

*Therefore, for the famous representatives of this direction, E. Cassirer or E. Rothaker, the world appears not only as the existence of symbolic forms, but as one that changes along with each concept that is introduced into it. Consciousness, which constructs symbolic systems, is responsible only to itself. In other words, all problems faced by a human arise as problems of language, text, as problems of their correct or incorrect interpretation and language behavior. Culture is perceived as a symbolic environment, and the only subject of culture is the individual who gives it meaning.*

*Modern humanistic thinking is looking for new ideals and guidelines. According to the imagination of some philosophers, the main thing in it should be the ecological content. There is no doubt that this is a very relevant aspect of the problem, but reflection on the preservation of a human's attitude to the world reveals the most complex contradictions of this attitude, including contradictions of the moral plan.*

*The concept of neo-humanism, the main idea of which is ecocentrism, as opposed to traditional egocentrism, has become widely known. A balanced ecosystem as a source and condition for human survival becomes the main object of attention and the goal of activity. Accordingly, so-called post-material values are included in the value system of neo-humanist culture: focus on education, spiritual creative activity, humanal freedom and self-expression, etc. The main principles here are biocentrism and eco-similarity, as well as communitarian individualism, which implies general interdependence and social tolerance.*

*Recently, a new model of humanistic thinking, called transhumanism, has been proposed. It is being built as an attempt to understand the future of human, connecting it with the development of modern technologies, primarily informational and genetic. The question here is whether human-made artificial intellectual systems and artificial organisms will displace human themselves from the field of their activity, or whether a fundamentally new system of interactions should emerge, in which the "human" should include the "technical". In any case, this is a completely different, "sociotechnical", space than culture in its traditional existence and understanding, and these are fundamentally different grounds for morality, if it has a place at all.*

*Thus, in modern culture, the ability to create images of socially significant goals, an image of a worthy future, an image of a human capable of achieving such goals, has been extremely weakened, if not lost altogether. Culture seems to have lost the perspective of its movement. And in this regard, the deep crisis of socialist projects, with the implementation of which a significant part of humanity associated the idea of social and cultural progress, played a significant role. Unfortunately, neither liberal nor any kind of renewed ideas claiming universalism could formulate the goals of social development.*

*The growth of catastrophism, historical dead-end, or at best cyclical attitudes in society forces us to ask again and again the question of the essence of culture and the means of its existence. Western philosophical thought has long drawn attention to the tragic nature of the soulless existence of human and culture in a world of relative prosperity. However, the philosophical thought of the East has not exhausted its potential and recently opens new horizons of culture and gives a powerful creative impulse to all its elements.*

*In particular, the philosophy of Buddhism and Taoism influenced the formation of a new direction in Western psychology - positive psychology, which is intensively developing in English-speaking culture. The purpose of this psychology is expressed in key words - "happiness",*

*"well-being", "prosperity" and "success". Adepts of positive psychology see the achievement of the set goal through self-education and self-improvement, through mastering and understanding certain ethical principles that underlie the image of an ideal human. Ethical guidelines include the following values: honesty, justice, benevolence, responsibility, persistence, courage, self-regulation, reliability, usefulness, and many others. Mastering these principles and values*

*is a condition for building a happy and prosperous life. So, very strangely, the desire for a prosperous life and the development of ethical consciousness is refracted in the mass European consciousness. Thus, quite unexpectedly, ancient Eastern psychological practices and modern Western science were synthesized. Obviously, the 21st century will be a period of cooperation, mutual influence and interaction of different cultures for the purpose of developing a harmonious society.*

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