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POST-INDUSTRIAL CULTURE AS A SOURCE OF TRANSFORMATION OF SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

KULTURA POSTINDUSTRIALNA, JAKO ŹRÓDŁO TRANSFORMACJI PRZESTRZENI I KRAJOBRAZU

Abstract

Postindustrial social space is, in its essence, cyberspace – a sphere dictated by the media (an iconosphere). The rapid development of technology has led to the emergence of a specific type of human – the technological man. The technical man has caused the emergence of a new type of society known as the industrial society. Its peak form is the technopoly – a totalitarian technocracy which is both a kind of culture and state of mind.

Shaped both by the culture of technopoly and the technostructure, the social space is changing its current form. There appear strong trends aimed, inter alia, at the loss of *civitas*, the deterritorialization of space and the senses, the disappearance of the *sacred*, the secularization of people's households, the visualization of streets and trivialization of the city, etc.

Streszczenie

Postindustrialna przestrzeń społeczna to w swojej istocie cyberprzestrzeń – obszar dyktatu mediów (ikonosfera). Burzliwy rozwój techniki doprowadził do wykształcenia się specyficznego rodzaju człowieka – człowieka technicznego. Człowiek techniczny spowodował powstanie nowego rodzaju społeczeństwa określanego, jako społeczeństwo industrialne. Jego szczytową forma jest technopol – totalitarna technokracja będąca zarówno rodzajem kultury jak i stanem umysłu.

Ukształtowana zarówno przez kulturę technopolu jak i przez technostrukturę przestrzeń społeczna zmienia dotychczasową formę. Pojawiają się w niej silne prądy zmierzające między innymi do: utraty civitas, deterytorializacji przestrzeni i zmysłów, zaniku sacrum, laicyzacji ludzkiego domostwa, wizualizacji ulicy, trywializacji miasta, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the strongest factors determining and modifying human life (Kowalczyk, 1996:89). Technical human being however, is a creator and a product of culture at the same time (Wciórka, 1992: 136-137). Moreover, according to Herve Carrier, culture becomes a fundamental prerequisite in the analysis of collective life, because it is a "new paradigm or a conceptual tool, targeting social field analysis and understanding its basic dynamisms" (Carrier, 1990: 16-17). A similar view is expressed by Daniel Bell when discussing the primacy of culture in a socio-economic context. In his view, in the last few centuries, a human being was regarded rather as a *homo pictor* (a creature creating symbols) than as a *homo faber* (a creature creating tools). Thus, culture has become an increasingly important cause of change for people, often more important than technique. Currently, society does not see culture solely as a set of norms and moral-philosophical affirmation of tradition. In modern times culture has started to undertake an unprecedented mission: it is supposed to be an official, continuous search of a new human sensitivity (Bell, 1994: 68-69). Hence, culture as such, particularly technical culture, is a main factor conditioning the functioning of a technical human being. Technical culture is a process of humanisation within technical environment. Technical culture is also a type of relationship between a technical human being and all components of technical environment. This creates a new quality of living environment for a technical human being – a new quality of existential space. Part of the space is a cultural landscape – a landscape created by culture, in this case technical culture. One can formulate a thesis that this landscape –being a physiognomy of technical culture – will differ from other cultural landscapes in the same way that technical culture differs from other cultures. Besides, in a cultural landscape created by technical culture a process of humanisation will be preserved.

Edward Hall proposes yet another approach to culture. In his view, culture is a form of interpersonal communication (Hall, 1987: 180) set in social space, which in turn is a means of cultural communication (Hall, 2001: 9). Hence, Hall's statement that "culture is communication" is interpreted by Plachecki as "culture is a transmission", a transmission of a sequence of behaviours, interactions, events. In other words, culture is a subconsciously applied technology of contacts with other people. It is worth highlighting that according to Hall, the way of functioning of culture-communication depends on a specific time model. Typically, each culture (e.g. Arabic, European, Indian, Japanese etc.) uses a few different times, e.g. secular, sacred, physical, metaphysical, biological, etc. (Hall, 1999: 19-20). Not only a time pattern, but also science has a modifying influence on culture. Under the influence of contemporary science are created economic and social structures, being a real basis enabling building a third civilisation – a technical civilisation (Mc Donagh, 1975: 669). Hence, relations between science and culture are becoming particularly important. According to Stanislaw Kaminski, traditionally the function of culture was maintaining stability between people's everyday life and a growing scientific theory. Culture was the place where the assimilation of the output of eras happened. Culture played a role

of auto-regulation, protecting ipso facto the social substance from destabilisation (Kamiński, 1992:245). Nowadays, culture is increasingly losing its hitherto prevailing function. By cooperating with contemporary science, it provides tools which task is not to stabilise but to modify human social space. The issue is contemporary science – pragmatic, strongly linked with technique, questioning existing values, and replacing existing human's world with a different one. Max Weber and Zdzisław Krasnodębski come to a conclusion that hitherto prevailing world was the world of ethical compensations causality. However, the present-day science offers the world of nature causality, without ethical sense (Krasnodębski, 1993: 159). Such status quo creates premises for the dehumanisation of the world, lack of sense, bridging individual's identity, relativisation of cultural models, and even radical behavioural changes. Science, which meant to liberate a human being, has damaged him considerably. This damage means that science does not want to do anything more than provide a human being with vast knowledge. It does not bring him up, nor does it educate him for "a wise man". Science can be satisfied with "an expert, specialist" – an impartial pragmatic loyal perhaps to procedures, instructions, etc. The issue is that this specialist in order to maintain impartiality should sooner or later reject links with other people or his own culture for here elements such as tradition, inheritance, responsibility, loyalty, decency, love, etc. are emphasized. These features however, do not allow being impartial or indifferent to other people and events happening around us. The attitude of an expert should be "cool" and "uncommitted". As a consequence, his attitude to cultural landscape – "the footprint" of culture in space – should be free from any emotional engagement, sense of responsibility or respect.

This article should be considered an attempt to draft a picture of post-industrial culture, place and role of a human being in this culture, and the influence it had in the area of cultural landscape. It is also an attempt to collate all the existing research done by the author. Additionally, theses and comments presented in this publication have been partially discussed in previous works.

THE CULTURE OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY TECHNOPOLY

Technopoly is a type of post-industrial culture and a state of mind at the same time. It is a totalitarian technocracy (Postman, 1995: 62), which emerged through a technocratic enchantment of the world (Kurczewska, 1997: 311-326). In technopoly, there is a deification of technique (as a paradigm, strategy of actions), the subordination of all forms of life to technique and technology. Technique identifies and controls culture.

The phenomenon of over-domination of information is a factor which in the field of technopoly enables technique a total control of culture and redefinition of social structures existing so far. For technopoly a new cultural god is not technique (as a skill of making objects), but information. According to N. Postman (1995: 75-76, 87) technopoly believes that the world needs unlimited information because its constant production and spread increases the area of liberty, creativity, peace, etc. Technopoly,

as a consequence, leads to the creation of information epoch even though its actual origin goes back to the times of Gutenberg and his printed press (XVI c.), and is continued by computer technology. In the era of information, information itself obtains a metaphysical status. Information seems at the same time a means and an aim of human creativity. Regrettably, technopoly belittles the fact that information can be dangerous in case of its overload and lack of its target, lack of an applicable theory, lack of aim which it should serve, etc.. In technopoly, a destruction of social resistance to information and a devastation of information immunity system take place. Ultimately, technopoly deprives individuals of social, political, historical, metaphysical, logical and spiritual model which enables to distinguish between true and untrue, unreliable information (Postman, 1995: 72, 78). The lack of such model causes that in the awareness of both an individual and a society a new world emerges, called by Postman (1995: 86) a „peekaboo world" – an improbable, virtual, chaotic world in which events appear and then immediately disappear. In my view, in such a world social space is a faithful representation of this world. A similar situation can be observed in a landscape as such and a cultural landscape – it is temporary, chaotic, without any special sense. From the perspective of people of "a peekaboo world", what surrounds them is changeable, temporary, and impermanent. Thus, it seems unworthy to sacrifice one's attention, efforts and means for something – even if it is cultural space, historical heritage, or landscape – which (in their opinion) immediately passes and will be replaced by a new (also passing-by) version. The cultural landscape seems to affect this type of society only to some extent because its memory is short-term – more often living the moment, much less often wanting to solve more complex problems.

The realization of total domination of a human being over nature has become possible within a new type of a society – an industrial society identified both as a new product of culture and a new pragmatic result of the culture of technopoly. The industrial society has a substantial scientific-technical potential (Łapiński, 1994: 82-83) and assumes the introduction of technocracy, i.e. giving the power to engineers instead of incompetent, profit-oriented businessmen (Regulation..., 1995: 460). As far as a technical human being is concerned, it is an attempt of mechanical control of social processes and equally mechanical modification of natural processes. In other words, cultural changes were forced externally without considering the "humanistic factor" (Obuchowski, 1993: 28). Therefore, it is worth highlighting, the idea of technocratism in its assumptions has led to a de facto totalitarian society. It reduces human individuals to the level of natural objects and emphasises the necessity of completing social tasks by means of technique of actions (Lorenz, 1986:145) as well as soulless bureaucratic efficiency (Zacher, 1978: 81-82). The promoted technocratic, purely sociotechnical attitude turns out to be wrong. According to Stephen Kline and Nathan Rosenberg, one cannot treat technical and social innovations (occurring e.g. in the area of social institutions, market, administration, organisational hierarchy or work distribution) as independent elements. They make up one type of techno-social continuum. Even in its initial stadium, this continuum modifies culture, changes social values and judgments (Kline, Rosenberg, 1986: 278).

In terms of culture, the industrial technocratic society can be characterised by a few specific features:

1. Culture is assigned a typically pragmatic role. As Dawid Bolter (1990: 318) believes, in an industrial society, culture id responsible for an intense transmission of the world into an increasingly artificial environment. Culture is to create useful production techniques from a material which primarily belonged to nature. The aim is a complete replacement of the natural world with a fake world – a world of fake landscapes and city-like products being in fact human knowledge and capital resource (Nawratek, 2012). Their striking feature is functionality, correctness, repetition, predictability, submission, subordination to the logic of capital, etc. but they lack, in my opinion, uniqueness, intimacy, surprise, significant places.

2. The use of culture to create new loyalty in a human being. Culture, apart from educating individuals, ought to define the border of a world in which an individual can find employment, maintain his dignity and moral identity. This creates a new type of loyalty (Gellner, 1991: 49). From now on, loyalty towards a monarch, land or religion fades away and loyalty towards specific culture takes effect. This means that the same culture deprives an individual of family bonds, instead creating a lonely person facing an anonymous group in culture.

3. Appointing the state for a coordinator of social changes. In an industrial society, the state, firstly, supports culture, not religion as it has been until now. Secondly, it maintains a uniform high standard of education. Ernest Gellner (1991: 49) believes that education is the most valuable investment being a source of identity for a technical human being.

4. The unification of culture. John Naisbitt sees globalism as the cause of the gradual disappearance of cultural diversity (Naisbitt, 1982). This results in a facility of information transfer, and thus, a diffusion of certain values on a variety of areas of life and substantial areas of the world. In this case, Lorenz puts forward a hypothesis of the loss of independent existence of cultures. Similar dress code, behaviour, and customs particular to people from different regions of the world are determinants of this process. Alongside one can observe, particularly in young people, lack of sense, lack of faith in the world, and boredom. Young people notice that the pursuit of success, often glorified by their parents, as well as faith in economic boom often leads to a dead end (Lorenz, 1986: 166-169).

EXAMPLES OF TRANSFORMATION IN CULTURE SPACE

Presented above phenomena and trends have led to significant reassessments in the post-industrial culture space. The following cases have been particularly important.

The loss of *civitas*

According to J. Wojciechowski (1998: 192) a classical social space consists in democratic space, in which existing *publicus* enables social contact and creates

the space for socio-cultural discourse. In the view of V. Acconci (1998: 78), in the domain of classical social space *publicus* has been „real". Thanks to *publicus*, real social undertakings take place. The participants of these events were conscious of the fact that they are co-authors of what was being created and they ought to engage fully and be responsible for decisions taken. Therefore, a classical social space was the space of a real action, and new ideas arose as a consequence of these real actions.

Modern social space commonly understood as cyberspace – the space of media dictate – is not democratic. In cyberspace, despite seemingly easy, ready availability of information sources and media, there is no opportunity for free communication. In the area of such a space one can observe the loss of *civitas*. Present-day social space is an area of virtual space governed by three rules: „immersion", „manipulation", navigation". It is characterised by elusiveness and flexibility. It is space without fixed places, present everywhere and nowhere, promising everlasting surfing (Mikina, 1998: 44). In such a surrounding, *publicus* and a real social discourse disappears systematically, and the one which still exists (often already in cyberspace) becomes equally „virtual", floating, immaterial. Mikina believes that shock actions of cyberspace mean that cyberspace „unifies culture and technology, politics and art, public and private sphere. It links inseparably and, it seems, irreversibly" (Mikina, 1998: 45). I believe that such status quo diminishes traditional public space. New media space has become less significant. It fails to create an atmosphere; it fails to create a place.

Deterritorialization of space and senses

Social space of the post-industrial era is marked by deterritorialisation. This phenomenon has led to the lack of physical contact and actions in cyberspace. Despite being physically somewhere else, a human being can participate in an action without real presence – supported by electronic medium or technology. Space exists in stillness; it lacks precision; it is characterised by atomisation. A social dialogue carried out in a virtual social space is temporary as between virtual and anonymous participants of the dialogue there is no bond. Social cyberspace, despite being a type of media space in reality – as argued by Chyla – is only a „simulacrum of classical public space: it is public space for people of postmodernity" (Chyła, 1998: 30). The features of such space are: lack of word domination, lack of dialogue between independent persons, technological and mass media dictate, lack of real independence of persons and the state itself, and lack of legal guarantee of such independence. Media space of post-industrial era is a radically visualised space, where a rule of deterritorialization of presence and deterritorialization of senses takes effect. A systematic reduction of the significance of the word for the sake of the supremacy of an index over a symbol occurs. In a virtual media space one thinks by means of symbols not concepts. One thinks through image. The key to understand such a view of the world can be summarised in a slogan: „don't think – look!" (Chyła, 1998: 25-27), an example of which can be an advertisement as a way to inform about a product but also a significant element of a contemporary cultural landscape – a type of specific narration with a human. It seems that in an icon sphere a human

being de facto does not think, but plays a sort of game (Józef Tishner) with himself and the world. There are no fixed rules in this game. Its aim is not to understand the world or oneself, its aim is the game itself.

The gradual disappearance of *sacrum*

The traditional, former social space was rich in *sacrum*. This factor ensured sense and made space real. It created whole sacred landscapes which were – according to Myga-Piątek (2012:16) – one of the oldest (if not the oldest) types of a cultural landscape. *Sacrum* was the element responsible for creating society and culture (Acconci, 1998: 79; Chylińska, Kosmla, 2012). *Sacrum* was also a warranty of a long-lasting social agreement (Łapiński 2001a: 51-56). Furthermore, according to M. Eliade (1996: 7) the presence of *sacrum* defined an ontological status in space – space was seen as non-uniform, diverse in terms of quality, totally different, having a sacred area, the centre of any other reference. Such a space is full of energy, rich in significance (Eliade, 1996: 15; Plit J., 2012a: 35-36). A space somehow presents itself to a human being, which, as Eliade believes, „provides "a focal point", thereby an opportunity to find a way among chaotic homogeneousness, an opportunity to "establish the world" and real life" (Eliade, 1996: 17-18).

A modern social space is deprived of *sacrum*; it seems to be increasingly more laic. In its ontological structure, it is uniform, neutral, unvaried quality-wise (Eliade, 1993:53-54), "amorphous", or homogeneous (Eliade, 1996: 15). Eliade argues that „there is no separation between its various pieces" It is a geometrical space, from which no quality diversity and no existential orientation result (Eliade, 1996: 16-17).

The lack of *sacrum* in social space leads to a substantial diminution of an existential space and destabilisation of a culture area (Myga-Piątek, 2012a), or even economy. This is because in terms of a social space (as well as nature) *sacrum* plays a twofold role: diagnostic and estimating (Łapiński, 2012: 25). In its diagnostic aspect, *sacrum* is a detector of civilisation changes. In the domain of given culture. The initial symptoms of good or evil occur in a way of perceiving and experiencing *sacrum*. The domain of generally understood *sacrum* determines the image of our social space and at the same time records the symptoms of any changes of this image.

Sacrum apart from a diagnostic role plays also an estimating one. This kind of view is based on the most primary, natural meaning of *sacrum* as something special, unique, designed for "something else", eliminated from the ordinary, every-day use. Hence, the presence of material symbols of *sacrum* in a landscape makes this landscape special and unique. Moreover, the presence of *sacrum* in a social discourse has added sense and value to this dialogue – it stopped being lobbing, an arena of conflicts, or a competition of different fractions caring solely for their own, particular interest.

Secularisation of a human household

Fried Marc believes that „(...) a home is not only a flat or a building but the whole space surrounding it, in which one experiences the most important episodes of their life" (Hall, 2001: 216-217). However, according to M. Heidegger a home is a special piece of existential space, a space where a human "lives". This "living" is „an essential sign of being" (Heidegger, 1977: 333). Thus, a home is the main place for a human being to be, the place where an individual finds their existence (Norberg-Schulz, 2000: 31).

A previous, traditional home and a modern, contemporary home are two different realities. According to Eliade, a human household in the pre-industrial era was full of *sacrum*. The home was organised and it created a real existential space. It was a sacred space, open to Absolut (Eliade, 1998: 54). It was *imago mundi* – microcosm. It possessed the symbolism of Cosmos hidden in its architectural form (a yurta, a hut, a tent, a shack). While being the representation pf the Universe, it was also seen as a reduplication of a human body – *imago corporis* (Eliade, 1996: 145, 147-148). It was motherland and "a nest" – the most loved fragment of space determining the identity of people, clan, origin etc. Creating a proper home, a human being of that time was creating a new reality, a new, own world which was a review of creating and organizing the world and life (Eliade 1998: 89-90).

In a modern social space, home – a kind of private existential space – has experienced secularisation. Entangled in a virtual media space (iconosphere) it creates a virtual space. One may fear that the home of a post-industrial human being may also become something virtual - it will stop maintaining the bond with the place of human existence. In a virtual space of a virtual home there will not be „a real human being", but mere fragments of fractured individuals.

A modern home has become an object and – quoting Le Corbusier – „a machine for living". This machine differs in terms of individual requirements, climate, a cultural model etc. Each time however, it is only a different method of closing space. Therefore, a home-machine is to a great extent a serial, functional and easily exchangeable product. A home-machine becomes a tool (in the same way as a television set, a computer, a car or a plane). A home-machine is a purely technical product with perfect technological correctness and a model spatial-functional organization (Hall, 2001: 84, 134). There is no room for cosmic symbolism, *sacrum*, and „spirituality". Spatial-functional organization of a contemporary home makes it „private" and closed. In its assumptions privacy is to ensure human separation from the world, in particular from the noise of civilization (Hall, 2001: 134-135). However, in my opinion, privacy in the post-industrial era is more often seen as an extreme isolation. Extreme privacy creates a home „closed to the world", a home without bonds with the world. In such a home, a human being learns to be „closed" to the world and other people. In my view, privacy of a contemporary household is a symptom of deepening loneliness and a human fear. Postmodern human being uses privacy in order to hide his own alienation. Many researchers highlight that these symptoms are caused by a feeling of existential threat related to ecological crisis.

Visualisation of the street

In the classical social space the street proclaimed the extension of the house (street = Polish word: ulica – "u lica" meaning "at the façade of the house"). A street of the past was also a kind of a semi-private space – a public space, where people meet, party, trade, etc. It also constituted an area of a real social discourse (Frydryczak 1998: 106-107). Everything that concerned the past social space concerned also the street.

According to B. Frydryczak (1998: 113-114), a modern street of metropolis is no longer a social discourse place – it has been taken over by advertisement and *design* (the proliferation of image). In the metropolis the icon of the image has entered the hitherto social space to such an extent that it has seized it all (Frydryczak, 1998: 113-114). Therefore, one can observe a gradual disappearance of a city as a place for the public and a simultaneous birth of a street as a communication artery, a motorway (Rembowska, 2004: 24; Plit J., 2012b). It appears that a new status of a street is less and less established by socio-cultural habitat and is largely dominated by billboards, neon lights and display windows.

Design of a postmodern street induces in a passer-by a feeling of sensual esthetical, albeit unreflective pleasure. The street appears aesthetically attractive but steadily less symbolic. Its *design*, being a servant of commerce and advertisement, does not contain any deeper sense. K. Lorentz (1986: 128) argues that a *design* of a postmodern street solely manipulates the instincts and emotions. A modern social space of a street becomes gradually deprived of the autonomy of a private sphere. The advertisement and *college* of a street supported by mass media enter mercilessly our households – they seize privacy, beset passers-by and family members. In my view, from the contemporary human being's perspective, a modern street appears not as a user-friendly space where identity-defining places are encountered, but as a street-phantom where a passer-by is a subject of commercial hunting. In addition, media space of a street creates an area of crowd and encirclement (Frydryczak, 1998: 113-114).

A present-day street – full of transparent window displays in shopping malls – becomes more and more decorative and more of a masterpiece, but it lacks *sacrum*. In the past it was the *sacrum* which was the force arranging the human world, nowadays it is advertisements and a colourful poster telezone (Virilio, 1995: 63).

The problem is that, as suggested by V. Acconci (1998: 83), what the street offers us is the quintessence of living by oneself which, in my view, constitutes a caricature of 'openness'. Although the street space is a contradiction of a home as living equipment (there is no complete privacy – there is total "sociality"), it still lacks a meaningful idea.

City – space of consumption

According to A. Wallis (1997), a city is an interlinked urban-social system. The urban subsystem consists of two main components: material elements of a city, such as houses, streets, squares, technical infrastructure, etc., and an overall of natural elements forming a spatial structure of a city. A social subsystem, in turn, is formed by residents of municipal agglomeration which, although changed historically, left some heritage in material artifacts of a city. Both sub-systems, in my view, form a common cultural image of a city. According to M. Madurowicz (2002a: 67) this image possesses a human dimension (spiritual and social) and a material dimension.

A city creates the Popper third world – the world of culture. It is closely linked to the first world – an external physical world, and the second world – an internal world of human activities and psychological experiences. It comprises, according to D. Jędrzejczyk (2004: 45, 48), a multidimensional space, within which „essential functions of the human existence are fulfilled". It is a kind of metaphor of existence where the core is a civilization dialogue with (culturally and physically diverse) city structures: buildings, streets, squares, zones etc. It is, in the view of H. Libura (1990) „a spatial wholeness full of humanistic content".

From the perspective of a social subsystem, a city, according to K. Rembowska (2004: 17), also creates a socio-cultural formation being the fullest manifestation of social experience of its residents. In other words, a city forms a kind of a social, existential space, which is a resultant of the interaction of the two abovementioned subsystems. In such a space one can notice both people and the traces of a human thought, systems of values, philosophical ideas, visions of the world, types of existence, social organization, etc. all preserved in the form of an architectural plan. M. Madurowicz feels convinced that a city "happens" as a culturally articulated space (2002a: 67) and at the same time as a model of a world resulting from experiences and cultural conditions of human collectivity (Rembowska, 2004: 22). The space, according to Rembowksa and Madurowicz (2002a:68), is full of signs which a city human being – *homo urbanicus* – analyses through classification, individualism, structuralism and estimation. These signs comprise the basis of human behaviours, bonds and identification with a city. In other words, the image of a city is a model of a world resulting from experiences and cultural conditions of human collectivity (Rembowska, 2004: 22). Understanding this hidden code, code of its social space, requires the presence of some metaphysics of respective *loci communes (tópos koinós)*, the spirituality of a city, the spheres of *sacrum* and *profanum* (Madurowicz, 2002b).

As well as traditional cities, big modern metropolises also create an image of the world of their era (world-image, not the landscape – cf. T. Sławek in this volume). The problem is that their space in many cases remains anonymous, and thus deprived of a metaphysical code. As K. Rembowska believes (2004: 24), in terms of functionality, metropolises are perfectly designed; very often, however, seem strangely lifeless, indifferent, do not create any sense of community, spiritual space, a territory where one would like to put down their roots.

One of the characteristic features of architectural plans of old, historic cities (at least in the domain of Western culture) was a clearly marked city centre. As argued by Roland Barthes (1999), a city centre was always the cultural heart of a city, a foundation for its identity, identification, a place of social truth, a sacred area. A city without its centre was not a proper city, for it lacked organization and philosophical orientation. It was in the city centre (at agora, meeting square surrounded by public buildings, in the presence of people, gods and heroes – a social space of a city), where crucial decisions were taken and human fate was decided. A modern metropolis does not usually include a centre understood as a mix of a material – spiritual and social – individual matter. According to K. Rembowska (2004: 26-27), in modern metropolitan city plans there is no room for agora. The place which could be called 'the centre' is trivialized and becomes purely commercial (Wallis, 1979; Winiarska, 2013: 212). Instead of hitherto "centre", sacred space (which, in its original notion, did not refer to everyday use) there comes *city* – a city centre, a specialized centre for power with no authority, and which is dominated by corporation skyscrapers and bank gigantism. In the area of *city*, the authorities' loyalty towards the society, and people's respect towards the authorities have their foundations not in an ethical but solely in an economic aspect. For K. Nawratek (2012: 11-42) an example of such places can be e.g. Dubai, Las Vegas, Sao Paulo, Wolfsburg, etc. – in fact products, city-like structures, or even anti-cities.

It appears that present-day cities lack not only a city centre, but also clarity of such a place as a square. In Jedrzejczyk's view (2004: 47), a square, in XIX century perceived as a representative and unforgettable place, nowadays often becomes an ordinary car park. A commercialization of municipal space of this sort affects not only the square, but also structures such as streets or quarters. The city is deprived of its distinctive features. According to the author cited above, such actions act against the existential space of a human being and therefore lead to humanistic and anthropological deterioration of a city. A postmodern-era city becomes a metropolis-labyrinth, in which a human being – *homo metropolitanus* – exists and takes actions, but loses the sense of their existence in the tangle of streets, institutions, etc. (Jedzejczyk, 2004: 52).

Trivialisation of a city or even its gradual disappearance as a significant place leads to, according to K. Rembowska (2004: 28-29), a vision of a city as a symbol of consumerism era. It turns out that in a modern society its most wanted member is not an employee or a citizen (gr. *politēs*), but a rich user-consumer (*homo consumens*), whose comfort zone is found in a supermarket. The philosophy of consumerism is reflected in shop windows, displays, neon sign boards, advertisements, billboards. All of these make a metropolis "a temple of consumerism", in which human relations referring to solidarity, compassion, loyalty, etc. are substituted by formalized social benefits based on government financial support. From this metropolis, the social space seen as an area of social discourse "flies away" and the number of shopping centres, entertainment centres, stadiums, fast food restaurants, amusement arcades and petrol stations increases significantly. Although it is true to say that people

indeed gather in great numbers in such places, they become a crowd of anonymous consumers rather than citizens concerned with their little motherland.

Fortunately – in Rembowska's view – globalisation and consumerism of modern culture are able to cause the society to counter-act by defending and promoting local and regional culture. It is hoped that thanks to such actions historically important places and unique, unusual places will not vanish from the metropolis landscape. Therefore, a social space – a generator of a social thought – will not vanish either.

SUMMARY

The presented image of post-industrial human being's culture seems to be pessimistic. However, in my view, it is a draft of new culture, which shows areas of opportunities and threats faced by a contemporary human being. In fact, researchers have noted a few dangerous trends in the field of our civilisation. It is also a fact that we witness the emergence of a new type of culture – culture which is supposed to meet human's needs; culture, which sometimes prompts fear, but also shows the scale of dynamism of contemporary generations. The presented image of social space is not pessimistic as a matter of fact. It is an image which already reveals the scale of problems and tasks to be faced by a contemporary human, because the construction of social space has not finished. Paradoxically, it has already been shaped by past generations and simultaneously has been undergoing changes influenced by current human actions. The cultural landscape has not completed the process of changes either. Undoubtedly, its reflection is marked by all changes occurring in the social space. The future and the shape of the new social space (and thus the cultural landscape) are difficult to foresee. It will depend on not only great civilisation trends, but first and foremost on personal involvement of individuals. The passiveness of individuals, entanglement in consumerism, etc. can lead to social collapse and replacement of *civitas* by various kinds of totalitarianism. Social activity, on the other hand provides an opportunity for identifying threats, overcoming problems and multidirectional development.

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