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**Karel Pstrušina: Civilization versus Culture in the Light of Electronic
Networking**

Abstract:

By Civilization I mean all form improvement of our everyday life. Civilization is a growth of safety and dignity of man. Civilization means that mankind dispose by the tools for better comfort and familiarity of environment. On the contrary, culture is a sorrow for a soul. It is a fear about a level of spiritual life, culture is disquietness, alarmation from comfortable life. Culture needs a tangled structure of emotion and it is culture that can help to the process of development of emotion. I think we need both, civilization and culture and we need both in very balance measure.

The task of philosophers working on electronic networks are both to prevent of abuse of electronic networking and to create coherent culture where everybody is contributors with his or her own opinion and with respect to the opinion of another.

Keywords: Civilization, Culture, Networking, Philosophy

From time to time I play a chess with my computer and I resign often because I have erred. My feelings are - disappointment, ill-humor and misunderstanding how is it possible that couple of chips and wires (or what are in) can be better to me, how it can be better to man? And involuntary one question is emerging all the time: will we have any chances in the future making so many mistakes? Of course, sometimes I win and I can read - You won, congratulation - and nothing more. I cannot see any disappointment or bit of hard thinking about the main mistake, those human concomitant circumstances at every such situation.

I have read that a chaos in our brains is perhaps "chief property that makes the brain different from an artificial-intelligence machine" (W.J. Freeman: The Physiology of perception. In: Scientific American 2/1991, p.85) and I have been proud of the chaos in my brain because it is something special. But in fact, does exist any reason for us to be proud? Are our brain's chaos impulses, or our sexappeal, or REM-sleep, if I may bring out at least three peculiarities, so outstanding that we have got ensurancy for our being?

Who can give the answer - YES and who can tell - NO? I have not a fear of next computer's development but I am afraid that our inner nature is insufficient germane to the dynamism of evolution.

The topic of my contribution is Civilization versus Culture in the Light of Electronic Networking and therefore I must explain what I mean by Civilization and What I mean when I am speaking about Culture. It was not long ago when I took stock together with my 95-years old uncle. He has experienced during his life perhaps all what was possible: An electricity and bulbs, Radio, TV, his first car, buses, trains, an undergrounds, airplane's travelling, space rockets, satellites for communication, satellites for a weather monitoring, the first man on the moon, radars, sleep's pills, headache's pills, penicillin, the third set of teeth, transplantation of hearts, transplantation of kidneys and of an eye's cornea, two world's wars, hunger and garbage cramed by food, escalators, elevators, gas fittings, plastic bags, plastic money, even children who are conceived in vitro and genetical improvement of plants and animals digital wrist watch, traffic signs, boom in books production, CD disks, mass education, mass culture, mass consumption, mass mediation of information, concentration camps, Hiroshima's bomb, drugs, swing and rock and roll, nationalism, fascism, socialism and democracy, Austrian's Emperor, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt and Havel, and computers, robots instead of workers, and electronic networking. .. I will not enumerate more.

These things have not impinged only on my uncle but on all of us. Some of them stronger, some of them weaker. Each of these things intervenes in our everyday's life. As for example anti-baby pills do. It is only pill and how profoundly it changes our historical approach to sexuality and family. We take care of these problems seemingly easy, we press buttons of slot machines, we open cans, but we cannot tell that our reactions are not hysterical, that they are without fear and anxiety.

There are really many new phenomenas, that are changing our natural and social environment. They are the products of our Techno-Reason that is a base for development of Civilization. But the question is: Do we have also so many means for development Culture? I think that development of Civilization and development of Culture is not in harmony. By Civilization I mean all form improvement of our everyday's life. Civilization is a growth of safety and dignity of man. Civilization improves a healthy and education. Civilization means that mankind dispose by the tools for better comfort and familiarity of environment. But civilization leads the man to avoiding a pain, a suffering and looking for saturation, happiness and passion. Modern man in the realm of civilization is roaming man. He or she takes a new things, uses that and he or she throw away old things and forgot on them immediately. Civilization is founded by application of scientific results in our everyday's life.

On the contrary, culture is a sorrow for a soul. It is a fear about a level of spiritual life, it is anxiety that our minds fall asleep. Our minds are beaten by comfort in everyday's life and the postmodern man is very near to lazy animals in ZOO because all things are prepared for our using. Therefore he or she must be injected, goaded by culture. Culture is disquietness, alarmation from comfortable life. Culture hides something in symbolic form and forces us to discovering of that. In this way culture tunes up us for acceptance of covert report and therefore we can tell that culture is inspiration of mind to the creativity. Culture needs a tangled structure of emotion and it is culture that can help to the process of development of emotion.

Prof M.W. Allen on the end of his research with people who have specifically damage of brain wrote: "Emotion may well be the support system without which the edifice of reason cannot function properly and may collapse. Culture harmonizes us. It is a compass on man's way through history. Culture teaches us what the human deal is. Culture prepares us for something transcendental. I think we need both, civilization and culture and we need both in

very balance measure. It is, for my opinion, only one perspective for today's man. If civilization prevail over culture than it could lead to some form of alienation or to such form of society where the individuals are very specialized and dependent on the social order. If culture prevail over civilization than we afraid all form of despotism or scholastic type of society, where some ideology is dominant. All totalitarian regims start with anxiety about a level of our cultural life. When we look at the role of networks in contemporary world with schismatic fight between civilization and culture we have to sort out electronic networks to the order of civilization. Electronic networks enable communication, enable a rapid exchange of informations etc. All results of electronic networks leads to protection of civilization and to comfortable life that is without life experience of the real world.

But the question is: How can the electronic networks involve the culture into processes of civilization. I think it is not only chance but also task for people who are working on electronic networks.

Virtual reality is only one of possibilities. Development of fancy is at every time very needed and the world of virtual reality offers great development of fantasy. But I expect more from the active interaction on electronic networks. An interaction bares the man, it tears out him or her from the peace of mind because he or she must express his or her opinion on the world or things. The man knows that his opinion will return with the sign plus or minus. If we express our opinion in dialog we learn always something about ourselves and from time to time it could be painful. To enumerate possibilities of electronic networking for the development of culture in positive sense is very difficult. Perhaps you allow me to name at least some dangers.

One of the great danger is that the electronic network changes to the form of mass-media. There is not doubt about the fact that mass-media have a massive influence on our everyday's life. The crucial moment is the way of stimulation of people by mass-media. I think contemporary mass-media represents the world by the means of head-lines and in maximum 3 minutes commentaries. Mass-media forces us for swallowing all reports without meditation on them. Mass-media pre-prepares our opinion for all situations and we are pre-prepared for acceptance of opinions that are finished and do not for creation of opinions. It is a great danger that threaten to contemporary culture. If the electronic networks will involve at this way than they would support processes of civilization.

Second great danger consist in such development of culture that will be hedonic culture. One day I came at home and I looked at TV screen, the sound was switch off. On the TV screen were joyful people with flags, they were dancing for joy and singing. I asked myself - why? What did the reports enable such joy? I thought it could be that somebody discover the new cancer's medicin, or AIDS medicine, or some scientist gave announcement about new source of energy, etc. I was glad also. Then I switch on the sound and I found out that the people on TV screen were the fans of some football's team that won some stupid match. Did the values change or is it such press of civilization and a new form of clip's culture on all of us that we do not differ among the values? The hedonic culture is one-dimensional culture. Such culture attacks our instincts by offering sexual and aggressive indulgences. The contemporary culture changes its direction. The vertical or transcendental orientation (with contrapuncts) was changed beyond horizontal or serial orientation, where the time and not values is only one sovereign power. The man in this culture is captured to the web of gratification and does not prepared for independency and self-creation as a person.

The man who lived in the time of Pericleus had had a pillar in mystical voices, he has been in copula with Gods and prophecy. Similarly middle age's man has been in copula with the God. The God has been present at every step of man. The copula of life has been stable. The man in the post-modern world is under the press of contradictions what he is longing for and what he is doing. Post-modern man has lost the pillars of his life and he must create new ones from the values of civilization and culture and therefore civilization and culture must be very balance. I should one more remarked that I have not anything against civilization and I am prefering culture. I only plead for balance between civilization and culture. What is the today's task of philosophers who are working on electronic networks?

There are two tasks:

For my opinion firs task of philosophers is to show, where the balance between civilization and culture is disturbed. The world is topsy - turvy. The world is performed by the wrong side out and philosophers must to turn the world by other way round. It is really Hamlet's task.

Hamlet says:

There are more things in heaven and erthe, Horatio Than are dream of in your philosophy The time is out of joint; - í cursed spite That ever I was born to set it right! The Denmark is a prison at this Shakespeare's play. The murderer - the king of Denmark - and Hamlet are on opposide side of bars. The murderer is free and people of Denmark are in prison. Hamlet's task is turn round the world in such way that murderer will be punished and the people will be free. We must to do what Hamlet has done. I think you remember the scene when actors plyed on Elsinor the drama "The murder of Gonzago" and where hamlet added several lines. Hamlet did not look at the stage but into auditorium. He has watched something what could confirme his conjuctures, how his father was murdered, how the world is. I suppose, philosophers does not have to look at the performance of the world but they must look for something what is hidden and must discovered all dangers including the danger of abuse of electronic networks that threaten to normal way of development of civilization and culture. Second task of philosopher I should like introduce by David Bohm thought. David Bohm at his Prague's lecture "Science, Spirituality and contemporary Crisis of Mankind" gave the question: "How does the coherent culture can arise?" And his answer was - we have to begin with dialog but not dialog for solution of any problems but only for communication. All participants will expresed their opinion on the meaning of differ things in such dialog, nothing more. It could be only small group of people that will be on start line and similarly to Prigogin's conception of disipative structure, from this kernel can emerge a new coherent culture. Philosophers must contribute to the arising of new and coherent culture.

If Bohm's thought is correct then the electronic networking is ideal tools for realization of such dialog. To be in dialog it means to be open to the world . Nobody gains victory over other people. It is new idea that won. Socrates many times spoke he is not wise he only give birth to wise ideas like his mather (midwife) has helped childbirth. Socrates is dead but the dialog on electronic networks is live and it could give birth new and coherent culture.

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