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## **Berdiaev about the Faustic Fate of Culture**

“We have exhausted the evangetic field and we entered into the apocalyptic sphere” - will note Berdiaev in his work “The Irregularity Philosophy” (1923), expressing the ideas of an entire align of Russian philosophers and theologians, Rozanov (Russian Church, The Apocalypse of Our Time), Merejkovski, (Bolnaia Rossia), Florenski (Stolp I utverjdenie istmi), Shestov (Dostoievski i Nietzche, Apofeoz bespocivennoski) etc. We will assert that all reminded thinkers identified the new type as eschatological.

In “The Faust’s Thoughts Before Death” Berdiaev evokes Faust’s fate, that is itself the faith of the European culture. Faust’s soul is the soul of the western Europe, that insistently searched the truth and allied with Mefistofel, and then to be gradually absorbed, eaten, by the Mephistophelian beginning.

The moor’s rye, writes Berdiaev, it is a symbol of Faust’s spiritual journey, of his spiritual decay. The pass from culture, in essence religious, to the civilization devoided of God, takes place; civilization that frets Faust’s creative energy. All Faust’s hopes and his raising are dieing. Goethe, says Berdiaev, expressed the western culture soul and fate. In “The Faust’s Thoughts Before Death”, the Russian philosopher does not make reference to Spengler’s book “Occidental Decay”.

Practically, the berdiavian analysis, of sixteen pages, is entire dedicated to Spengler’s “Occidental Decay”. What is the “Occidental Decay”? According to Spengler - the western culture crisis stands in the values’ reverse. A culture’s decay appears through a crisis of the created values.

The Occident did not lose it’s big problems, it lost in details.

For Spengler, a civilization is “a culture’s imminent decay”.

For Berdiaev, civilization, in the german sense, or *Materialinaia Kulitura*, is, by it’s nature, technical. Unlike the culture, the Russian philosopher specifies, civilization does not have a natural spiritual basis,

but a mechanic one. In civilization, the specialization principles win, the culture's spiritual integrity does not exist, the civilization is futurist, says Berdiaev. In civilization life is from inside to outside. The civilization is odd, "bourgeois", by its nature, in the most abstruse spiritual sense. The middle-class character means the civilized kingdom of this world, the organizing will of organized power and life pleasure. The bourgeois character means chain to what is transient, means hate towards what is immortal.

The European and American civilization, the most developed civilization in the world, created the capitalist industrial system. This system not only has known the biggest economical development, but also was an anti-spiritual phenomena, a phenomena of destroying the capitalist industrial spirituality of the civilization, of sacral things destruction. The new times' civilization killed God, she was the most unfaithful. For these reasons Berdiaev considers that the civilization is powerless to realize her dream of being the universal power. That is also because culture has soul, and civilization has only methods and tools.

In "The Sense of History", in "The Wish of Life and the Wish of Culture" chapter, Berdiaev appreciates the outstanding success of Oswald Spengler's book about the European decay and finds the explanation of this success- the german philosopher stressed upon the problem of human destiny in front of the civilized human conscience. Oswald Spengler recognized in the "Occidental Decay" that civilization in the lethal destiny of every culture.

It is an appropriate theme of Russian judgement and philosophy. And Russian thinkers were conscious, writes Berdiaev, of the difference between the type of culture and of civilization, and related this interaction theme between Russia and Europe. The entire slavophile conscience was not imbued of spell for the European culture but for the European civilization, in the thesis according to which "the Occident is in putrefaction" - means exactly the fact that the great European culture dies and triumphs the European civilization, without soul and without God. In fact, the fight between Russia and Europe between Orient and the Occident is, according to Berdiaev, the fight of the religious culture with the unfaithful civilization.

They wanted to believe that Russia will follow on the civilization path, that she has her own way, her proper destiny, that only in Russia is still possible a culture based on religion, an authentic spiritual culture.

The occidental preference for passed cultural centuries or for the eastern exotic cultures means the revolt of the spirit against a definite passing of culture in civilization. This revolt appears however in a smooth, declining and weak spirit. That is why the late culture men, in decay, notices Berdiaev, are helpless in passing from the close nothingness of the civilization to the eternal entity. They save their souls by their retreat in the world of the far past or in the world of the traditional cultures from East.

The culture does not endlessly develop, states with regret the Russian philosopher; she carries within herself the death seed.. Civilization, believes Berdiaev, means the death of the cultural spirit and the appearance of a totally another being or nothingness. Or, Spengler does not offer anything, says Berdiaev, to fulfill the sense of such an original historical phenomena.

In any culture, after bloom, complexity and distinction, begins an exhaust of the creative forces, an elimination, a calm of the spirit, a spirit deficiency. Culture modifies it's direction. This way, culture heads to the bloom of power, to a practical organizing of life, that Berdiaev sees in the life itself-with it's force and pleasures. The bloom of the arts stops, the meditation state of the holy and the genius-real life does not inspire anymore.

This stressed will for life destroys culture, bringing with it the death of culture. It occurs the "cultural dusk", when the desire to live and to organize life is huge.

Or, a cultural bloom century supposes the limitation of the will of living (we speak about the culture crisis, about a subculture full of crassitude !). We believe that these problems are associated with the hunger for life, about which Berdiaev was speaking at the beginning of the XX century. When the hunger for life spreads massively, the spiritual culture quits to sustain herself of the aristocratic culture, always qualitative and not quantitative. The custom is fixed on life itself, in it's happiness. The culture is not appreciated and the will of culture dies, it is lost. It does not exist the will of genius anymore, there are no more geniuses. The contemplation is not desired anymore, as well as the knowledge and the creation without any interest. In such conditions, *culture can not maintain itself high anymore, it splits and decline.*

Culture does not mean a new life accomplishment, of a new entity, it means the fulfill of new values. Yet, civilization tries to accomplish the life. Everything is technical, the great art disappears as

well as the great romantics. In this consists the culture and civilized tradition tragedy.

The will of the power of life destroys the personality, not only the culture, concludes Berdiaev. The human being dries, alters, gets poisoned, abandoned only to this class of pleasures. This will also say the most original English writer of the XIX-th century, Samuel Butler.

The pass of the culture in civilization it's associated with the entirely change of the relationship between men and nature. Civilization killed God. Civilization is powerless when it comes to accomplish her dream of universal power. But civilization is not the only way of passing to culture. There also exists the life's religious transfiguration way (among barbarism, culture, civilization, religious transfiguration), proper to Russia.

Russia was a mysterious country, misunderstood, country where the burning dream of religious transfiguration was hiding. The Russians started to live the cultural crisis without knowing the culture until the end, but, they always had a complaint concerning culture, a lack of will to create a medium culture, to maintain at this level of the medium culture.

Berdiaev considered Alexander's and Puskin's era, the apogee of the Russian culture.

The great Russian literature and the philosophers thinkers of the XIX century do not mean culture, we meet the longing for life, for religious transfiguration.

The culture tradition is weak at Russians, that is why the Russian conscience understood with more acuity the culture's crisis that did the Occident. But, as all the nations of the world, Russians are condemned to cover the civilization way.

Russians will never be chained by the culture symbolism and by the pragmatism of the civilization, as the Occident was; Russia must pass through a great atonement and will of purification.

Concerned about the problem of time and of eternity, about the Jewry fate, about the end of Renaissance and the Humanism crisis, Berdiaev remains permanently interested in the history of Russia.

Speaking about the ending of Renaissance, the author notices the completely special position of Russia within this process. Russia did not properly pass through Renaissance, and in this consists the Russian historic (and cultural) destiny originality; because they did never feel the joy of the Renaissance, Russians never had the enthusiasm of the Humanism (from here, maybe, the barbarity and the asperity); Russians

did not know the joy that offers the creation force excess free play; of that Russian culture does not have anything from the joy spirit of the Renaissance and of the Humanism; we, says Berdiaev, created with acrimony and sufferance; the Russian literature, the main proud of the Russian culture and the main way of Russian influence to the West and even to the whole world, the biggest Russian creation, does not have Renascentist spirit because: at the foundation of the great literature was the great affliction, the hunger of world's sins redemption and of liberation; the character of the Gogolian work is sad and agonizing, and Dostoievsky's and Tolstoi's work are neither Humanist nor Renascentist; Russians did never have the joy of the fulfill of creation.

The entire Russian thinking character, of Russian philosophy, of Russian persuasion, the seal of something painful. Opposite to the joy spirit of Renaissance, the Russian philosophic thinking is Apocalyptical.

The religious Russian thinkers as Dostoevski and Leontiev (in The East, Russia and Slavophiles), did not deny the great culture of the Occidental Europe, but they it, even more than the contemporary European. They have denied the contemporary European civilization, the bourgeois spirit; they exposed the betrayal of the great traditions of the old European culture.

Through the enigmatic metaphor, the collocation "the land of the holy miracles" (A.C. Homiakov), names the Occident in the poem *The Dream* (1834). At the Russian poet, in fact the main ideologist of the Slavophil, that Russia had until Petru I- the main theme is the regret for the far Occident, that lost from it's long-standing majesty. The poem ends with the call "Look alive, sleeping Orient" (Dostoievsky, 4 /751).

The same ideas about Europe we also find at Ivan Karamazov, who spends his summers in Europe, kisses the stones and cries above them; it also repeats in "The Journal of the Writer" ; "Europe - what a holy and great thing, Europe!", exclaims Dostoievsky, - Europe - "The land of holy miracles!"

Do you know how dear are to us these miracles, and how much we love and respect them, more that we love and respect our brothers, those great nations that populate it, and all that is majestic and wonderful made by them.

You, Europeans and occidentals, never loved Europe like we did, the scavophil dreamers, considered by you the traditional enemies"- finishes Dostoievsky.

Such thoughts about Europe do not express neither the slavophiles nor the occidentals, representing the two philosophic and cultural trends from the '30's –XIX-th century and the beginning of the XX century. Dostoevsky's relationship with Europe attests that the Russian is an universal man the freest man in the world.

Versilov from the roman *Podrostok (The Adolescent)* says: "We are free people and they, the Europeans, are not. At that time, with the entire Europe, I, with my Russian melancholy, was the single free man (...). When I think about France, I feel French, between Germans I feel German, when I get in touch with the old Greek civilization, I feel Greek and just then I am more Russian than ever, because I become the exponent of the fundamental principle of Russian thinking (...). A Russian cares about Europe as he cares about Russia, each stone from there is precious for him and appreciates it. Europe has always been our nation, as well as Russia, or even more! Alone, Russia does not live for herself, but for an ideal and for almost a hundred years Russia puts Europe's interests above hers".

Although Russians love Europe in a way that even the Europeans can't love, Russia remains for Europe a stranger, among *the others*. About this phenomena, little misunderstood, was writing Nikolai Iakoveevici Danielevski in "Russia and Europe", in 1869: "Europe does not consider us hers. She sees in Russia and in slaves...something that she can not use as material from which she could get something useful. No matter how loose and mild the outer layer is, brown and transformed in loam, Europe understands that under this cover is a hard, strong center that can not be pounded, milled or dissolved. Therefore, by any means, this center has to be blocked from developing and growing, because Europe can not admit an influence of a stranger world, that is hostile and barbarian" - concludes Danielevki.

The antagonism between Russia and Europe, believes Danielevski, is a "tremendous objective historical process within which the problem can be solved, the slav entity has to remain a pathetic stem of Europe, or, in his turn, can become a superposition that leaves its stamp on an entire historical period".

Only Ialta and Postdam changed the situation, and for 50 years made U.R.S.S. an influence area for the Oriental Europe, fact that was noticed by Toynbee: "For the first time in a thousand years the Occident felt towards him the Russian pressure, that Russia felt from the Occident as the centuries go by."

For the culture the man essence to be in the world for a time, starts with the spiritual crisis, cosmic and sacral. The boarding of the modern world crisis from a perspective of the culture crisis helps us to understand that the way to the holy lays in the sacrifice power, in the experience of the pulverization feeling and atoning of the human being, until the *redemption through culture*.

The human spirit, through the consciousness of his creative mission (so, of the divine nature), can understand the true sense of existence, can recover himself, returning to the essences.

Many philosophers, concerned about the culture crisis problem, noticed that the civilization generates a “cultural abortion”. Here we meet the phenomena of “willing to live”, a too stressed will for the life. (Berdiaev), that destroys the culture, brings “cultural dusk”.

The human being can recover, can cure. The cure come from and through culture, through a reconciliation of the man with himself, through a sublimation of the human being to the cultural act.

The culture helps us tolerate the life and helps us to give up at the agonizing search of happiness “in a world in which the death, the nothingness, the sadness and the despair form a lugubrious chorus, that makes impossible the efforts of hearing sublime and metaphysical songs”.