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Diagnosis of the crisis of contemporary culture and ways to overcome it in the thought of Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

The paper presents a diagnosis of the crisis of contemporary culture and ways to overcome it based on the work of contemporary German philosopher Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz. The purpose of the paper was, first, to show the roots and sources of the contemporary crisis of culture that we find in the philosophy of Gerl-Falkovitz. Secondly, to indicate the possibilities of overcoming this crisis considering the proposals given in the thought of the German philosopher. The main role was played, among others, by phenomenological anthropology including the concepts of *spirited-body* [*Leib*] and *physical-body* [*Körper*]. Also important were the terms *incarnation* and *decarnation*, which are crucial to understanding Gerl-Falkovitz's work.

Gerl-Falkovitz's philosophical reflections – especially in recent years – reach deeper and deeper into the cultural life of modern man. She sees a dramatically accelerating and deepening process of the decarnification of human being [*Sein*] and the related – equally dangerous – phenomenon of the “forgetting” of the *spirited-body* [*Leib*]. The German philosopher stresses that at the root of the contemporary crisis of culture lies a profound anthropological crisis. Therefore, the thinker strongly postulates that today we urgently need to lean into the problem of proper anthropology. One on the basis of which it will be possible to take care of a mature and fully becoming-human. One that will be a positive response to the various, harmful proposals for capturing human existence promoted, for example, by contemporary currents of gender ideology, transhumanism or “Biodizee”. The anthropology of the *spirited-body* [*Leib*] developed by Gerl-Falkovitz can certainly constitute such a proposal. In it, the thinker seeks to embrace the human being fully, in his material-spiritual complexity, in his relationship to God and other people, in his vocation *to-become-human* to the fullest.

The work consists of three separate, closely related chapters. The first chapter, entitled *Sources of the Thought of Hanna Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz*, is intended to provide the foundation for the next two chapters. It provides an introduction and an in-depth look into the unknown

and scientifically undeveloped philosophy of the German thinker. We will begin this chapter by providing a brief biographical and scientific sketch of Gerl-Falkovitz. This seems necessary due to the fact that her person and work is rather little known in the Polish scientific world. We want to present the most important - from the perspective of the research we are undertaking - events and facts related to her personal and scientific life space. We will further lean into the sources that form the background of her philosophical thought. The first such source is phenomenology. The German philosopher looks at man and reality through its prism. A significant influence on Gerl-Falkovitz's anthropology - which we will lean on next - is the phenomenological anthropology of Edith Stein. Under her influence, she forms her own proposal of anthropology. Later in the first chapter, I want to refer to Romano Guardini's theory of opposites. Next to Edith Stein, this is a very close and important thinker for Gerl-Falkovitz. In the last paragraph, we are going to lean into the philosophical reflection contained in her writings on the subject of God and religion. Here she draws primarily from Christian tradition and philosophy - Catholic.

In the first chapter of the dissertation, we want to draw attention to two key terms that we will use in the work: “incarnational culture” and “decarnational culture.” The first type of culture denotes the place of integral human development, the second the space of his personal, moral and existential decline. “Decarnational culture” is the space where the process of degradation of our humanity takes place. On the other hand, the fundamental premise of “incarnational culture” is the idea of the given and given nature of man and his close relationship at the metaphysical level to God. Gerl-Falkovitz believes that it is only in light of the truth that through incarnation God assumed human nature, became-human, that we can discover the full truth about ourselves. The truth about our metaphysical origins, about what is the meaning and purpose of our lives.

In the second chapter of the work, entitled *Decarnation Culture – the dehumanization of man*, we want to present Gerl-Falkovitz's diagnosis of the crisis of contemporary culture. The analysis of the state of culture she makes from the perspective of the anthropology she has developed, and in which she shows how serious and deep is the crisis we are facing. The German thinker firmly emphasizes that the cultural crisis we are dealing with today is an extremely dangerous and widespread phenomenon, affecting the deepest layers of human existence. In her philosophy, we can distinguish three fundamental spaces, the sources of the crisis of modern culture. These are: gender ideology, the ideology of transhumanism and “Biodizee”.

Gender ideology leads to the gradual disintegration of personal and gender identity, the separation of nature from the person, and the reevaluation of ethical norms and principles. Its influence on the shape of human life today is extremely wide. The second dangerous philosophical and cultural phenomenon - associated with the almost rapid development of virtual reality and cyber-technology - is transhumanism. Transhumanists want to create a completely new “trans-man.” One that will be free from existing limitations: suffering, sorrow, pain and even death. The German philosopher warns against the utopian transhumanist vision of “post-humanity.” Before the hard-to-predict consequences of interference with human nature. The third phenomenon destroying culture and man that Gerl-Falkovitz points to is “Biodizee”. After man has negated the existence of God, it is no longer He who is “blamed” for the existence of evil in the world. Existence itself, human life, is indicted. Life being the source of all suffering.

In the third part of the work, entitled *Incarnational Culture - Becoming-Man*, we intend to point out the ways to overcome the outlined crisis of culture that Gerl-Falkovitz proposes to us. Here we find three essential elements of incarnational culture, which are essentially one way: the philosophy of “becoming-human,” the anthropology of gender, and the philosophy of guilt and forgiveness. Within the framework of the philosophy of “becoming-ness,” the thinker distinguishes three “life-tensions”: from “I” to “I”; from “I” to “You”; and from “I” to “Up”. On the correct course of these relations-tensions, depends the correct development of man, and consequently the culture he creates.

Reflections on the anthropology of gender occupy an extremely important place in Gerl-Falkovitz's thought. In her view, sexuality is a fundamental dimension of human existence, “being-for-self” and “being-in-the-world.” The German philosopher emphasizes that man is not just a man, he is male or female. Our spirited-body [*Leib*] is masculine or feminine. By nature, gender identity is a fundamental and unchangeable part of our metaphysical structure. He argues that it is impossible to overcome the crisis of culture without building the foundations of its world on the basis of a correct anthropology of gender.

The third area identified by Gerl-Falkovitz, relevant to overcoming cultural decline, is related to the philosophy of guilt and forgiveness. Closely related to the issue of guilt is the issue of forgiveness. According to Gerl-Falkovitz, forgiveness is a very important – if not the most important – act, allowing for the inner integral development of man – the reintegration of today's shattered humanity. A man burdened with guilt needs forgiveness. The German thinker points out that human forgiveness alone is not sufficient here. It is always an act of forgiveness of “guilty to guilty”. Therefore, she makes us realize that there is a greater and more perfect act

of forgiveness than that which can be given by man to man. Full, absolute forgiveness can only be done by the One who is without any fault – God.

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