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Ladies and Gentlemen,

thinking is the fundamental function of human mind. The process of thinking takes place in the brain and consists in associations, using memory, using certain store of information and on this basis formulating conclusions, which not infrequently may turn out to be illusory or false. Reflection and dialogue are connected with the process of thinking too. Some people believe that man's intelligence is a measure of thinking. We also differentiate certain mental categories such as: positive and negative, creative, strategic, inductive, deductive, abstract, logical and many more. These categories depend on the subject which "processes" the mind in the process of thinking as well as their usefulness. It is Descartes himself who at the beginning of the 17th century in the famous statement: *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) attributes the fundamental function to this human ability, since it is directly connected with his consciousness and being.

In this issue of "The Horizons of Education" we deal with "the strengths and weaknesses of thinking". The title formulated in this way does not signify the quantitative character of thinking, we rather wanted to treat this problem in terms of quality. It is more about creative thinking, as a convention of positive rationality, and which ought to express the power of human mind. This ability and quality of human thinking plays the key role in social, political, scientific and educational life. For nobody needs to be made aware of the fact that every minute of the future depends on positive, logical and appropriate thinking. Decisions – the result of thinking – made wisely and with common interest taken into consideration, can make human life easier and happier.

Our thematic proposals of articles should introduce the Reader into the issues depicted above.

To begin with, Bogdan Szlachta discusses the need for thinking in a watershed. In this statement the author wants to draw attention to the fact that this "necessity" of thinking is connected with the attacks of the supporters of positivism on the existing normative order in political thought. And this, according to the author, requires constant critical reflection on the existence of a similar order negated by the so-called agonists, the supporters of radical democracy.

Then, Adam Workowski advances a thesis that “my thoughts” give power to thinking, but it is only these thoughts which meet two conditions: they are authentic and autonomous. Although the thoughts of fanatics and opportunists are stronger and more effective, thinking concerns liberating oneself from internal distortion in order to discover the true nature of the world and of oneself. It is about discovering the authentic “I” through “my thinking” and “my thoughts” which, as the author concludes, “have greater power than the world effectiveness”.

Radosław Rybkowski analyzes the history of the establishment and development of higher education in the United States. This country has perhaps the greatest number and the most prestigious universities in the world. The author presents two approaches in the development of the 19th-century history of American higher education: the focus on thinking in isolation from practice (*Yale Report*) and supporting practical and pragmatic use of knowledge (the *Land Grant Act*), which assumed the ultimate curricular form for universities at the end of the 20th century. Universities devote a lot of attention to broadening students’ knowledge, teaching them critical and creative thinking, not neglecting at the same time the practical dimension of preparation for profession. Undoubtedly, this system of education has a strong influence on the development of the USA economy and the position of American universities in the world.

Anna Sajdak, in turn, takes up the subject of educational tuning of creative thinking, that is consciously undertaken actions aimed at supporting and stimulating pupil’s abilities to think creatively. The author in her argument backs herself up with psychological concepts which support the creativity of thinking through the selection of appropriate tools for diagnosing human personality. Then, she presents the directions of educational actions which create appropriate environment conducive to and improving the creative activity of thinking. Finally, the author presents a few reflections on the subject of “the block on creative thinking”, that is all kinds of impediments to educational, creative thinking.

The article by Marek Walancik treats about the place of the mind and human thinking in the present time. The author notices that post-modernity is characterized by the negation of the science, the mind, driving out all values, morality and authorities. In this place we create a man who lives for the moment, whose life aim is to be rich, beautiful, always young and living for the

present, that is, one could say, a non-reflective man. However, the author does not finish with a rather catastrophic vision, since he clearly emphasizes that it is the mind that will not allow man “dry” morally, that will allow to restore the appropriate hierarchy of values, where the most important value will be the man, his rights and well-being.

Harald Schöndorf assesses the present time in a similar tone. He notices that admiration for technology, upsetting social structures through the alarming low number of births, the individualization of life, giving ecology a religious character and so on, and so forth, lead to the necessary reflection upon our future. Similar phenomena are being observed in the field of science which is seriously dependent on the financial resources, because of which it is made a “slave” to the utilitarian character of the world. Also philosophy did not manage to develop the non-antinomic thinking about freedom and the world of objects. Undoubtedly, Harald Schöndorf’s remarks encourage a deeper reflection upon the appropriateness of our thinking about life and the future.

The last article has a different character. Its subject concerns the discussion on the education of contemporary man in the achievements of “The Horizons of Education” to date. Agnieszka Wałęga delivered a lecture on this topic in Łódź in October this year during the conference *Periodical Press of the 19th and 20th Centuries as the Source for the History of Educational System and Education*. The author made a thorough and critical analysis of our achievements for which we express our gratitude. Since she did not do this at the request of the Editorial Team of “The Horizons of Education”, which proves the objective character of the accomplishment, we recognized that the assessment of our work presented in this way requires publication in our pages.

As announced in the previous issue, a book “The Horizons of Education in the Times of Transformation” came out in September. It is a 654 pages long collection of some articles which have appeared so far; they are arranged in thematic categories, leading in “The Horizons of Education”.

We encourage everyone to read it, wishing you a lot of beautiful reflections.

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