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Editorial

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reflecting on a possible positive dimension of loneliness in the context of creation, it is necessary to consider the ethical aspect. Being lonely should be understood as being separated, 'self being', without others or next to them. Why does an individual decide to be separated? A positive aspect of loneliness must be considered as a person's independent decision. Being lonely against one's will cannot be considered as a self-imposed act, as a positive dimension of loneliness. History, literature and religion provide numerous examples of creative and positive dimensions of loneliness, of being alone. However, loneliness in these examples means being lonely for a cause. Being lonely for a cause can be analysed within the ethical aspect. Sacrifice, devotion can also be considered here. On the other hand, contemporary transformations call for viewing loneliness from yet another perspective. Maybe it should be re-evaluated. Being lonely may not result from 'bad luck', wrong choices or a desire to sacrifice oneself, but from commonsensical calculations. I am alone because it is more convenient, more practical, it allows me to focus on my goals only. Modern societies do not require forming couples nor joining communities because one is a part of a huge web and may cooperate with others to obtain a particular aim without the necessity to abandon 'one's oneness', one's separation from others. Maybe such 'oneness' should be used as the term describing the contemporary world, in which being in a lasting relationship can be perceived as a nuisance, because it does not permit to form various co-operations in order to achieve various goals. The durability of being together, abandoning one's distinctiveness may be perceived as something more and more anachronistic. Even the traditional attitude to family life may undergo erosion. A futuristic vision of defining one's share in being together may become a frequent occurrence. For

example, who are full-time wives and husbands? Maybe, taking into account cultural and social transformations, it is necessary to redefine the identity of marriage, of being a wife, a husband or a parent.

'Oneness' in relation to a family life is only one aspect of transformations taking place nowadays. Loneliness can take various forms. New media, through which we get to know other people, can also become the source of alienation. Contacts obtained and maintained through them do not seem to be inconvenient in any way – one can always give them up. Zygmunt Bauman draws attention to a limited number of active relations, which does not exceed 150 persons. Thus, everyone can create his 'own primal village' with lively relations. This village is not geographically and spatially restricted, and its centre is 'me'. 'Oneness' will be the result of contemporary civilisation, in which relations are defined by subject's creation. Everyone can create their own village and their own ethical standards resulting from an adopted philosophy of life.

This issue of 'Horizons of Education' is devoted to multidimensional analysis of loneliness in the context of creation. Here the readers can find reflection on its psychological, philosophical, educational and semantic aspects. The issue opens with an article written by Beáta Balogová and Martin Lačný. It deals with loneliness in the positive context of contemporary person's social life and considers the meaning of life. The authors analyse experiencing difficult life situations resulting in post-traumatic stress. The experience of such stress offers to an individual a higher quality of life with greater resilience, the result of which is a new dimension of life, a new meaning of life.

The articles written by Wiesław Wójcik and Marek Rembierz also seem interesting: they focus on loneliness in intellectual activities, which require a lot of intellectual effort. Intellectual effort flourishes on loneliness, requires unlimited time, uses it up but gives joy in return. Loneliness of a creator, a genius can yield wonderful fruit.

Janusz Miąso discusses the issue of interpersonal communication in the context of loneliness. According to him, at the beginning there is no loneliness but intrapersonal communication, which transforms loneliness into a desire for interpersonal communication. Experiencing another human being leads back to one's inside, where one experiences, enriches and enhances a desire to turn to others becoming permanently more creative.

Marek Studenski writes about loneliness with reference to the life of priests and consecrated people. He believes that experiencing loneliness in a creative way is a chance but also a source of problems which might be difficult to overcome. Difficulties faced by priests or monks are often completely different from the ones imagined by those preparing for such life. The necessity to face situations which must be accepted and experienced after the formation period reveal the validity of the decision taken.

Bożena Sieradzka-Baziur analyses a semantic dimension of the concept of loneliness. She points at three thematic categories: social contacts, emotions and the number and quantity. Language users assign various, unlimited in number, language signs to those three categories. It results from the fact that languages are alive, they develop and undergo changes together with their users.

In her considerations on loneliness, Joanna Sztuka presents volunteering as an active form of adaptation to old age and the strategy of coping with this period of human life. She points at the fact that from a pedagogical perspective, the elderly can and should constitute an important link of the social capital.

Thematic considerations on loneliness in this issue of 'Horizons of Educations' end with the article written by Justyna Kusztal.

We strongly recommend those highly interesting reflections on creative aspects of loneliness. The authors from various academic centres in Poland and abroad have contributed material which is definitely worth thinking over. It should be noticed that loneliness is also closely connected with ethical considerations, as the essence of ethical struggle is to reveal the art of life.

Grzegorz Grzybek