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Summary of doctoral dissertation: *Reasons for the Fall of the Culture According to Richard Sennett*, written at the seminar on social philosophy and politics under the direction of prof. dr hab. UPJPII Joanna Mysona Byrska.

The main objective of this dissertation is to present the reasons which, according to Sennett, lead to the fall of the Western culture and to formulate conclusions that could provide remedy for this fall. Richard Sennett is a contemporary postmodernist and post-Marxist, American thinker who writes about the fall of the contemporary culture and shows the social, economical and political mechanisms leading to the fall. In Sennett's interpretation, the fall means also irreversible changes for the worse, departure from traditional forms and values. Among the most important changes are the loss of stability, flexibility, lack of interaction and concentration on the short-term.

The main research method used in the dissertation is the analytical and synthetic method. It was used, first and foremost, to reconstruct the philosophical thought of Sennett and secondly to present the conclusions from the texts analysis. The thesis was written based on Sennett's own texts as well as on the publications of other philosophers who inspired him to further research and with whom he argued against. The difficult part while writing this dissertation was the necessity to reconstruct Sennett's conception, as he did not create a coherent theory. The problems significant for the culture are presented in his works in a multi-perspective and a descriptive way.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography.

The first chapter outlines the concept of the culture in Richard Sennett's interpretation. The diagnosed fall of the culture is a result of forgetting by the contemporary society the values related to labor as the main culture-formative activity of a human being as well as the crisis of the traditional forms of public life based on constancy and cooperation. The point of reference for the thinker is Hannah Arendt's concept of *homo faber* and *animal laborans*. Sennett claims that a person working with consideration is always a creator of the culture, regardless of the outcome of this work. Culture in his understanding is a result of the following three human activities, i.e.: the labor, the creation and the action.

The second chapter concentrates on the concept of the new capitalism. This term is used by Sennett to describe a contemporary political, economical and cultural social order which exists in the circle of the Western culture. Sennett indicates the changes which led to the creation of the new capitalism and compares this system with Max Weber's social capitalism. In this chapter not only

the features of the system has been analysed but also an attempt of its assessment has been undertaken.

The next chapter focuses on the labor in the new capitalism. According to Sennett work is the basic and the most important culture-formative activity of a man. However, only professional work fulfils this purpose. The chapter demonstrates the reasons for the collapse of professional work and contains the analysis of labour market changes and the labor as well. Furthermore, it has been proved that only a person who understands his or her work can really be an expert and a conscious creator of culture. Lack of the sense of responsibility and the increasing level of instability have a negative influence on work. Finally, a new understanding of the concept of professionalism has been presented in the chapter as well.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation deals with the problem of the action, which is one of the essential culture-formative activities of a man. According to Sennett, action is related with the activity in the public life. Lack of activity in the public life should be equated with the fall of culture. The passivity of an individual in public life is a reason for fall of a public man and thereby the fall of a man as a creator of public, political and legal reality which is one of the elements of Western culture. The result is the fall of the culture in general. Three attitudes have been described in this chapter which, according to Sennett, are responsible for the fall of a public man and indirectly for the fall of the culture.

The last chapter contains an analysis of the concepts of cooperation and community considered by Sennett as significant in the process of creating and sustaining culture. Cooperation and community understood in an appropriate way can prove to be remedy for the fall of Western culture. The solution proposed by the philosopher, i.e. cooperation and community, seems to be a good idea, which could effectively fulfil its function. However, it is utopian in its nature, because Sennett expects social competence and social skills from the fallen public man who is deprived of these qualities.

The reasons for the fall of the culture identified by Sennett can be considered as accurate, but not as exhaustive. According to the thinker some of those reasons include: the changes related to work (flexibility, concentration on shortterm and instability), new capitalism with the dominance of the present, mobility and globalisation. Another one is the fall of a public man as a consequence of antisocial attitude on a mass scale. It should be underlined that Sennett omits the importance of religion in the process of creating and sustaining culture. In that way he seems to forget of the one of three pillars of the Western culture. This culture falls – undergoes significant changes, because Christian values are not cultivated enough in everyday life.

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