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In the book *Anxiety and Lucidity: Reflections on Culture in Times of Unrest*, Leszek Koczanowicz reflects upon the phenomena of fear and anxiety in essential areas of life, both for the individual and the community. He adopts an interdisciplinary perspective so characteristic of an insightful researcher of culture. Fear and anxiety, as he argues, are intrinsic to modernity – the inability to get rid of them is typical of modern man. Koczanowicz puts his thoughts on paper in a demanding fashion, which does not, however, obscure the pleasure of reading these well-written and intelligent texts. The author's knowledge is vast, which transpires in the reviewed publication.

The Covid-19 lockdown has led to a crisis in many, if not all, areas of social life. Lebenswelt – the lifeworld – has ceased to be familiar, with the standard social order seriously disturbed. Koczanowicz's book, although written before the pandemic, as one of the very few, is the most up-to-date in pandemic times. The category of fear, used as a narrative dominant in this collection of essays, enables tracing, along with the author, the phenomenon of fear in modern culture.

When reading Koczanowicz's book, it is worth asking yourself the following questions: Is it possible to return to the pre-pandemic world? Is a world without fear possible at all? What will the world emerging from the crisis look like? Are we able to imagine it? What will man be after the pandemic?

In the first essay, *Angor animi: Or, on the culture of anxiety*, Koczanowicz uses the medical context to problematize the perception of anxiety. Angor animi – i.e. fear in

the face of imminent death, is transferred by Koczanowicz into the areas of community, the lifeworld and social relations, thus combining them into the culture of fear.

Also, this essay alludes to Boltanski, who characterizes modern reality as distinctively ambivalent. This ambivalence is a source of anxiety that has never been equally intense and widespread (p. 13). On the one hand, man experiences the unpredictability of the everyday world. Still, on the other, he looks to the future with the hope that the relevant institutions will maintain the existing order, although... *the world as we knew it has come to an end, while the future is the beast in the jungle* (Koczanowicz 2020: 14). Striving to understand the everyday world or one's own circumstances in the ambivalence of this reality poses a challenge for modern hamartia – hamartia, which millions of people share. Both fear and uncertainty feature in the question: Is the world of everyday life the only reality? Is there some depth beneath the surface, or should one abandon the search for the hidden causes of the actions taken? For few, the answer could reside in the words of Wittgenstein from *Philosophical Investigations*: “Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: This is simply what I do” (Wittgenstein 2010: §217: ccv).

Hamartia as alienation or hamartia as a virtue? Searching for answers together with the author, we discover the phenomenon of being out of place (*Identity as a nuisance. Two genealogies of modern hamartia*). The experience of being out of place, misinterpretation of one's here and now or inaccurate recognition of the circumstances constitute the experience of many people today, which is in stark contrast to the category of hamartia in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Are we able to discover our own identity through hamartia as alienation or as a virtue? Can a person be in their own place? Autonomy, as well as perpetration and freedom, are key features of the subject nowadays. However, does the subject really possess them? Can the subject really hold the authorship of their own life? Does the subject not give up autonomy in many areas simultaneously, or does he allow others to decide whether he does not live entangled in social norms instead of being the causative person? Joining Koczanowicz in exploring the examples from Hobbes, Machiavelli, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Durkheim or Rousseau, we discover that the individual, instead of living their own lives, lives the lives of others. By living others' views and judgements, they remain alien to themselves.

Taking the role of the Other and being an external observer may be interpreted as a virtue. This approach to hamartia is pointed out by Koczanowicz, who quotes examples from the works by Kant, Smith, James, Mead or Rorty. According to Richard Rorty, being deprived of one's own place is the basis for the lack of a specific view of the world and thus lack of exclusion of those who have a different worldview. The place where Rorty's ironist operates is the sphere of private life. Her world is her own private world as she does not impose her reality and principles on others. Others possess a different reality and a dissimilar world. However, is the existence of a society of ironists possible?

Koczanowicz creates a unique narrative about communication by analyzing the content of a postcard. The postcard's message is challenging to grasp and becomes an emblem of the paradoxes of language and communication. Taken out of context, the meaning of the content of the postcard may be undermined. Tearing out of mem-

ory and lack of reference to a specific situation enables rereading the content, thus creating a new chain of connections between past events. These considerations have led me to reflect on whether and if so, to what extent the ambivalence of communication influences the perception of fear or increases the amount of fear in the everyday world? (*A gladioli postcard. Memory and communication*).

The memories of childhood in a spectral world is an essay in which Koczanowicz combines the philosophical discourse on Otherness and Strangeness. The encounters with the Other in the illusory world proved significant for the author. What is it like to grow up with the Other, besides the Stranger? Is it possible to communicate with the Stranger? One may attempt to share this experience with Koczanowicz. The author, himself brought up in a city of displaced people, tells the story of appropriating a place that is not his own, adapting and at the same time rejecting someone else's history and life. We live next to the Other, beside the Strangers, the Different, at times even together with the Other, the Stranger, the Different, and sometimes we ourselves are classified as Other, Stranger or Different. However, certain groups remain excluded from this multiplicity of cultures and worlds. What can be considered puzzling is the limited multiculturalism, i.e. multiculturalism excluding Strangers, and the diversity excluding the Diverse. Being simultaneously Different and Strange makes us present and absent from the community.

The author draws attention to the state of uncertainty in which the settlers of a multicultural city had to function. Today, this state of uncertainty accompanies all Others and Strangers: migrants, the elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, people of different skin colour or people who define themselves as LGBTQIA. Politics seems to play a special game with the migration crisis as well as economic, social and demographic crises. It controls the layers of fear present under the layer of social order, taking advantage of the uncertainty and fear of social groups. This approach has resulted in the exclusion of Others from many communities. Do pedagogy or sociology have an answer to this state of affairs? Sadly, no. They, in fact, contribute to perpetuating the culture of fear.

Post-communism and culture wars are essays that tackle the coexistence of culturally and politically different communities and two nations with disparate values and goals. Are any of them genuine? Will any of them usurp hegemony?

Are we able to abandon the vision of the uniqueness of the Polish nation and join an honest discussion about our country's standing in European or global culture? Wolff (1994) and Janowski (2008) point to the lack of uniqueness of Poland. This country is neither particularly persecuted nor chosen, a country that, in fact, does not stand out from other Eastern Europe countries in any way. Are we able to use the emancipatory character of the postcolonial theory for Polish history, free ourselves from myths imposed by the colonizers and our own national myths, overcome cultural limitations, free ourselves from fears of domination and loss of identity? However, recalling the discursive concept of Laclau and Mouffe's politics, will referring to Polish history and its uniqueness, with the idea of the nation as an *empty signifier*, not provide a *hegemonic advantage* in the political struggle? At the end of the text, Koczanowicz points to a doubt regarding the unauthorized assumption of continuity of culture that exceeds

economic, political and social transformations. The essay concludes that the liberal arts must be confronted with the illusion of the continuity of culture.

To what extent do social media transform relationships with Others? Is there a shared virtual reality? Does the world of social media create a different reality for each user? These are the questions that Koczanowicz asks the reader in his essay *The anxiety of intimacy: or, on telling the truth in the age of the Internet*. The internet technological revolution has created a tool for making parrhesia, thus escaping the fear of intimacy. A user of a Facebook account or other social networks is faced with the dilemma of what information to disclose and what to omit. The fear of intimacy can be associated with identity, with reconciling self with social identity. In the concept of stigmatization, Goffman draws attention to the tension that accompanies individuals who ignore certain information about themselves and hide certain features that could discredit them (Goffman 1986). Likewise, the Facebook or Twitter user decides what to reveal and what to conceal. It is also worth remembering the difference between the identity Koczanowicz drawing on Rousseau's *Confessions*, the social identity revealed by *I* according to Goffman's concept, and the identity revealed on the Facebook profile. Identity in social media is just a profile that a person can manage and even decide to have a few of them. There is also a significant difference between real and virtual identity management. The fluid boundaries of intimacy in the Internet age allow for complete isolation as well as emotional exhibitionism. On the one hand, people possess a desperate need to be present, which may be achieved through new technologies; on the other hand, *the internet never forgets*, and some events that are shared now may prove unfavorable in the future. We do not know what world will emerge from the web or to what extent new technologies will change the trajectories of interpersonal relationships. Will a human or a bot emerge from the network? To conclude, it is worth paying attention to this essay, which seems so crucial for contemporary people, especially as it is not common for cultural critics to focus on this area of culture.

Koczanowicz points out the ambiguity of the term politics in his essay *The anxiety of politics*. Whatever understanding of politics we have, it is one of the fundamental features of human existence. The inability to conceptualize it creates a source of fear. Koczanowicz states "(...) what we cannot name is particularly disturbing and, even, terrifying to us. Unable to give politics "a local habitation and a name," we still need to talk about it because politics is impossible to ignore as one of the fundamental properties of human existence" (p. 93). The author recalls the concepts of Wittgenstein, Fondane, Habermas, Laclau and Mouffe, Boltanski, Levinas or Ricoeur, offering examples of different kinds of understanding of politics. What I found remarkable was Kocznowicz's perceptions of politics as seduction through the art of enhancing reality. Is it still art, or is it ideology? Another interpretation of politics is the struggle for hegemony or imposing the interpretation of *empty signifiers* (Laclau & Mouffe 2007).

In his reflections on modernity in the essay *Anxieties of Community*, Koczanowicz traces the phenomenon of fear in this area of human activity. He refers to the vision of man proposed by the two characteristic circles of thought – enlightenment and counter-enlightenment, particularly the understanding of the relationship between the individual and the community. He illustrates the examples that reflect the diversity of

community perception in the works by Kant, Burke, Herder, Nietzsche, Sternhell, up to the contemporary visions of Taylor and Nancy's community. Koczanowicz also alludes to the poets' understanding of community despite not always postulating political ideas. The poet resonates with the community's voice and can transform it or give it a form (p. 129). The author points to the importance of distinguishing communities based on experience, oftentimes on the experience of a crisis or a state of emergency, or communities based on dialogue.

In the essay *Please, don't be angry, happiness, that I take you as my due: happiness in the age of democratization*, Kochanowicz critically analyzes selected concepts of happiness present in contemporary liberal arts and social sciences. He draws on, among others, Foucault's concept of happiness, which is linked to the state as one of its major responsibilities. Fortunately, the authors of pragmatic concepts of the body draw attention to the role of the body in the development of abilities (Dewey 2008; Shusterman 2012). Happiness as a product or happiness as harmony? – this is a dilemma that Koczanowicz leaves the reader with.

The fear of old age is yet another area explored by Koczanowicz in the essay *Mortal generations: on two phenomenologies of ageing – Cicero and Améry*. What is the ageing process? Does an older adult themselves reflect on their own old age, or do they still perceive themselves as the subject? Or are they merely terrified of old age and death? How does individual experience interact with social determinants in this process? How does a person act in their old age? Koczanowicz strives to address these questions by analyzing the phenomenology of old age by Cicero and Amery.

Amery's thought fits with the contemporary observations of sociologists and educators holding that old age leads to alienation and self-alienation, exclusion and self-exclusion, and stigmatization and self-stigma. At death's door, a senior person is absent from social consciousness (Lejzerowicz 2019; 2020). The ageing process is a social phenomenon and existential experience, hence the need for an interdisciplinary approach offered by ageing studies. Describing the existential experience of ageing requires objectifying the individual experience by appointing a narrator. The *impartial* observer, the Other is a figure which appears in Cicero, Amery and Koczanowicz. Koczanowicz writes about his own experiences and reflections related to age, using the figure of K. K. poses the following questions: can philosophy be a consolation, especially in the last stage of life? Or is there only despair without hope left? Which perspective should one take, Cicero's or Amery's? Which is more grounded? Koczanowicz ends his narrative with a sentence from a poem by Szymborska: *I prefer not to ask how much longer and when* (1998: 215).

Predicting the future is another area of anxiety analyzed in the essay *The anxiety of clairvoyance: terminal lucidity and the end of culture*. The current world is ending, with schemes of action and typical procedures no longer effective. Is terminal lucidity a lucidity before a fall or before another crisis? The possibility of clairvoyance is, in a sense, the same as terminal illumination. Who can read the signs of the times, who can be a prophet or a clairvoyant: the spirits of Marx, the angel of Benjamin, the philosopher of Hegel? These figures of modernity reflect the era's problems – the period of decline, the era of transit, perhaps leading to emancipation. At the same time, they

correspond to the feeling of the end of history. Koczanowicz concludes the essay with a radical proposal to take up the challenge to face the fear of the time we live in (p. 175). The radical nature of the challenge is reinforced by the fact that no clairvoyant will predict the outcome. "(...) The owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk" (Hegel 2008: 23).

Koczanowicz's considerations fit into the contemporary discourse of researchers of culture, politics, philosophy and sociology as he describes many of the issues raised: autonomy, subjectivity, identity, the randomness of human existence, time, transience, communication, democracy as a project of enlightenment in a manner which creates space for discussion. The author's perspective is remarkable and constitutes an innovative approach to contemporary literature. He guides the reader along the paths of fear, reinterpreting the problems in his earlier works: *Community and Emancipation. A dispute over a post-conventional society* (2005); *Politics of Time: Dynamics of Identity in Post-Communist Poland* (2008); *Modern anxiety. Essays on Democracy and Its Adversaries* (2011); *Politics of Dialogue: Non-Consensual Democracy and Critical Community* (2015).

The book *Anxiety and Lucidity* is an exciting springboard for a discussion on the future of democracy. It is worth recommending, especially today in times of ubiquitous fear, of the multitude of catastrophes that accompany man, existing in a shaky reality in which they seek rules yet ends up with randomness or exceptions.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Magda Lejzerowicz – researcher in disability studies, a philosopher, assistant professor in Institute of Interdisciplinary Disability Studies The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw. Dr Lejzerowicz deals with the ethical, social and pedagogical aspects of integration systems, with particular emphasis on the education and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Other scientific interests are the person with a disability as the subject of activities, identity and disability, stigma and social exclusion, communication with people with disabilities, preparation of academic staff to work with people with disabilities. Dr Lejzerowicz collaborates with the Department for the Sociology and Anthropology of Culture at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She conducts the research project Inclusion Education and Preparation of the Polish School.

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