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COSMOPOLITANISM WITH A HUMAN RIGHTS FACE¹

Ulf Hannerz's long-standing preoccupation with cosmopolitanism results, *inter alia*, from his international scholarly experience and Western European/Scandinavian familiarity with multiculturalism. With finesse and competence, he identifies various phases and faces of cosmopolitanism. The three categories presented cover much of the "cosmopolitan field" in the contemporary world. This attempt should be appreciated for being not speculative but *realistic*. Anthropologists value theories that "stay rather closer to the ground" than "drift off into logical dreams."² "Happy face cosmopolitanism" is realistic, since in the modern world we are observing the flow of ideas, items, technologies and pop-cultural "products" ranging from soccer to karaoke to cuisine. It is a hybridised world in which these modern products are inevitably indigenised. The "sober face type of cosmopolitanism" is realistic, because it discloses how "transnationalised problems" are inevitably politicised and handled by the international communities, both from above and below. Reference to Appiah's "rooted cosmopolitanism" displays clearly the *absurdity* of a presumed *contradiction* between cosmopolitanism and loyalty to the community and patriotism. "Cosmopolitanism with a straight face" is realistic by the virtue of showing what is or should be done in everyday life, at least in multicultural and immigrant societies. All of these types of cosmopolitanism are closely intertwined and present in one way or another in various societies. Hannerz must be praised for his realism and, so to say, *sober straightforwardness* in presenting the state of the art of cosmopolitanism in the contemporary world, based on anthropological evidence.

Here, I would like to touch upon a statement by Theresa May which elicits Hannerz's *déjà vu* with regard to anti-cosmopolitanism, and then discuss the phenomenon of anti-cosmopolitanism in a "mono-cultural" society. May's statement that "if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere" does not come

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² C. Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books, New York 1973, p. 24.

as a surprise to me. She has had many predecessors. The former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron pledged several years ago to abandon multicultural policy by saying that young immigrants “find it hard to identify with Britain (...) because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.”³ He sung in a choir alongside Nicolas Sarkozy, Geert Wilders, Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen. Horst Seehofer, CSU leader in Bayern, summarised this “wisdom” by proclaiming that “multiculturalism is dead.”⁴ Across Europe, bashing multiculturalism has become part of a campaign directed against the “cosmopolitan orientation.”⁵ I am aware that cosmopolitanism should not be confused with multiculturalism⁶, but these two notions and several related issues are strictly connected. Let us call them compound elements of a cosmopolitan syndrome.

Our thoughts and concerns depend on the social *milieu* in which we live. Our concerns result from economic, social, and cultural conflicts. This justifies my preoccupation with the outbreak of anti-cosmopolitan attitudes in Poland. Thus far, discussions on this syndrome have been intrinsically linked to multi-cultural, -ethnic and -religious societies, most of them immigrant. Steven Vertovec labels such a heterogeneous condition “superdiversity.”⁷ In contrast, the Polish case represents *superhomogeneity*.⁸ Since World War II, over the life span of almost three generations, Poland has been an ethnically and nominally religiously uniform society, although it is obviously divided along class-cum-culture lines.

As an anthropologist I want to stay close to the ground and start with some facts. In Poland, Muslims comprise less than 0.1% of the society, immigrants are barely visible, and refugees can be easily counted – 4,000 since 1990 have been accepted. In 2016, 12,000 applications for refugee status were filed, mostly from Russia, and in the same year, 44 applications were considered positively.⁹ The outburst of Muslimophobia is striking. Between 2003 and 2014 alone, 73,000 Russian citizens applied for refugee status in Poland¹⁰, and less than 10% decided to settle there. Virtually

³ D. Cameron, PM’s Speech at Munich Security Conference, 2011, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference> (access: 1.08.2017).

⁴ R. Herzinger, ‘Multikulturalismus’ und ‘Leitkultur’ sind Irrwege [‘Multiculturalism’ and ‘Dominant Culture’ are Wrong Ways], “Welt Online”, 22.10.2010, <https://www.welt.de/kultur/article10454526/Multikulturalismus-und-Leitkultur-sind-Irrwege.html> (access: 2.08.2017).

⁵ U. Hannerz, *Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture*, “Theory, Culture and Society” 2010, vol. 7, no. 2–3, pp. 237–251.

⁶ N. Rapport, R. Stade, *Cosmopolitan Turn – or Return?* [A Debate], “Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale” 2007, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 223–235.

⁷ S. Vertovec, *Super-diversity and its Implications*, “Racial and Ethnic Studies” 2007, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 1024–1054.

⁸ M. Buchowski, *Making Anthropology Matter in the Heyday of Islamophobia and the “Refugee Crisis”*: *The Case of Poland*, “Český lid” 2016, vol. 103, p. 53.

⁹ D. Pawłowska, *Ilu uchodźców znalazło w Polsce schronienie?*, BiQDATA, 2.02.2017, <http://biqdata.wyborcza.pl/ilu-uchodzcow-znalazlo-w-polsce-schronienie> (access: 4.08.2017).

¹⁰ K. Stummer, *Forgotten Refugees: Chechen Asylum Seekers in Poland*, “Krytyka Polityczna & European Alternatives”, 11.02.2016, <http://politicalcritique.org/cee/poland/2016/forgotten-refugees-chechen-asylum-seekers-in-poland/> (access: 3.08.2017).

all of them were Muslims from Chechnya, but no Muslim or refugee panic ensued. Before 2015, “only” 30% Poles were against welcoming refugees. Recently the proportion of those *rejecting* the possibly of relocation of refugees from Syria and North Africa increased from 51% in May 2015 to 61% in April 2016 to 74% in April 2017 (CBOS 2017). One may wonder: what caused this increase in xenophobic attitudes?

A serious answer is complex, and several reasonable accounts have been developed in and for superdiverse societies. Feelings of cultural fear and anxiety¹¹, cultural fundamentalism and cultural racism as a new rhetoric justifying forms of social exclusion,¹² the degradation of the working class and decomposition of the middle class in the neoliberal system, which has led to frustration¹³, and a search for scapegoats – all of these have contributed to cultural fear and anxiety. Populist politicians all over Europe prey on these fears. In the Polish case, the myth of “frontier Orientalism”¹⁴, which carries “clash of religions” connotations, along with praise for a long-lasting “cosy superhomogeneity”, are also detectable causes of fear of strangers. One more factor cannot be ignored. Many officials, journalists, and regrettably also scholars, excel in the promulgation of fake news served in a post-truth fashion. Muslims and refugees have been fiercely targeted. Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the governing rightist political camp, proclaimed in a parliamentary speech that in Sweden fifty-four “sharia zones” exist in which the state has no control; citizens are afraid to hang the Swedish flag, and girls are afraid to wear short skirts. In Italy, churches are used as toilets, and immigrants pose a threat to the health security of the continent, since they bring cholera, dysentery, parasites and protozoa.¹⁵ In the light of data about rising Islamophobia, pervasive political propaganda that preys on historically established myths and is aimed at raising fears against “distant others” appears to be contributing to refugee-phobia. This rhetoric translates into social attitudes, hate speech and horrifying *practices* of racial and xenophobic physical assaults¹⁶. Gruesome *déjà dit*, *déjà lu* and *déjà fait*.

¹¹ R.D. Grillo, *Cultural Essentialism and Cultural Anxiety*, “Anthropological Theory” 2003, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 157–173.

¹² V. Stolcke, *Talking Culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe*, “Current Anthropology” 1995, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 1–24.

¹³ D. Kalb, *Introduction: Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working Class Populism and the Return of the Repressed in Neoliberal Europe*, w: D. Kalb, G. Halmi (eds.), *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working Class Populism and the Return of the Repressed in Neoliberal Europe*, Berghahn Books, New York–Oxford 2011, p. 1–63.

¹⁴ A. Gingrich, *Frontier Myths of Orientalism: The Muslim World in Public and Popular Cultures of Central Europe*, in: B. Baskar, B. Brumen (eds.), *Mediterranean Ethnological Summer School*, vol. 2, Inštitut za multikulturalne raziskave, Ljubljana 1998, pp. 99–127.

¹⁵ *Kaczyński o uchodźcach: cholera, dezenteria, pasożyty!* [Kaczyński about Refugees: Cholera, Dysentery, Parasites], “Super Express”, 14.10.2015, http://www.se.pl/wiadomosci/polityka/kaczynski-o-uchodzcach-cholera-dezenteria-pasozyty_703198.html (access: 3.08.2017).

¹⁶ M. Buchowski, *A New Tide of Racism, Xenophobia, and Islamophobia in Europe: Polish Anthropologists Swim Against the Current*, “American Anthropologist” 2017, vol. 119, no. 3, pp. 519–523.

West European rightist rhetoric appears innocent in comparison to the speech of Polish mainstream populist gurus. Speaking in defence of freedom of speech and against supposedly harmful political correctness, they claim to express “ordinary people’s” opinions and represent the will of the sovereign nation. A ruling Law and Justice mouthpiece, MP and at the same time professor of law (!) at Warsaw University presented her political camp credo, which is worth citing:

These are times in Europe of: shameless traitors, German ‘rags’, 5th columns, ‘totalists’, corrupt alcoholics, moonbats and fascist goon squads, *wayward cosmopolitans without fatherlands, mothers and fathers* [emphasis mine], adherents of ‘cultural sexuality’ [gender], erotomaniacs, sexual pathology and political correctness, murderers of children and parents, effeminate blokes dressed in skinny jeans and pink ballet shoes who adopt bees, trees and apes, political blackmailers and Islam, lovers of goats, Satanists, perpetrators of deicide and junkies, gender terror, political baseball players, liars, politicians without character or a capacity for honour. Catholic Poland endures and defends itself. And Hungary, too.¹⁷

No doubt, her contribution to political theory and catholic social teaching will remain “unforgettable”. She presents a binary worldview in which cosmopolitanism is part of a complex syndrome which stands for social inclusiveness and human solidarity, tolerance and is a lack of hierarchical divisions. It is opposed to rightist-populist orthodoxy hostile to any otherness or that involves xenophobia, islamophobia and racism. Are we, “western liberal intellectuals”, and many likewise thinking people, destined to succumb to such a rightist tsunami? No! But “we should accept the fact that we have to start where we are...”¹⁸

This is not a choice between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. As Ulrich Beck remarks, nationalism endowed with a “cosmopolitan eye” does not involve the stigmatisation of others coming from outside the nation or minorities¹⁹, nor, I hasten to add, does it share much with the currently dominant nationalist political ideologies. Being an anthropologist, I support Hannerz’s “straight face cosmopolitanism” as a sensible recommendation. Daily practices and micro-habits are of enormous importance. This stance also fits Charles King’s view that “an opposition to nationalism is nowise cosmopolitanism but everyday life.”²⁰ In the spirit of Appiah, the dichotomy between the two is dissolved. However, what if in a given context, such as that we are dealing with now in Poland, xenophobic nationalism prevails, and all sorts of Others are not tolerated? I think that Hannerz’s endorsement might not be sufficient. As active

¹⁷ K. Pawłowicz, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/KrystynaPawlowicz/posts/1545644758841240> (access: 1.08.2017).

¹⁸ R. Rorty, *Solidarity or Objectivity?*, w: M. Krausz (ed.), *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame 1989, p. 176.

¹⁹ U. Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 61–62.

²⁰ P. Pieniążek, *Przeciwieństwem kosmopolityzmu nie jest nacjonalizm, tylko codzienne życie (rozmowa z Charlesem Kingiem)* [An Opposite to Nationalism is not Cosmopolitanism but Everyday Life (a conversation with Charles King)], “Krytyka Polityczna” 13.07.2017, <http://krytykapolityczna.pl/swiat/nacjonalizm-kosmopolityzm-king/> (access: 1.08.2017).

advocates of human solidarity and defenders of minorities rights, we also need here and now Martha Nussbaum's²¹ universalist cosmopolitan outlook that legitimizes and supports our resistance to rightist discriminatory politics. Aware of their essentialist nature, we strategically need cosmopolitanism with a human rights face. This is not a case of "drifting off into logical dreams", but pragmatic use of it for "close to the ground" practices of human solidarity.

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²¹ M. Nussbaum, *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*, "Boston Review" 1994, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 3–16.

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