

MANIC DEFENCES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY The Psychocultural Approach

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SUMMARY

The article discusses the impact of contemporary culture on the individual's personality. We used the "psychocultural" approach whose key feature is the amalgamation of theories and methods belonging to psychodynamic and psychosocial studies, as well as those used in the field of media and cultural studies. The idea of a potentially therapeutic effect of culture (therapy culture) can already be seen in Freud's and Lacan's texts, and it is often used in critical analyses of contemporary corporate culture, which is more or less developed in some parts of the world. In their criticisms, many contemporary authors emphasize that modern societies have a tendency towards the weakening of basic commitment, or lack thereof, to a social equivalent of Winnicott's concept of environmental provisions as an inalienable democratic right essential for human emotional and mental progress or emotional well-being. The article describes frequent resorting to the so-called manic defences that defensively distort, deny and obscure the awareness that a human being is not the omnipotent source of life, but instead depends on other human beings, and often tries to compensate for loss through various activities. The article describes excessive shopping as an activity that often serves as an attempt to find what was lost, i.e. to fill an emotional void. This solution (resorting to manic defences) is encouraged by contemporary culture, especially through promotional material (e.g. advertising). The main theses of this article are supported by quotations and data from world literature.

Key words: culture - manic defences - therapy culture - environmental provisions

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INTRODUCTION

On psychocultural approach

We describe people in a number of different ways. However, most of our descriptions appear as if we are referring to universal human nature exactly because we rarely consider the impact a particular cultural context has on the process of growing up and on personality formation. Psychiatry textbooks such as Kaplan and Sadock's Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry perhaps expanded on the subject the most by devoting an entire chapter titled "Transcultural psychiatry" (Kohn et al. 2009) to matters of culture. These authors refer to the definition of culture forged by National Institute of Mental Health's Culture and Diagnosis Group: "Culture refers to meanings, values and behavioural norms that are learned and transmitted in a dominant society and within its social groups. Culture powerfully influences cognition, feelings and self-concept; as well as the diagnostic process and treatment decisions" (Lu et al. 2007, qtd. in Agarwal 2011). Crapanzano (1977, 1984) points out: "Life history develops in relations to others and reflects particular contexts, not a static, longitudinal social reality" (qtd. in Agarwal 2011).

Culture is typically divided into material and non-material culture, high and low culture, popular and mass culture or consumer culture. There are many studies into specific areas of culture, e.g. economic, political, media, technical and therapy culture, cyberculture, etc. Agarwal (2011) find out that a relatively small number

of books or articles refer to research on the manner in which cultural differences impact personality formation. The exceptions are, for example: Mead (1928), Freeman (1983), Bot (1990), Holmes (1999). Societal developments are reflected in the brains of its members, thus making certain social and cultural developments that can affect the mental health of individuals, and society as a whole, quite interesting (Jakovljević 2014). In other words, the question is where is the disease located. Is it only in the patient's brain or does it also exist in a diseased society? This is why the answer should be sought in a multi-dimensional and integrative approach to understanding and treating diseases (Jakovljević 2014).

Psychological culture refers to the cultivation of the soul, a subject tacked by Cicero in ancient times (cultura animi) (Jakovljević 2014). Authors such as Bainbridge and Yates (2011), and Lennon-Patience (2013) refer to the "psychocultural" approach. According to these authors, the essential of this approach is the amalgamation of theories and methods belonging to psychodynamic and psychosocial studies, as well as those used in the field of media and cultural studies. The psychocultural approach of the aforementioned authors mainly includes the psychodynamic object relations theory used in understanding the role of emotions in contemporary political, therapeutic, media and popular culture. It should also be noted that, with all the theoretical and practical differences between psychological schools of thought, research into the hidden and irrational unconscious processes and their contribution to the formation of everyday human cultural experiences is one

of the major and common marks of psychodynamic theory. For example, the concept of political psychoculture is based on systemic psychodynamics (Gould et al. 2001) and its application to the social, political and organizational phenomena (Jakovljević 2016).

On manic defences

According to Peltz (2005), the purpose of manic defences is to distort, deny and obfuscate the awareness that a human being is not by itself an omnipotent source of life but instead, from the very beginning, depends on other human beings. Nowadays, this term is mostly referred to in literature as narcissistic defences (Marčinko & Rudan 2013). According to the Kleinian school of psychoanalysis, manic defences come into play when the awareness of our limitations (that we are not omnipotent) becomes too painful to withstand. Manic defences actually represent a group of defences and involve the denial of psychic reality, a denigrating contempt for the loved objects, omnipotence and the felling of triumph over the objects, with the aim of decreasing their importance. The defences allow the reduction of feelings such as loss, guilt, helplessness, dependency, etc. The establishment of denial and contempt for helplessness and dependence (alongside control and idealization of the object on which one actually has a preconscious desire to depend) always restarts this established manic circle (Hinshelwood 1991). The use of manic defences increases when tolerance for mental pain associated with loss (e.g. the loss of omnipotence, the object's love, the object and its care) decreases. Klein (1935), as well as Ogden (1994), highlights the connection between a higher degree of tolerance for loss and the maintenance of one's complex, multi-dimensional psychic reality. At the degree at which one can no longer tolerate loss, manic defences are activated and the experience of psychic reality collapses in all of its complexity. In other words, according to the Kleinian school, the signifiers of a depressive position decrease, while the signifiers of a paranoid-schizoid position increase (Klein 1940, Peltz 2005). The psychic space for thinking, authentic feeling and other mental content that provides the richness of the human experience of self and the environment becomes narrower and emptier. Enthusiasm, curiosity and love for knowledge give way to resignation, mental stupor, cynicism or excessive reliance on hypomanic denial, escaping into action and omnipotence. Exclusively market-oriented societies suffer from both escape into action and omnipotence (Peltz 2005).

THE CULTURE OF FREE MARKET AND HUMAN RESPONSES IN "MANIC SOCIETY"

After visiting England, by far the most industrially developed European country in the 19th century, the German romantic poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

wrote: "The perfection of machinery, which is there everywhere applies to some purpose, and which executes so many human tasks, had for me something mysterious and terrible; the artificial headlong action of wheels, shafts, cylinders, with a thousand small hooks, cogs, and teeth, which whirl so madly, filled me with dread. The definiteness, the exactness, the meted out and measured punctuality of life, tormented me quite as much, for as the machines in England seem like men, so the men seem to me like mere machines." (Heine 1837, qtd. in Sachs 1933).

In approximately one hundred and fifty years, we went from Heine's fear of industrialisation to the "post-industrial era" and Don Tapscott (1998), who stated: "Good news! The Net Generation has arrived, the first generation to grow up with digital media. Everybody relax (...) who is blessed enough to know that the kids are all right and that 'the cynics, technophobes, and moralists are dead wrong'. Children play, learn, communicate, and form relationships as usual, enhanced and empowered in the interactive world. While television robbed children of hours of play each day, digital media restore this precious time. Skilled, energized, fresh-thinking, newly empowered youth are ready to innovate. Their mindset demands fast results, and can change eagerly and on the fly a thousand times, which leads to a generational 'digital divide'." (Tapscott 1998, qtd. in Ahumada 2001).

Tapscott's story evokes associations to the author's unlimited optimism that allows him to see the world similar to the character of professor Pangloss in the novella "Candide" written by the French writer and philosopher Voltaire, who optimistically believed that "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds". His story seems coherent, meaningful and credible, a "perfect story" (Baruch 1997) that presents digital media as that which offers only good to the young, so-called internet generation. However, what it lacks is the impression of true experience that characterizes Heine's story. Heine mourns, while Tapscott offers an emotionally unconvincing story in which he states that he does not do anything bad but, on the contrary, gives only the good. He refuses to accept any alternative point of view originating from "the others" he contemptuously described as "the cynics, technophobes and moralists" (Ahumada 2001).

In neoliberal culture, self-realization takes place mainly in economic and consumerist spheres, which promotes a hypercompetitive narcissistic and manic self that does not address the needs and suffering of others (Jakovljević & Tomić 2016). In his analysis of contemporary society, Leyton (2009) referred to the sociologist Richard Sennett who, in his book "The Culture of the New Capitalism" (Sennett 2006), described the changes in political and social institutions caused by neoliberal capitalism. The author talks about the centralization of power in political and other institutions in the cutting-edge corporate culture, which limited the subordinates'

opportunities for autonomy and interpretation of directives. At the same time, it diminished the question of responsibility for the negative effects which their policies have on workers and citizens. Changes in monetary policy liberated capital for global investment (“The crazy escape of manic capital”, Greider 1998) and increased the shareholders’ desires to gain immediate profit. Priority was given to “flexibility” and innovation over stability and professional skills which previously held a higher position in the value system. Relying on Sennett’s (2006) analysis of the situation, Leyton (2009) stated that the advisor became the new ideal worker, thus discouraging long-term commitment and reducing respect for the accumulated knowledge of older workers. Only a small number of people are viewed as talented, while others are reduced to an unspecific status of masses. This mass of supposedly “untalented” becomes troubled with a feeling of guilt because it is not special which leads to increasing problems with self-respect and the strict and intolerant superego. Leyton (2009), quoting Sennet (2006), accentuates that people in the workforce do not feel as anxious because of their potential failure rather that they fear being labelled as unprofitable and redundant.

Peltz (2005) also stated that the governing structures, by diminishing responsibility for the containment (Bion 1962) of anxiety and the holding (Winnicott 1971) of the vulnerable and those in need, led to the state in which the expression of dependent needs became shameful. This author also states that modern society lacks fundamental commitment to a social equivalent of Winnicott’s (1963) concept of environmental provisions necessary for human emotional and mental progress. In other words, it would mean if not complete guarantee of provisions, than at least the facilitation of the fulfilment of their basic human needs of all members of society (healthcare, education, cash benefits for work sufficient to provide for one’s existence, medically healthy water, air, food and energy and the protection of other commonly needed resources), even when there is no direct benefit for the market. In contemporary societies, especially in Western civilization which is considered to be a representative of democracy, the governing authority that could provide quality protection for these human rights is weakening. The needs of the market are given priority over the needs of the population (Peltz 2005, Stein 2011).

According to Peltz (2005), manic defences constitute a psychic response to the lack of a governing system that would guarantee the fulfilment of basic needs through environmental provision. These defences act as protection mechanisms against anxiety associated with the loss of vision of a socially just future that would be based, as already mentioned, on “good enough” social provision for basic human needs and containment (Bion 1962).

Similar to Peltz (2005), Stein (2011) speaks of *manic culture*. This author identified four characteristics that, in his opinion, may have had a heightened impact

on the increase of risk taken by financial institutions in the last few decades after governments and regulatory agencies lost a large part of their authority. These characteristics are *denial, omnipotence, triumphalism and over-activity* (Stein 2011). Instead of serving as warnings to the governing at various levels, they lead to increasing systemic risks. In “manic culture”, the organization leaders would simply underestimate the importance of warnings, says Stein (2011), because the appearance of concern would endanger their experience of omnipotence. Instead of applying careful examination which should logically come from the responsible leaders, people start denying reality and engaging in over-activity (shopping, loans, etc.), which can include attacks on the very systems set up to “contain” risks (Fraher 2014).

Therapy culture

The concept of treatment (therapy) in contemporary Western culture, according to Yates (2011), has in fact become associated with the desire for emotional well-being. The state of emotional well-being interferes with the anxiety about subjectivity, loss and cultural changes. Therefore, according to the same author, it seems that the concept of “emotional well-being” nowadays often replaces the concept of “mental health”. In this way, potentially negative associations to mental illness have been avoided, while the new concept was easier to accept by consumers. The turning of culture towards therapy is often strongly manifested in today’s media. The obvious practice of today’s media is an increased focus on the self, whereby identity is often constructed more in terms of feelings and relationships, than in relation to social categories such as, for example, class (Anderson et al. 2009). In other words, notes Yates (2011), therapy nowadays also takes place outside of clinicians’ office spaces or clinics, and can be found in popular culture and media.

The idea of the therapeutic effect of culture can be traced back to the days of Freud (Rose 1999; Rieff 1966, 2008) and Lacan. According to Freud (1930), the goal of psychoanalysis should be to help people to cope with their lives that also include the normal occurrence of unhappy feelings. However, it seems that contemporary therapy culture supports higher expectations, and it seems that it promises more happiness and well-being. Frequently used concept of celebrity covers all of these. The strengthening of celebrity culture and its effect on the mediatisation of politics has been extensively explored (Marshall 2006, Yates 2010). In addition Yates (2011) emphasises the increasing overlap of the political, therapy and celebrity culture within the contemporary public sphere. Important causal factors that led to such developments, according to some authors, e.g. Sennett (1977) and Lasch (1979), are the weakening of traditional boundaries between private and public life, as well as the emotionalisation of the public sphere (Richards 2007, Yates 2011).

Shopping and/or therapy

The language of economy and marketing has become ubiquitous, and by becoming a part of linguistic structure, it is also becoming a part of the common culture (Plastow 2012). According to Plastow (2012), compulsive spending, the behaviour on which the market relies the most, might be considered as one of many socially acceptable manic attempts to fight pain and anxiety. Today, people visit shopping centres not only to buy things/goods they need but also because they are trying to find compensation in them, to find lost pleasure or enjoyment. Thus, going shopping is often more motivated by the unconscious than the conscious need for retail therapy (Plastow 2012). This type of shopper acts as if shopping, or purchased items, will help to “cure” or at least temporarily soothe their suffering, i.e. as if shopping or purchased items constitute “therapy”. It is as if the shopper is guided by the idea that the purchased item will be an adequate substitute, more conscious than unconscious, for something that was lost or left unfulfilled within themselves. However, the “found” object will ultimately prove to be a disappointment. The shopper is in fact condemned that his unconscious desire remains unfulfilled which of course does not exclude the possibility of shopping having a certain cathartic effect, constituting a form of cleansing and enabling the shopper to temporarily suppress desire with the “passion of consumption” (Plastow 2012), while the real source of their longing remains suppressed or denied.

Bollas (1979) introduced the concept of the transformational object, stating that children, at early infancy, do not experience the activities of their caretaker (most often the mother) as those originating from the caretaker as an object in external reality, but as a process of transforming the experience of self, i.e. as the experience of existence, a form of existential and not yet representational knowledge. In adults, this “object” (as a process) is also sought after due to its function as the signifier of the process of transformation of the self, and not for possession over it. In this process, the subject-as-suppliant now feels himself to be the recipient of enviro-somatic caring which the subject always re-identifies with the metamorphosis of the self (a new job, relocation, vacation, changing relationships, new items). Bollas (1979), as opposed to e.g. Plastow (2012) and others (especially Lacanian psychoanalysts), stressed that this is not an object relation that emerges from desire, but from a kind of proto-perceptual identification of the object with its active feature – the object as the enviro-somatic transformer of the subject that promises to transform the self. Advertising is based on the traces of the transformational object as the advertised products usually promise to alter the subject’s external environment and thus change the internal mood (Bollas 1979).

Plastow (2012) also emphasizes advertisements as those that contribute to the aforementioned “beneficial” effect of shopping, which are sometimes followed by a message spoken in a sensual voice full of promise, such as: “Because you’re worth it!” (Verhaeghe 2007) or “Take care of yourself”, which intentionally place the individual at the forefront. The insatiable desire or, according to Bollas (1979), the need to repeat the transformational experience, seeks an object or process, but always with a disappointing result in case of desire or always with new hope in the transformational potential of an “object” as a process; the ultimate benefit of which, regardless of psychological interpretation, will be reaped by the manufacturers and their continuous use of advertising.

The modern society’s preference for trade pushes it towards harsh individualism that promotes profligate enjoyment at all costs and emphasizes a narcissistic way of functioning which is at least partially determined by advertising images, the media and the cult of celebrity (Plastow 2012). Ubiquitous advertisements that promote the enjoyment of a new product or new types of old products may provoke the feeling of social isolation in those who cannot afford them for various reasons. According to Bauman (2007), the society of consumers “is perhaps the only society in human history to promise happiness in earthly life, and happiness here and now and in every successive ‘now’; in short, an instant and perpetual happiness. It is also the only society that stubbornly refrains from justifying and/or legitimizing any variety of unhappiness (...), refuses to tolerate it and presents it as an abomination calling for punishment and compensation.” Or, as stated by Debord (1967): “The absolute denial of life, in the shape of a fallacious paradise, is no longer projected onto the heavens, but finds its place instead within material life itself.”

The search for happiness became a dictate in a way, and its fulfilment is measured primarily by external standards (wealth, power, fame, beauty, etc.) (Jakovljević 2014). Helde (2004) believes that the social phenomenon which he named “the syndrome of the tyranny of happiness and hedonism” is in fact a harmful side effect of positive psychology which has led to the hypertrophy of the ideology of happiness and positive thinking (Jakovljević 2014). The tyranny of happiness has not only invaded popular but also professional culture. Martin E.P. Seligman (2003) believes that optimism and the ensuing happiness can be learnt. If someone cannot rise above trouble, suffering or disease, then it is their own fault because they do not think positively and do not know how to be happy. Thus, the concept of happiness has been transformed into an imperative, a kind of a cult of happiness. This forced happiness leads to a growing number of unhappy people who also feel guilty for not being happy (Jakovljević 2014). On the other hand, the psychodynamic/psychoanalytical viewpoint emphasizes

the ability to tolerate different feelings, including so-called negative feelings, rather than attempts at avoiding them, as one of the important signs of mental strength, the strength of one's ego, i.e. mental health. Certainly, this viewpoint puts emphasis on the authenticity of one's feelings and the importance of working through them and grieving in case of loss (either specific loss such as the loss of a loved one, a job, etc. or abstract loss such as the loss of or separation from the safety of childhood in adolescence, of ideals, etc.) instead of resorting to defences.

In social circumstances that seriously jeopardize one's sense of security, in which losses that threaten human existence are a too common occurrence or a mass phenomenon (e.g. high unemployment rate, etc.), many people will automatically and unconsciously resort to a shorter, faster and less painful (although, not healthier) solution, such as the described use of manic defences. Grieving is a long and painful process for which there are significantly fewer opportunities in serious social crises or misfortunes. The proclaimed ideology or the cult of happiness practically "prohibits" grieving because, in general, the expression of authentic emotion is increasingly treated as a weakness or a flaw in a world that fosters the illusion of human perfection.

PERSONALITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF RESULTING CULTURAL CHANGES

Fast economic and technical development that leads to the disintegration of identity, as stated by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1997), also leads to diffusion of identity and past recognizable social roles and schemes, which previously helped the individual in the integration of his identity. In his work "Civilisation and Its Discontents" Freud (1930) claims how the civilized man of the modern age achieved a higher degree of security by accepting certain restrictions to his freedom and by abandoning some of his opportunities to be happy. Almost seventy years later Bauman (1997) expressed the opinion that discontent began to emerge precisely out of individual freedom in his book "Postmodernity and Its Discontents". He noticed how our values changed to such an extent that "security was abandoned in order to enjoy more freedom, freedom to shop, consume and enjoy life".

Many studies point to a change in some parameters of development, especially those related to adolescence, the developmental period that has always been considered the most sensitive indicator of sociocultural changes (Goosens 2006, qtd. in Rudan & Tomac 2011): 1) Adolescence lasts longer and is much more diverse than the one described by previous theories of adolescence. 2) The traditional sequence of events (completion of formal education, professional

life, marriage and parenthood) is replaced by the acceptance of individualistic criteria for adulthood (becoming financially independent, the opportunity to live without others as an independent person, etc.) (Chisholm & Hurrelmann 1995, Arnett & Galambos 2003). 3) According to some authors such as Cahn (1998) and Briggs (2008), we should focus on the idea of "subjectivity" or "subjectivisation" (or "becoming a subject") instead of focusing on identity as described by e.g. Erikson (1959). Personal history and childhood circumstances are still determining factors, but research casts doubt on the earlier deterministic approach. Understanding spread to the vision of the possible in which the space for that which is *not* determined is always present. Increasing importance is attributed to chance and the impact of current events on the formation of subjects. 4) "Post-traditional" identity is described as more open, fluid, complex and as questioning traditions (Johannsson 2007). Its greater diversity and inclusion of numerous identifications, higher reflectiveness and variability result in a person becoming "their own continuous project" (Thomson et al. 2004). At the same time, it is affected by and itself uses a large influx of information, especially that on the internet. 5) It remains an open question whether a person will ultimately remain open to the unknown and new or insist on the mechanical and the same, returning to old relationships or creating new ones? According to Cahn (1998), this is more a process of differentiation than individuation-separation. 6) In modern individualized, high-risk societies, tensions often arise from potential conflicts between more narcissistic and more relationship-oriented goals. According to Waddell (2006), this situation imposes the need to revise the concept of narcissism, especially in adolescence. Revising it would likely lead to a better understanding of growth and development in adverse social circumstances that reinforce the tendency towards the occurrence of more destructive and self-destructive ways of relating.

The occurring changes in the social context lead to the increased weakening of boundaries between adolescence and adulthood and the creation of a context for adulthood that is increasingly "adolescent". On the surface, there is a pronounced sense of excitement and exhilaration in the face of new possibilities, alongside the review and break-down of old certainties. At the same time, on a deeper level, there is increasing exposure to the fragmentation of cultural environment and to new risks. At the centre of fragmentation there are unfortunately inconsistency of maintenance and the stability of relationships (Cahn 1996, 1998). This absence of solid foundations that provides certainty and predictability is increasing anxiety and fear of losing control. In other words, it is the experience of losing oneself as the centre of the initiative of one's own thoughts and actions and losing the past where certainty and security of tradition reside (Cahn 1996, Briggs 2008).

ESCAPE FROM GUILT IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

It might seem that the dissatisfaction with culture/civilisation will finally be replaced by a depressive society, as described by some authors. For example, Roudinesco (1999) believes that the period of individuality has been replaced by the period of subjectivity in modern “depressive society” in which “by creating the illusion of freedom without coercion, independence without desire and history without history, the modern man becomes the opposite of the subject”.

Altman (2005), however, believes that the structure of manic defence persists, although in somewhat altered forms, with the purpose of using defensive efforts to restore a damaged sense of omnipotence and guiltlessness of an individual and society as a whole, (e.g. by often constructing (and occasionally attacking) an external or internal enemy. This defensive constellation also favours the simple, black and white perception of the world we live in, with “good” and “bad” people who must remain divided and must never become “grey” or otherwise nuanced. This sense of self and the society around oneself is enabled by the aforementioned move from the depressive to the paranoid-schizoid position.

“Manic defences” belonging to the paranoid-schizoid position provide an explanation for the lack, or failure, of *social responsibility* in a “manic society”, says Altman (2005) precisely because they serve as a defence against *depressive guilt* that encourages care for others. Manic defences lead to the creation and maintenance of the sense of omnipotence, the denial of psychic reality and escape into action (as opposed to thinking) and abundant projective identification.

Omnipotence in the function of defence is perhaps mostly embodied in various “powerful people” in finance who see themselves as “masters of the universe” says Altman (2005). In consumer societies in which any value is measured exclusively based on money, the belief that absolute freedom derives from unlimited amount of money has become the norm. A large amount of money provides enough omnipotence and allows for the belief that an even more complete form of untouchability can be reached with “some more money” (Altman 2005).

In his book “The Society of the Spectacle”, Debord (1967) stated that the dominance of economy over social life is expressed as an apparent transformation of *being* into *having*, i.e. that human fulfilment no longer equates with who someone is, but with what they possess. The same author noted that, on the current level on which social life is completely dominated by the accumulated economic production, there is a general shift from *having* to *appearing*. “Having” provides prestige and through its manifestation (appearance) achieves the ultimate goal (Debord 1967, qtd. in Altman 2005).

Regarding money and happiness, Freud stated: “Happiness is the deferred fulfilment of a prehistoric

wish. That is why wealth brings so little happiness: money is not an infantile wish.” (Freud 1898). Empirical research and clinical experience show that Freud was right. For example, most people who win the lottery squander the money and soon return to their previous lifestyle (Brickman et al. 1978). Even when it seems that making money results in happiness, it is mostly the result of “prosocial spending” (Dunn et al. 2008, Bennett 2009), i.e. buying gifts to others, donating, etc. These findings show that money itself is not the source of happiness, but rather the expressions of love and morality facilitated by money (Akhtar 2010). Moreover, the results of self-report studies into “levels of happiness” only slightly differ between the rich and the poor in sample populations (Myers 2000, Kahneman et al. 2006). Likewise, there is evidence that the overall quality of life, including feelings of happiness, is at least occasionally better in less affluent countries than in those with higher average incomes (Sen 1999, Brooks 2008).

Melanie Klein differentiated between the subjective experience of “manic defence” (Klein 1935) and “actual feelings of happiness” (Klein 1946). The former arose from the trio of idealization, denial and omnipotence, which, acting in unison, upheld the cardboard figure of an “all-good” world where everything was possible and where one did not have to depend upon others for love and support. The later emanated in the context of deep object relations and the capacity for reparative concern and gratitude. Klein (1957) emphasized that envy has an adverse impact upon the development of the capacity for gratitude and happiness. Lack of envy, in contrast, makes it possible for one to admire the character and achievements of others.

CONCLUSION

In consumer societies, advertising keeps people from abandoning spending, at an increasing pace, in order to maintain the lingering fantasy about happiness, power and freedom. As a result, people work more and more in order to maintain the ability to pay with money, credit cards or other means of payment. On the opposite side, which is actually familiar to everyone on some level of consciousness, are the fantasies whose construction is based on uncertain grounds, which is why they might collapse at any moment. Work security only represents a memory of days past (Altman 2005).

Generally speaking, in traditional societies, the past was a reference or starting point for comprehension on which further actions were based. The past, present and future were intertwined. The contemporary man does not use history as a reference point, as something from which one can predict the future. The past is belittled compared to the present (Ahumada & Carneiro 2006). Only that which is happening “right now” has any importance. However, due to the present moment’s lack of connection to the past and the future, that present moment also often loses meaning (Ahumada & Carneiro

2006). It has value while it lasts, but that value is lost once the moment is over. Its transient nature provides intensity to sensations and pushes people to seek these transient moments. Dreams of buying new products, following recent trends or the of consumer culture, the feelings of enhancement or improvement are associated precisely with novelty, which is why things and trends need to constantly be replaced with newer and better ones.

In modern times, it is possible to measure different achievements, especially academic success, by standardized tests. This is one of the examples indicating today's widespread practice of presenting issues only through concrete and measurable values. It seems that values, such as sense of purpose and integrity, are not primary for a functional self of the 21st century (Altman 2005). We can notice the victory of action-orientedness, alongside the collapse of the psychic space (potential or transitional space, Winnicott 1971), which is the very characteristic of the usage of the aforementioned manic defences in today's "manic society" (Peltz 2005, Altman 2005, Stein 2011). According to Altman (2005), guilt is the most general affect associated with the realisation that one betrayed their own values. More specifically, according to the same author, guilt is often associated with the realisation that one has caused harm to someone they care about. The ability to withstand depressive guilt comes from the existing sense of responsibility for actual or perceived damage caused by destructive impulses that exist somewhere deep within people. Manic defences ensure a "guiltless state". In harsh, or even ruthless social conditions, they become the only way out for many people.

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All authors contributed to the conception of the article. Based on literature research, Duško Rudan analysed the concept of manic defences and their use in contemporary society. Miro Jakovljević contributed to the understanding of the concept of psychoculture. Darko Marčinko contributed to the psychodynamic interpretation of the content.

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