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The Monarchy of Fear. A Philosopher Looks at our Political Crisis

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Review

Nussbaum, M.C. (2018). *The Monarchy of Fear. A Philosopher looks at our Political Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 978-1501172496

The book *The monarchy of fear* thematises fear as a central emotion in current societies. It enables the reader to understand fear from different perspectives and from different disciplines. Focusing on the presence of fear in the US-American society, fear is being discussed as an emotion in a democratic society (Nussbaum, 2018, p. 1f.). Following Nussbaum, fear can be connected with the vulnerability of persons in a society. Therefore, the discourse on fear can be connected to the discourse on inclusion and exclusion in a society. Following knowledge on the brain and theories from psychoanalysis, fear can be understood as a central emotion of human life that can be overcome with love and care of other persons (*ibid*, pp. 19ff., 27ff., 33ff.).

The book included an emotion of emotions that are connected with fear. Anger is being argued as one of those. Anger is an emotion that asks for retribution. Another emotion that is argued as a reaction to fear is disgust. Those emotions can be connected with social practices in a society that fosters inclusion and exclusion (pp. 73ff. 97ff.). Additionally, the emotion of envy is being discussed as a further emotion that derives from fear. Following Nussbaum's argumentation envy can exist in a society that is separated in groups. If some of them are for instance wealthier than others, those could envy them. Following theories from ancient philosophy and

from psychoanalysis, Nussbaum argues that an infant child imagines the parent to be happy and it asks them to receive happiness from them. If they do not do that, a child can react with envy (*ibid*, pp. 136ff.). Within an argumentation on sexism and misogyny, social practices are being analysed that can foster social disadvantages of women (*ibid*, pp. 166ff.). In the final chapter *Hope, Love, Vision* different social practices are being discussed that can contribute towards a society in which fear is less relevant. Examples for those are arts, religion and protest movements (*ibid*, pp. 221ff.).

The Monarchy of Fear in my opinion is a pivotal book on a central emotion. Nussbaum is connecting knowledge from empirical sciences on the brain and evolution with hermeneutic sciences that analyse literature, cultures and history. This she connects to current political movements. Different perspectives from several scientific discourses enable a holistic understanding of fear. They contribute towards a mutual connectivity of different sciences towards each other. The book is great to read and along with concrete examples good to understand. The reader can relate to one's own emotions and experiences in one's own living environment. This reflection can strengthen the reader to cope with raising demands and requirements of a society. Especially persons who themselves feel insecure can benefit from reflecting the role of fear in their society. Following Beck (2015) and Giddens (2012) insecurity can come along with the individualisation of a society. Furthermore, the book can encourage the reader to engage in social practices that foster hope (*ibid*, pp. 221ff.). Nussbaum's holistic understanding of fear, anger, disgust and envy can help the reader, to take more control on one's own acting and one's own emotions. Argumentations from the book can meet needs and demands of persons, who search for hope in a society that is becoming more insecure. As one's individual life can be understood in the context of one's society, this book contributes not only to current scientific discourses, but also can support and strengthen persons who feel insecure facing current political changes.

References

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