

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's Insatiability

by [Pedro Blas González](#) (August 2020)



Falsehood of a Woman, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, 1927

The mystery of one's birth and the inconceivability of the world's existence without the positing of one's ego were the only luminous points in a series of otherwise obscure moments. [\[1\]](#) –Witkiewicz

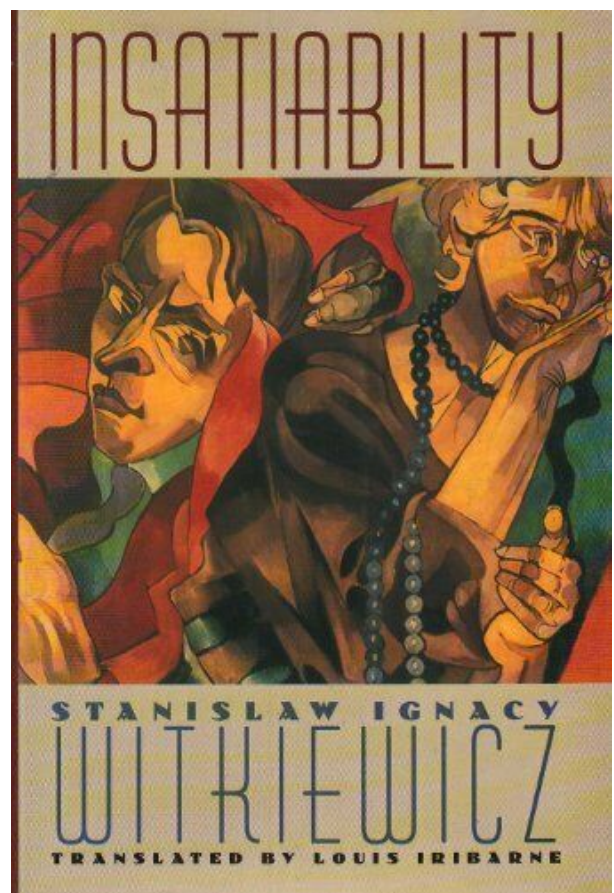
Genezip Kapen, the protagonist of Witkiewicz's *Insatiability*, cannot tolerate captivity of any kind. This is foreshadowing about the young boy's life to come. More importantly, it is a

warning of the coming days of communism in Europe.

Polish writer, playwright and painter, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939), wrote *Insatiability* in 1927 and published it in 1930. The work is a dystopian novel, albeit a highly complex novel of ideas and the dissolution of Western values. *Insatiability* consists of two parts: "The Awakening" and "Insanity." This division is significant, both stylistically and thematically.

Insatiability is like few twentieth century novels. With the exception of Zamyatin's *We*, a novel published in 1924, *Insatiability* predates all of the better-known dystopian novels. Witkiewicz's masterful novel is an experimental work of fiction written by a writer whose work addresses the relationship between essence and form.

The novel shines with Witkiewicz's proficiency in the history of philosophy, especially the last vestige of metaphysics in the twentieth century, phenomenology. This is also indicative of his paintings.



Witkiewicz traces the impact of some of the most nihilistic currents in intellectual history on Western civilization and the human psyche. He points out Marxism as

the single most destructive and corrosive form of human engagement with reality, beginning in the 1800s. He refers to Marxism as an anti-philosophy, something that many thinkers and critics have also pointed out, including a vast number of former Marxists. Like a ravenous cancer that cannot be excised, Marxism's genial ability to corrupt man's imagination through perpetual, chameleon-like malleability is unprecedented in human history.

Marxism's perpetual ability to fabricate rabid converts partly springs from the ranks of nihilistic narcissists. Some human beings view life as the enemy. This creates self-loathing, lack of purpose and meaning in their lives; they turn on the world and other people as being the culprits of their perceived inadequacies. The next step is to seek alleged emancipation from the hierarchy of values. The latter is the intoxicating liberation that comes with the destruction of reason, values, culture, the annihilation of innocence and free will.

Marxism's demoniacal fanaticism fuels violence, and, in turn, violence requires ever-innovative forms of violence in order for its practitioners to attain self-fulfillment. The cycle—perpetual revolution Marx called it—can never be allowed to end.

Insatiability shows how positivism propped up Marxism to become the dominant ideology of the twentieth century, and yielded uncontested power throughout the world that, well into the twentieth first century, it has yet to relinquish.

One reason for this, Witkiewicz shows, is rooted in the spurious offering of modern philosophy about human reality. Imagining that philosophers are out-of-touch idealists, the general reading public dismisses philosophy as sophomoric. Marxism capitalizes on this. Lamentably, this leaves an idea-vacuum for Marxism—which is anti-philosophy par excellence—to gain ground with unschooled people and educated

automatons alike.

Witkiewicz counters the spread of positivism with Edmund Husserl's development of phenomenology, a form of metaphysics that concerns itself with self-reflection in relation to the study of consciousness, which gained traction in the early part of the twentieth century.

Zip, as the protagonist is called in the novel, is a young man who leads a life of existential inquietude. The first part of the novel "The Awakening," introduces the reader to Zip's gift for epiphany. The young man is profoundly intuitive, enabling him to understand and become poised to deal with the aberrant world to come.

Witkiewicz, Philosopher of Existence

Witkiewicz is a philosopher of existence who is blessed with the ability to write fiction. The themes of *Insatiability* are not for the light hearted or people who find best sellers enthralling.

Insatiability was introduced to English speakers in the 1980 Nobel Prize winner, Czesław Miłosz's, enlightening 1955 book *The Captive Mind* Ortega's 'Revolt of the Masses' and the Triumph of the New Man, [Human Existence as Radical Reality: Ortega's Philosophy of Subjectivity](#). He also published a translation and introduction of José Ortega y Gasset's last work to appear in English, "Medio siglo de Filosofía" (1951) in