

# The Life of Humans

catalog

# The Life of Humans

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# The Life of Humans

Agata Cukierska

author

As early as in ancient Greece, bee colonies were considered an equivalent of the political community in nature – an ideal natural system in which insects symbolised civic virtue and devotion to the collective good. With the development of modern entomology, scientists – coming to realise the complexity of insect worlds – started to gradually hold an anthill, beehive or termite mound as a contrasting example of a harmonious, utopian system of organisation, which should not only be admired, but even imitated. In the first half of the twentieth century, negative comparisons of the systems functioning in the world of insects to authoritarian or totalitarian political regimes started to appear.

“The Life of Humans” project is a tale of a man and his culture seen from the perspective of an explorer of human civilisation, a form typical of nature TV programmes or scientific papers. The exhibition’s narrative concentrates on specific aspects of human existence and corresponds with Maurice Maeterlinck’s trilogy published in the early 20th century: “The Life of Bees”, “The Life of Termites” and “The Life of Ants”, in which the Belgian Nobel Prize winner, under the guise of an entomological argument, adopts a parabolic strategy, treating the world of insects as a metaphor for the world of humans. Following that path, the “Life of Humans” exhibition deliberately presents an overly anthropomorphised world of nature in order to analyse individual groups of social insects. The search for common points and a critical analysis of the mechanisms existing in the natural world in relation to the functioning of the individual in a group leads to the final question about the place of an individual in society.

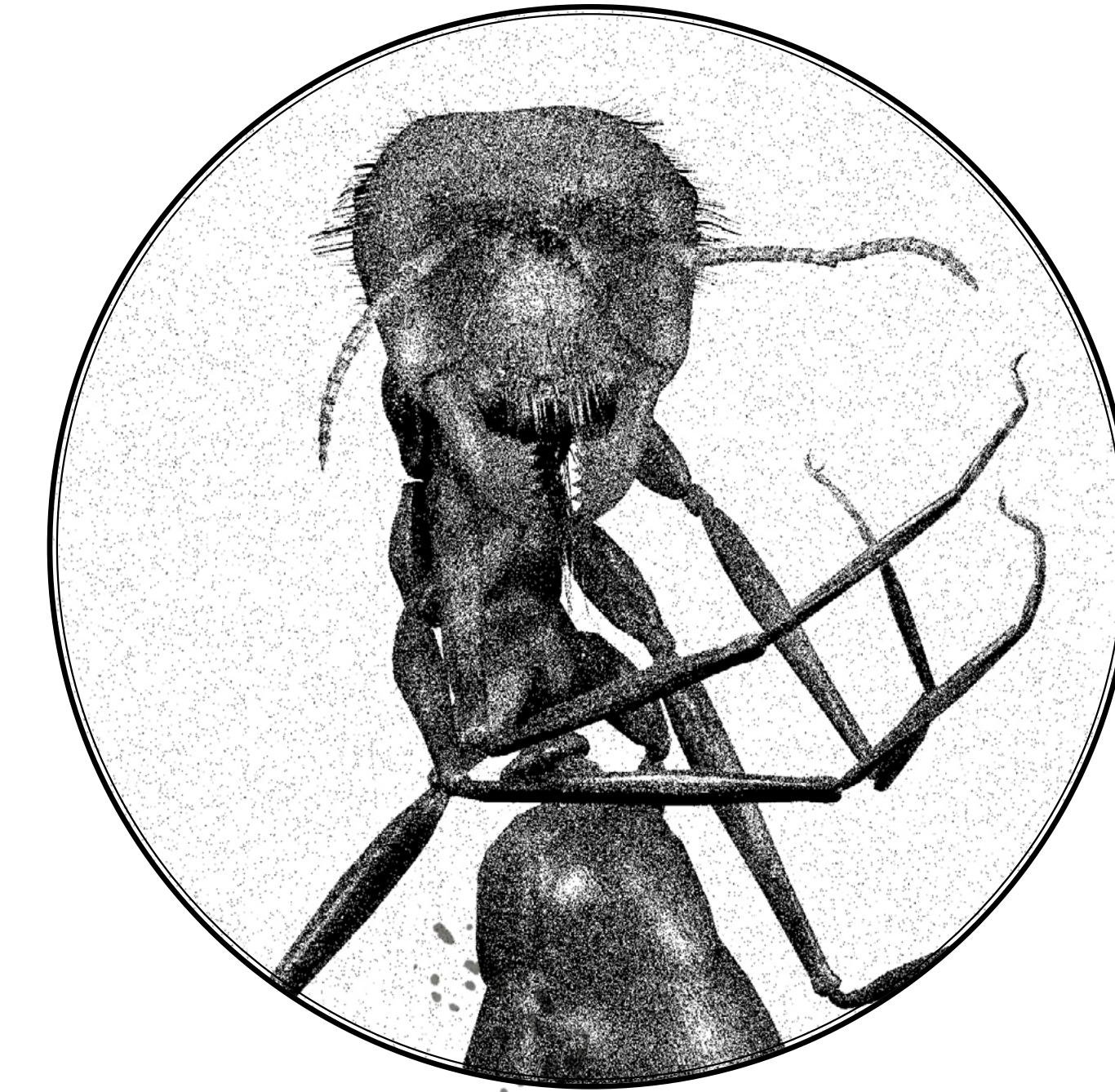


fig. 1

Marcin Wysocki

The visual identification element of the exhibition *The Life of Humans*.

# **School in a state of emergency**

**The pandemic and the education system**

**Agata Tecl-Szubert**

**author**

**Here again, as in a swarm or a termite society, we are faced with a big issue. Who governs the society? Where is the head or the centre which sends orders, carried out with absolute obedience, without the slightest resistance?**<sup>1</sup>

### Covid-19 hits the system

The passing year has been a special one. Two events will undoubtedly go down in history – the first on a global scale, the second on the micro-scale of our state. Both are still occurring before our eyes and we still do not know either their frameworks or long-term consequences. From the narrow, local perspective, the phenomena have initiated processes within the complex social structure that have revealed the anachronistic character and multi-level dysfunctionality of the current state system. Its harmful and oppressive nature, obsolete solutions and detachment from the contemporary world have manifested themselves particularly in the field of state education. The year 2020 shows how inadequate it is to face the contemporary challenges. The school has lost its basic function - not only has it ceased to function as a developmental mechanism, supporting pupils' discovery of their own potential and facilitating their orientation in the modern world, but it has stopped to offer a stable, safe space for growing up.

In the first months of 2020, the world was shaken by the Covid-19 epidemic, which immediately spilled out of the Chinese province of Hubei in all directions, necessitating isolation, suspension of social life and the so-called 'normality' in country after country, Poland included. In order to hinder the spread of the virus, governments began to introduce increasingly restrictive regulations, which gradually led to the confining of millions of people to their homes, forcing them to move most of their

activities - work, study and interpersonal contacts into the virtual space. After the first winter-spring wave and the summer relief period, a second phase of fighting the epidemic arrived. A significant portion of people's lives moved into the virtual space again.

Right in the middle of the pandemic, the Polish government escalated the social tension by taking a step that resulted in a wave of protests. On 22 October, the Constitutional Court announced that the provision allowing abortion when there is a probability of a severe damage to or incurable disease of the foetus was unconstitutional. That signified the end of the so-called abortion compromise, which had been in place since 1993, and which, under the current anti-abortion law, allows for the termination of a pregnancy in three cases: in addition to the aforementioned one also when the pregnancy was a result of rape or threatened a woman's life or health. The Court's decision caused mass protests not only in large centres, but also in small towns. For the first time protests were attended by the youth. The immediate reaction of the Minister of Education and Science, who announced that he would hold accountable the members of the teaching staff who were allegedly responsible for the attitude of the protesting pupils, showed the scale of misunderstanding of the decision-makers responsible for Polish education.

Timothy D. Walker, an American teacher who, after several years of working in a primary school in Helsinki, described the Finnish school miracle concluded that "when learning in school resembles learning in the real world, it is easier for children to see the purpose of their work."<sup>2</sup> Is it possible for any human activity to succeed without the awareness of the goal? Is 'what for' not the question we ask most often? What do we work for? What do we study for? Or to adopt a more existential perspective – what do we live for and what is the purpose of the world? To recognise the purpose of teaching and learning and link it to the ability to read and understand the phenomena that take place in this very fluid and unstable world, as well as to equip

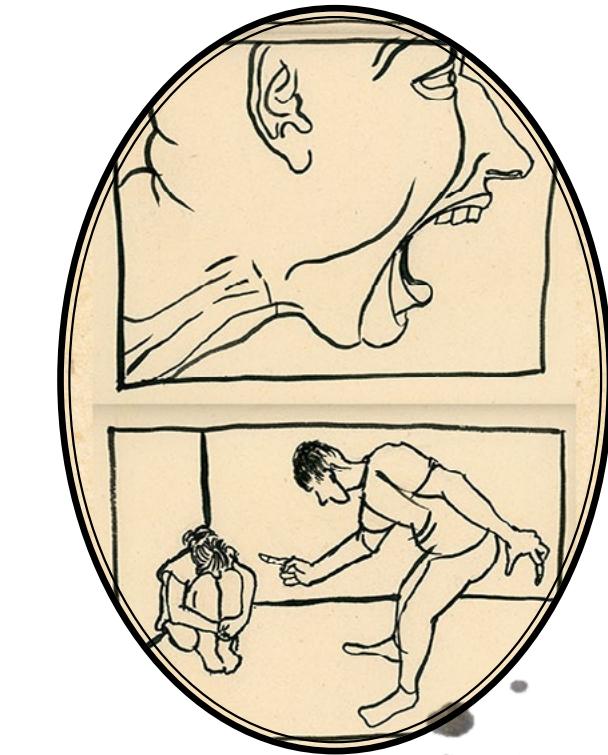


fig.2

Jaśmina Wójcik

*Escape from the hive. Workers' rebellion*

2020, ink on paper, audio

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ucieczka-z-ula](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ucieczka-z-ula)

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Życie mrówek*, translated by A. i M. Czwartkowscy, Warszawa 1958, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> T. D. Walker, *Fińskie dzieci uczą się najlepiej*, translated by: M. Kisiel-Małecza, Kraków 2017, p. 122.

one with the tools to find a place for themselves is what defines the success of the educational process. When, following in the steps of other countries, the Polish government decided to introduce the national quarantine and teaching moved to the Internet, the worm of the embarrassing centralised and hierarchical structure crawled out, accompanied by the bizarre nature of the principles of our education system, which leaves no room for authorial activities, experimenting with working methods or creating space for discussion, conversation and togetherness. The overloaded core curriculum, tiring on a daily basis, turned out to be all the more overwhelming. While the philosophical, social, economic or cultural foundations of our lives were falling apart, the teachers were still expected to stick to the curriculum. Children and adolescents were deprived of everything that underpins their development – the daily routine that gives them a sense of security, contact with their peers and family and the opportunity to spend their free time outdoors. Those students who struggle with home violence or poverty on a daily basis were put in a particularly difficult situation. Most of them had to deal with their difficult emotions within the four walls of their house. The system did not allow for departing from the imposed procedures – in most schools remote work was to take place according to the timetable. In practice, however, this meant that the responsibility for education switched to carers, who not only had to cope with the new reality and learn to work from home or face a loss of job and income, but were also forced to help their children solve hundreds of tasks, memorise compulsory formulas or revise for tests and assist the youngest pupils in their lessons. Unfortunately, many pupils could not count on such support. While the chaos in education could somehow be explained during the first wave of the epidemic, the second wave hit the Polish school as unprepared as at the time of the first quarantine. First grade pupils have returned to distance learning and the same problems have reappeared. The Ministry of National Education is playing for time - as if everything was about to return to normality in a moment. However, as one of the brightest contemporary philosophers and theoreticians of culture maintains "the catch is in the fact that even if life does

return to something that resembles normality, it will not be the same normality we had before the pandemic. The things we were accustomed to in our daily lives will no longer be taken for granted, we will have to learn to live much more fragile lives, among constant threats. We will have to change our general attitude to life, to our existence as living beings among other life forms."<sup>3</sup>

## Unlearning the basics

During the first wave of the epidemic, a team of experts and educational practitioners developed the document titled "Education Report. Between the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Education of the Future" which exposed the inefficiencies in the structure of Polish education and gave recommendations for actions that could become the basis for a real systemic change.<sup>4</sup> The basic omissions and errors were determined according to four categories: the system and management level, the social level, the curricula content and the material level. The report points to the immense pressure created by ministerial procedures and directives, parents and the public that the teachers and school heads have to work under as well as to the inadequacy of the curriculum, working methods, available tools and infrastructure. What is most striking is the lack of space, or perhaps even the need for creating genuine bonds based on mutual respect and the joy of participating, on different principles of course, in the educational process. This is not only about the relationship between a teacher and students, but also between students and teachers themselves. The scale of the problem may be illustrated by the fact that we still do not know how many students have been excluded from remote education. This problem affects mainly children and teenagers from the poorest, often dysfunctional families, also those affected by domestic violence. When they returned to school in September, their situation worsened even further when the teachers tried to make up for the period

3 S. Źižek, Pandemia! Covid-19 trzęsie światem, Warszawa 2020, p. 84.

4 R. Żak, Raport Między pandemią COVID-19 a edukacją przyszłości, <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/node/160776> (access: 19.11.2020).

of distant education. The system sees a mass, not a specific pupil or teacher working in a particular environment. At the end of October, the Ministry once again announced the move of education in Poland to the Internet – first for high schools and primary school grade 4 to 8 students who were soon joined by pupils from grades 1 to 3. This time the teachers received a government allowance of PLN 500 to purchase remote teaching aids. There is a recurrent theme in discussions with the teachers – the money became yet another means of antagonising students and teachers. The few-month interval between the restriction in March and the return of remote education was wasted. Even if it was impossible to introduce the majority of the recommendations from the abovementioned report, still a lot of suggestions could have been taken into consideration – mostly in terms of departing from a strict timetable in favour of strengthening the relationships with the students, for instance through participating in valuable on-line events during the school hours or extending students' knowledge by observing and analysing the phenomena that occur around them or encouraging them to learn about family and local histories.

The tension in the educational community is growing. Teachers are feeling increasingly exhausted and frustrated, which translates into the quality of teaching and their attitudes towards students. Their work is restricted by bureaucracy, procedures and curricula which change with the politicians in power and recently have been tabooing a lot of issues important to adolescents. On the other side there are

students – overworked, discouraged and increasingly lonely and lost. With the current system not working properly, a fact demonstrated clearly by the pandemic report, perhaps it would be worth taking advantage of the existing conditions of remote education to suspend the current principles and procedures and redefine the basic categories so closely associated with the notion of school – the hierarchical structure, working methods, core curricula, infrastructure and the design prevailing in educational spaces. It would also be worthwhile to look at the language we use when talking about the functioning of the school or the way we feel about it.

The real change would have to be effected by unlearning the habits that make school an increasingly less friendly place for all those involved in the system of general education. Let the principle of reciprocity and cooperation replace the formula of one-way knowledge transfer in a space arranged to facilitate this equivalence. Instead of the cult of hierarchy, establishing ties and strengthening the authentic relationship. Instead of competition, evaluation, final tests – let us switch to setting goals together and strengthening competences. The core curricula could do with more vagueness and space to be filled with a

teacher's own ideas, with responding to the group's needs and pace of learning and spending time together outside school to experience the world the students usually learn about while sitting stiffly by school desks. Let teachers' talents and experience together with the interests of the students resound during classes. Too little emphasis is put today on both students' and



**fig. 3**

Jaśmina Wójcik

*Escape from the hive. Workers' rebellion*

2020, ink on paper, audio

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ucieczka-z-ulą](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ucieczka-z-ulą)

teachers' independence and creativity. And it is precisely independence that is so valuable in the contemporary world. It would be invaluable to include in the timetable such subjects during which students could take advantage of the increasingly more interesting educational offer by cultural or scientific centres. In such "un-school-like" conditions it would be much easier to start a genuine relationship and mutually develop the so-called soft competences, which condition the success in so many fields.

In the post-pandemic world students will certainly need the institution of school, the building and the classroom as they provide the stability and sense of safety. However, the present situation demonstrates that in the modern world, changeable and increasingly unpredictable, stationary education may soon become a luxury and only a possibility alongside which alternative working methods should develop. It would be worth working out an original strategy for building the foundations of remote education so that both students and teachers can safely use practical, easy-to-use tools.<sup>5</sup> If the core curricula remain unchanged and do not take into account the real needs of today's students and teachers living in a particular 'here and now', they will be passing on dead and useless knowledge, or in fact an excess of information that will not translate into true skills and competences which could facilitate informed decisions in adult life.

Above all, however, it is important to understand the conditions in which contemporary children and young people grow up.

<sup>5</sup> Currently, remote education uses mainly the tools provided by large Internet corporations, which impose their rights and restrictions, not only in terms of use, but also in terms of data protection – especially when it comes to free offers, utilised more often by teachers. The dangers arising from such solutions were discussed, for example, by Wojciech Orliński, whose publication is worth referring to (although not uncritically): W. Orliński, *Internet. Czas się bać*. Warszawa 2013.

The period of school is a time of the clashing of various influences that from an early age format the students and impose specific, often mutually excluding behaviours, ways of thinking or dressing. Socialisation training and social requirements come from different ways – from school, the family home, peers or the digital world. Before an adolescent person finds out what he or she is like and what causes him pain or pleasure, they learn how things should be. It turns out that without real emotional support and the development of critical thinking, children and young people with their typical sensitivity are completely unable to cope with the demands and expectations placed on them from an early age.

The students who will return to school after the distance learning is over will struggle with even more mental disorders, including depression. Even before the epidemic, the situation was dramatic – the 2019 estimates showed that around 10% of children and young people in Poland suffered from mental problems. According to WHO forecasts, depression will be a major health problem in the coming years.<sup>6</sup> According to the statistics, for years Poland has been a country with the second highest number of suicide attempts among children and teenagers aged 10-19 in Europe, with many of those attempts leading to death.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that these horrible statistics do not have any influence on the manner in which the school structure functions today, oriented primarily towards achieving measurable results and

<sup>6</sup> E. Sala-Hołubowicz, *Włączająca edukacja kulturowa jako receptywna relacja*, in: *Sztuka w edukacji*, ed. A. Zasucha, E. Śmigiel, Katowice 2019, pp. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup> You can read the statistics on the Dajemy Dzieciom Się Foundation's website, although the data may not reflect the true scale of the problem: "In 2019, 951 suicide attempts among children under 18 were registered, including as many as 46 attempts by children under 12. In the past year, 98 of them ended in the child's death. According to research carried out by the Dajemy Dzieciom Się Foundation, 7% of young people aged 13-17 tried to take their own lives. Suicides are one of the main causes of death among children and adolescents in the 10-19 age group." <https://fdds.pl/od-1-marcia-br-telefon-zaufania-dla-dzieci-i-mlodziezy-116-111-bedzie-dzialal-cala-dobe/> (access: 20.11.2020).

## Is 'what for' not the question we ask most often? What do we work for? What do we study for?

preparing students for examinations. Pupils and teachers are treated as cogs to drive the machine invented behind the desks of decision makers. A lot of the issues and problems faced by young people during adolescence are silenced and tabooed, and any deviation from the norm – whether in terms of behaviour or outcomes – is treated as a problem that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.

The crisis, born from natural causes, has revealed the fragility of our civilisation and the inefficiency of the structures it relies on. While trying to be optimistic about the future, one would like to believe that various forms of social life organisations will start to cooperate and create communities based on genuine relationships, mutual responsibility and interdependence in order to take care not only of people but also of the world around us. There is a problem, however, which the author of the famous nature-inspired, philosophical trilogy Maurice Maeterlinck pointed to while comparing the human civilisation to an anthill in "The Life of the Ant": "man, the only one among the social creatures, has no social organ (...). In the human world, everything is based solely, organically and fatally on egoism."<sup>8</sup>



fig. 4

Dorota Hadrian

*Oratorio* (2020, sculpture)

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fig. 5

Jaśmina Wójcik

*Escape from the hive. Workers' rebellion*

2020, ink on paper, audio

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# The Rite of Spring

**The cycle of nature and war – cultural and linguistic analogies**

**Małgorzata Szandała**

author

**In the dark vastness of Hades  
souls can only smell**

Heraclitus

**Her whole life is an entire  
sacrifice to the manifold, everlasting  
being whereof she forms part.**

**(...) through successive stages, at the almost  
perfect but pitiless society of our hives, where  
the individual is entirely merged in the republic,  
and the republic in its turn invariably sacrificed  
to the abstract and immortal city of the future.**

Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Bee*

Let us look in such a way that the things we look at arrange themselves in a composition created from events – subsequent or dispersed, occurring in history, nature, art, life, language and landscape. Certain events may affect us more than others.

### Sacrifice

The creation of Igor Stravinsky's ballet with Vaslav Nijinski's choreography is one of such significant events, which radiates over the area around it. The circumstances of its creation, its message, music and choreography, so unique for the moment of their appearance, are of particular importance. The Russian original was titled "The Sacred Spring", but translated to French the title got slightly modified to the "Rite of Spring" and the latter title stuck. Stravinsky's initial idea was to name the work "Sacrifice", a word which is going to be crucial here. The first part of the piece, "Adoration of the Earth" presents a spring celebration of an ancient Rus community: young girls and boys,

an elderly woman and wise men perform the rituals of the union between the earth and nature. Still bare after the winter, the soil is being enchanted by a common dance – a simple, rhythmical, coarse even but full of energy. What follows are ritual, not entirely peaceful scenes: "Rites of abduction" of girls by boys, processions and "Fights between tribes". The first part concludes with the "Dance of the Earth", with the Sage as its central figure – the dance itself starts slowly, then intensifies. The dancers want to wake the earth up after the winter so that life could resprout from it. The scene is immediately followed by another one, the "Sacrifice". The title refers to a young woman, a virgin, who – after the all-night rituals – dances her holy dance in the presence of the elderly and eventually sacrifices herself to the unpersonalised god of spring. The dance ends with death, the young woman's life is offered to win the favour of the powers of nature. Her death is supposed to ensure the revival of the vegetation that supports the life of the entire community. The sacrifice is to secure the future and existence.

The unbridled, wild, violent music, full of dissonances and rhythmical changes, the equally *broken* choreography and the gestures of the dancers were so foreign to the 19th century aesthetical canons, still accepted at the time, that the effect of the performance was primarily a shock. The work's vitality, brutality and counter-aesthetics contributed to its power of expression and dealt a heavy blow to the taste of the contemporary audience. The break with the previous aesthetics was definitive. It was a subversion, a radical and revolutionary work. "The Rite of Spring (...) is integrated with one idea: the mystery and great creative power of Spring" Stravinsky wrote.

Spring comes suddenly, it explodes, bringing a violent change. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise that the scandal which broke in Paris in May 1913 is considered one of the greatest in the history of art. "Among the spectators arriving at the theatre at 8:45 PM there were a lot of extremely smartly dressed ones. Everybody felt the excitement."<sup>1</sup> The expectations towards Diaghilev's famous ballet group and the artists were

<sup>1</sup> M. Eksteins, *Święto wiosny. Wielka Wojna i narodziny nowego wieku*, translated by: K. Rabińska, Poznań 2014, p. 29.



fig. 6

Małgorzata Szandata

*Rite of Spring*

2020, reproductions of drawings,  
video

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swieto-wiosny](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/swieto-wiosny)

high. Yet, after just a few minutes, the first whistles could be heard, and the performance almost ended in a brawl. After the premiere the press erupted with opposite opinions, from disgust to euphoria. According to Modris Eksteins, the events and the work itself were part of a much broader phenomenon and did not occur in isolation. The cultural landscape of early 20th century Europe created a suitable background against which the "Rite of Spring" could herald (or even foretell) future events – the Great War, the redefinition of many areas of life and the appearance of a new European order. "One of the best symbols of this century, full of paradoxes and exposed to disintegrating forces, in which – while longing for freedom – we came to possess the power of complete destruction, was the dance of death with its orgiastic and nihilistic irony. The Rite of Spring, which premiered in May 1913 in Paris, a year before the outbreak of the war, with its revolutionary energy and apotheosis of life through sacrifice was a symbolic *oeuvre*, a work of the 20th century world, which in its pursuit of life killed millions of its most valuable human beings."<sup>2</sup>

### **The Rite of Spring.**

Without any exceptions, death is the experience of every living organism. It is inscribed in the cycles of nature. The cyclicity, or the repetitiveness of the same form, each time according to the same scenario of sequenced stages is associated with rituals. A ceremony, just like any other ritual, has its specific aesthetics, choreography, gestures and objects. It aims at transformation and transgression of one's own circumstances. The repetitiveness of the ceremony guarantees the lasting of what it refers to. Power and vitality, initially so distant, heads inevitably

towards destruction, death and decomposition with the processes occurring in repeated cycles. Making sacrifices, so killing, is supposed to guarantee the rebirth and completion of the same circle of transformations. Moving towards life and towards death are coexisting drives. Directed towards destruction, death paradoxically possesses an unbridled creative force, primary and wild like nature. Creation happens through destruction, the new may grow only on the nutrients of the ruins of the old – the life-giving substance produced in the decomposition of old matter or order. To break with the old will mean to transgress the boundaries of imagination and notions. In his book "A Terrible Love of War" James Hillman writes that "War demands from us to take a leap of imagination as extraordinary and fantastic as the war itself. Since our usual categories of thinking are not capable and broad enough, they reduce the meaning of war to the explanation of its causes."<sup>3</sup>

Pagan rites of spring as well as 'The Rite of Spring', both as a musical piece and an event, corresponded well with this type of rituals which reflect nature and make war part of a common, ritual circle. The observation will become obvious when we realise the coincidence of those two specific

events. Their closeness in time makes us understand their closeness in nature. One could even say that war is actually a festival of spring. The statement is not an ethical judgement on war or the rite. It can be assumed that man – as a species and a community with all its culture that has grown on it – is subject to the same forces and drives.

The cycles and rhythms of nature rely on their own laws: the birth, lush blooming, force, drive, pollination, death and organisms that feed on dead bodies of other organisms. There

2 Ibidem, p. 10.

3 J. Hillman, *Miłość do wojny*, translated by: J. Korpanty, Warszawa 2017, p. 17.

## Insects have a special function in the anti-Semitic imaginarium

are no moral norms, only laws of nature and hierarchies, relationships and sequences of events that result from the laws. Subsequent events do not have to form understandable narratives starting from the cause and leading to a logical effect and providing the explanation for the appearance of evil or a misfortune. From the cultural perspective, killing symbolises the radicality and power of change, phenomena that elude ethical or aesthetical judgements, or – to speak more generally – the redefinition of all the values accepted within a culture. Modris Eksteins's specific image of Europe in the early 1900s is characterised by a particular atmosphere – some widespread and general intoxication with the idea of change. An almost analogical situation can be found in Maeterlinck's description of honey bee swarming: "It is the ecstasy of the perhaps unconscious sacrifice the god has ordained; it is the festival of honey, the triumph of the race, the victory of the future: the one day of joy, of forgetfulness and folly; the only Sunday known to the bees."<sup>4</sup> This is the festival of the future!

The energy so released and the hovering spirit of avant-garde in one swoop moved from culture to politics and ideology to finally bring about the war. And, paradoxically, it was the war itself that became the "life-giving" principle. In the chapter titled "War as culture" M. Eksteins discusses this very phenomenon: „Although the equipment was important, the war was seen, especially in Germany, as the highest form of testing one's spirit and thus vitality, culture and life. In 1911, Friedrich von Bernhardi in his

<sup>4</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Bee*, translated by: A. Sutro, New York 1914.

book that in Germany had six issues over two years also referred to war as >>the life-giving principle<<. It was a manifestation of the highest culture. (...) In other words, it was considered to be the foundation of culture, or the springboard to the higher level of creativity and spirituality, it was an important part of a nation's pride and image."<sup>5</sup>

**They appear to be shivering in the darkness, to be numbed, suffocated, so closely are they huddled together; one might fancy they were ailing captives, or queens dethroned, who have had their one moment of glory in the midst of their radiant garden, and are now compelled to return to the shameful squalor of their poor overcrowded home.**

Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Bee*

collecting pollen from that charming and beautiful fields. The bees are working without rest. This scene does not belong to

<sup>5</sup> M. Eksteins, *Święto wiosny...*, op.cit., p. 164. M. Ekstains gives many examples of how much fascination was aroused by the idea of war at the time and how it captured the imagination of so many people: "The Faustian power that Wagner, Diaghilev and other modernists sought in their works was revealed to the entire society. ,This war is an aesthetic pleasure, incomparable to anything', says one of Glaeser's characters" (p. 170), „In August 1914, most Germans perceived the conflict in which their country had become involved in spiritual categories. The war was first and foremost an idea, not a conspiracy to expand Germany's territory." (p. 163)



fig. 7

Małgorzata Szandata  
*Rite of Spring*

2020, reproductions of drawings,  
video

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any specific place or time.

"Does the earth want war" James Hillman asks. "Why is Ares also the ancient god of agriculture and why did Mars have its own plot of land in the country, behind the city walls?"<sup>6</sup> Let us imagine that another image is quickly placed over this scene. An image seen from the perspective of the god of war, who knows very well that in that lush, juicy greenery, in its deepest flesh, close to the earth, the cycles of life and death alternate incessantly. Hillman goes on by saying: "I started to watch cemeteries, where the bodies of those killed in war were buried. Instead of analysing the minds of people to find the reason why those killed lay there, I wondered if the earth that possessed their bodies had not claimed them even before."<sup>7</sup> The earth demands its sacrifice.

Let us continue to place the images on the idyllic scene and imagine that a moment ago the same charming fields were the place of work (or even death) of death camp prisoners. Like any landscape that picturesque scene is tainted and shows us an encoded view. The idyllic countryside landscape creates the appearance of innocence – a typical coordinate system of ordinary, safe and good life: a field, a road, houses on the horizon and a church securing the entirety of the view. Determined by that canonical image, a well organised, simple and pious life may go on undisturbed and in proper order. It is a recurring pattern. But this landscape (like any other) must come under the charge of being tainted. When Martin Pollack speaks about tainted landscapes, he exposes a certain practice and says plainly: "They are landscapes which have been places of mass murders, committed secretly, far from people's eyes, often in complete conspiration. Inconvenient witnesses were liquidated, the pits the bodies were ditched into were filled up, evened and covered with carefully planted trees and bushes to make the mass graves disappear."<sup>8</sup> According to Pollack, this procedure required "deep knowledge of gardening". We could even think that the sacrifice

of the bodies was made to some god of nature and the ceremony was performed by the master-gardener. Nature was, in turn, supposed to absorb, overgrow and cover everything to finally decompose the corpses covered with soil and create that stunning impression of innocence, making the previous landscape return, as if nothing had ever happened there. Natural processes were purposefully harnessed to conceal the crime. The image of the countryside has its cracks. "Do they know what the land they work hides? Did they make a vegetable garden here? Do they grow potatoes? Did they plant onions?" asks Martin Pollack. "We can see only the meadow and a simple, wooden fence, one that can be found in any Polish, Ukrainian or Russian village. Such a fence could be put up in Austria. (...) There were many such places. Infinitely many."<sup>9</sup>

We can then speak not as much about mentally projecting the laws of nature and natural processes on people's lives or treating them allegorically but even about their strictly practical use. With premeditation and pragmatism. In face of this evidence, comparing and putting together the celebration of spring and war, perceived as rituals (cyclical and aesthetic events) stops being just a metaphor. Too many depressing convergences reveal here. Let us focus for a moment on the issue of language: while looking at that natural convergence from another perspective, it becomes obvious that the language Maeterlinck uses to describe the life of bees or ants closes us in a common universum of events, equally incomprehensible to the insects and us. "Oh, we know well that our fate is similar to theirs, that they are just a feeble and incomplete shape of the force beyond our understanding, the same mighty force that at the same time revives and devours us. It can be formulated that way, no doubt. If scrutinised carefully, the fate of bees is as sad as nature itself and it will remain so until we unravel its mysteries, if it has any, and until we understand them."<sup>10</sup>

There is another linguistic question that needs to be dealt with in this context – another language event in the puzzle we look at. It is an analogy. It occurs here in its purest and most

6 J. Hillman, *Miłość do...*, chapter: *Dygresja: Blisko ziemi, powrót na wieś.*, pp. 128-129.

7 Ibidem, p. 129.

8 M. Pollack, *Skażone krajobrazy*, translated by: K. Niedenthal, Wołowiec 2014, p. 20.

9 Ibidem, p. 75.

10 M. Maeterlinck, *Życie...*, p. 161,

ruthless form, while transposing the imaginarium of the animal world on human reality.

### Sacrifice Lousing

When it comes to words and phrases, the interpenetration of notions and worlds is a natural thing. Language feeds on the richness of its ambiguities, which are at the same time the source of danger. Like an ant lion, language sets its traps for us. Just like in the case of natural processes harnessed to conceal the crime, words in the Nazi or racist language were supposed to serve a particular purpose. They were meant to affect casue effects and introduce analogies to the world of tangible facts. Their role was to trap and enslave. To create images in some minds and impose names and qualities on others.

Locusts are a plague, the must be eradicated. Insects! Insects are busy and repulsive, they are a plague. Repugnant insects are trampled upon and smashed against the ground with the sole of one's shoe. Swarms of biting insects put us off. Lice, fleas, biting and blood-sucking parasites multiply and spread disease. Bedbugs and cockroaches are born from dirt. When transferred, such images become a source of violence. It comes straight from the language: we know only too well today that everything starts from calling your neighbour a cockroach.

At a certain point, that moving mass of cockroaches was seen as a danger to all good citizens. Everything, the entire community had to be cleansed. It was necessary to start the *de-Jewishing* action. Parasite insects are the most repulsive creatures in the animal world. As an analogy, the world of insects was incorporated into the Nazi antisemitic nomenclature

and skilfully used. This practice was commented on by Monika Żołkoś in her text titled "Insectosemitism": "The anti-Semitic language of the Nazis makes a significant shift: parasitic Jews appear to be a community that operates outside moral categories, driven solely by a biological impulse."<sup>11</sup> Insects' way of feeding and reproduction is extremely repulsive. Repulsion is a reflex that makes us get rid of them. Delousing was a method to achieve the purity of the race. Monika Żołkoś also recalls the figure of Alfred Rosenberg - a well-known extreme anti-Semite and co-author of racist theories. It was him who invented the

thesis of the parasitism of Jews and maintained that "it is a biological fact to be spoken about in the same way as the parasitism in the animal or plant world is spoken about."<sup>12</sup> To put it bluntly, insects and Jews were supposed to be eliminated in a similar-analogical way. The same mass death by chemicals was intended for both. It was not supposed to provoke any sympathy or moral dilemmas. 'Insects have a special function in the anti-Semitic imaginarium. In the anthropocentric concept of the animal world, animals are defined as creatures alien to what is human. They are

unworthy of attention and care and become the embodiment of existential worthlessness. Killing them, as opposed to a cruel treatment of mammals or birds does not rise any ethical questions (...). Hierarchical thinking, incorporated into the logic of species chauvinism, locate insect at the lowest level of the pyramid of existence." The Nazi were not the first to deny humanity to Jews "but never before were entomological phantasms used on such a scale."<sup>13</sup>

Such analogies and shifts created a language and terms

<sup>11</sup> M. Żołkoś, *Insektosemityzm*, in „Narracje o Zagładzie” 2017 no. 3, p. 55.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 51.

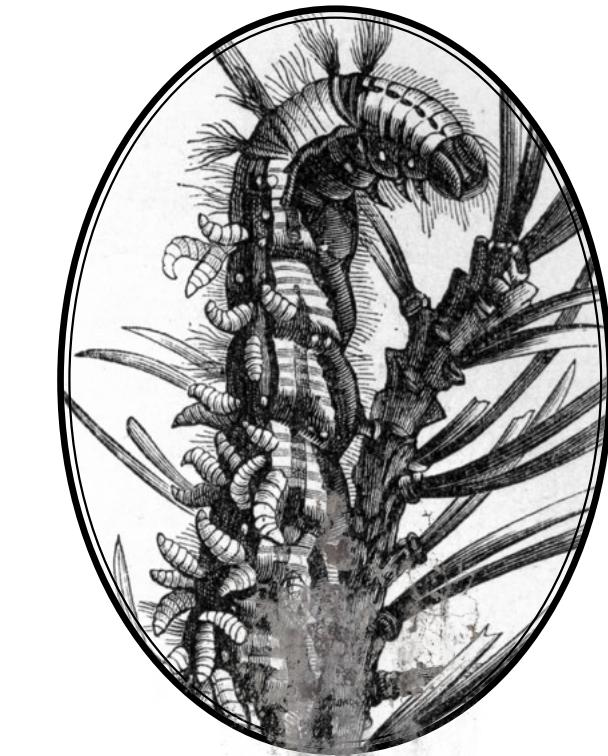


fig. 8

Małgorzata Szandata

*Rite of Spring*

2020, reproductions of drawings,  
video

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/  
swieto-wiosny](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/swieto-wiosny)

that captured the general imagination and the entire public life in Hitler's Germany.

LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii, or the Language of the Third Reich was a title of Viktor Klemperer's book, published in 1947, just after the war, which provided a unique study of that linguistic neoplasm. He described the reality of the totalitarian state from the perspective of the Nazi's linguistic creativity and it was a first-hand account. The author – a German philologist and a son of a rabbi – was deprived by the Nazi regime of his position of professor at the University of Dresden, where he taught literature. As the persecution intensified, he was gradually stripped of his civil rights (it was only owing to a lucky coincidence that he did not share the fate of other Jewish citizens). "The man standing next to me on the front platform gives me a stern look and says quietly, right at my ear: – you will get off at the Central Station and come with me. – This is the first time such a thing happens to me, but I know the situation very well from stories of other star-bearers. Perhaps it will finish well, maybe he feels like playing jokes and decided that I will suit him. But I cannot be sure of that in advance, and, as even being treated mildly and jokingly by the Gestapo is not a pleasure, the incident affects me. I am going to louse him – my catcher says to the porter – he must stand here, face towards the wall until I call him."<sup>14</sup>

Despite the horrifying reality he had to live in, Klemperer observed the mechanisms of that language with professional attention. In his philologist's diary, he noted: "...stereotypes are now gaining power over us. The language that speaks and thinks for you..."<sup>15</sup>

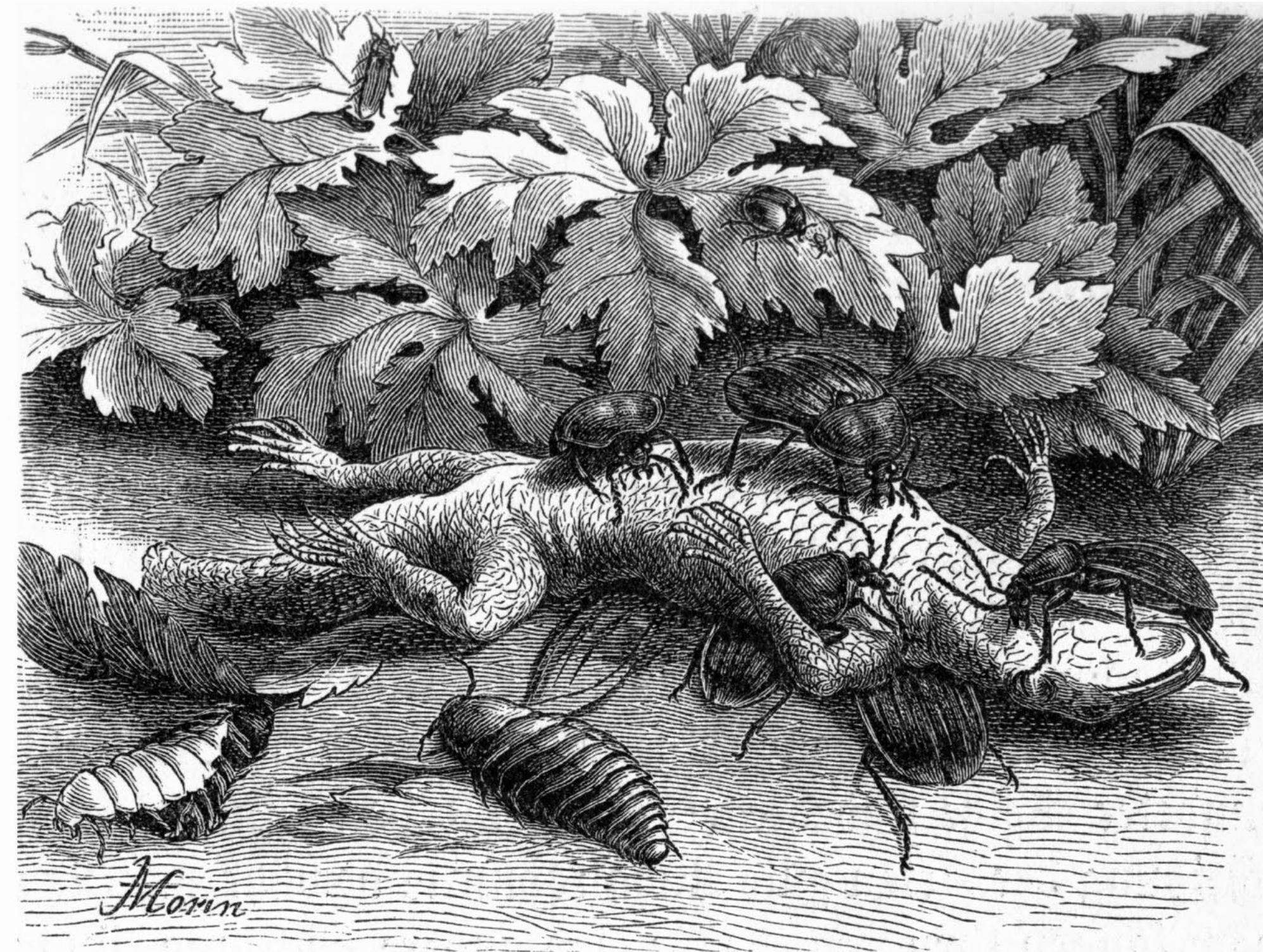
## Rites of Spring

It is not the sense of sight but of smell that is of use for the souls in Hades. Smell - the most animal of the senses. Our lives are governed by incomprehensible forces that move the wheels of history – cycles of events. The gods of war and nature act

together, they constantly demand sacrifice. Our thoughts are governed by language.

<sup>14</sup> V. Klemperer, *LTI Notatnik filologa*, translated by: J. Zychowicz, Kraków-Wrocław 1983, pp. 194-195.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 117.



Schwarzglänzender Nasläfer (*Silpha atrata*) nebst Larve.

fig. 9

Małgorzata Szandała  
*Rite of Spring*  
2020, reproductions of drawings,  
video  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/  
swieto-wiosny](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/swieto-wiosny)



TO SKANDAL BY POLAK NIE MIAŁ ODWAGI CYWILNEJ  
BY UDZERZYĆ BEZBRONNEGO CZŁOWIEKA

fig. 10

Hubert Czerepok

*It is a scandal that a Pole does not have the civilian courage to hit a defenceless person*

2011, neon

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/to-skandal-by-polak-nie-mial-odwagi](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/to-skandal-by-polak-nie-mial-odwagi)

# **Taboo and stigma**

**Repression of non-heteronormative people in the Third Reich**

**Paweł Wątroba**

**author**

**In the gloomy republic of the secretors, the devotion is absolute, unmovingly implacable and the control is incessant. Everything here is black, subdued, depressed. Years pass in crampiness and darkness. Everybody here is a slave, everybody is almost blind. Nobody, apart from the victim of the mad reproduction quest, goes to the surface to take a deep breath or see the sun. Everything from beginning to the very end happens in everlasting darkness.<sup>1</sup>**

M. Maeterlinck, *The Life of the White Ant*

To the sexual minority in Germany, the Weimar Republic (1918–1933) seemed to be an exceptionally favourable time. In Rob Epstein's documentary, those remembering the times recall the interwar period with affection as a time of numerous opportunities for the development of youth organisations and nightlife for the non-heteronormative community.<sup>2</sup> Especially in Berlin, which attracted gay and lesbian people from home and abroad and appeared to be the capital of freedom, with a wide range of venues, associations and a homoerotic press. It was there that in 1897 the Scientific and Humanitarian Committee was set up by Magnus Hirschfeld – a homosexual, Berlin-based doctor of Jewish origin. It was the world's first organisation for the improvement of the situation of the LGBT+ community, which brought together many well-known German scientists. The Committee was involved in educational activities and political actions for the equality of minorities as well as in research

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Życie termitów*, red.: H. Ruszkiewicz, Warszawa 1958, s. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraf 175, director: R. Epstein, J. Friedman, produced by: R. Epstein, United Kingdom, Not, USA, 2000.

devoted to developing the knowledge of human sexuality.<sup>3</sup> The main objective of the organisation was to bring about the legalisation of homosexuality, penalised in Germany since 1871 under paragraph 175. Thanks to Hirschfeld's efforts and the research of the Sexological Institute, in 1929 in Berlin a draft act was prepared for the Reichstag.<sup>4</sup> However, it was never voted for. On 6 May 1933, the Sexological Institute - the seat of the Committee - was ransacked by a National Socialist student military group and the books from Hirschfeld's library were burned in the streets of Berlin.<sup>5</sup>

### Anti-homosexual rhetoric of Nazism

The persecution of non-heteronormative people in the Third Reich was justified by the alleged threat they posed to the state and to the idealised Aryan race, for which binary gender roles and heteronormativity were to guarantee the growth of population and military power. In Germany, homosexuality was not treated symmetrically with regard to gender. According to the law at the time, only male homosexuality was treated as a criminal offence under paragraph 175, which read: "Fornication that goes against nature, which occurs between men or between man and animal is punishable by imprisonment, with the possibility of loss of civil rights."<sup>6</sup> Linguistically, the sexual intercourse between men was equated with zoophilia, which was indicative of the inhuman nature of homosexuality that went against the accepted natural order. The Nazi ideological perspective on homosexuality was demonstrated in Heinrich Himmler's speech: "Some homosexuals think that what they do is their private life. But sex life is no longer a private matter, because it concerns the

<sup>3</sup> Komitet Naukowo-Humanitarny (entry) in: Giszowiec, Wikipedia.pl, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komitet\\_Naukowo-Humanitarny#cite\\_note-CIT-EREFBeachy2015Chapter\\_Three-2](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komitet_Naukowo-Humanitarny#cite_note-CIT-EREFBeachy2015Chapter_Three-2) [access: 10.11.2020].

<sup>4</sup> Reform of the Penal Code - Institute for Sexual Science (1919-1933), <http://www.hirschfeld.in-berlin.de/institut/en/ifsframe.html>

<sup>5</sup> R. Biedroń, Różowe piekło nazizmu, in: Auschwitz.org. <http://www.auschwitz.org/historia/rozne-grupy-wieznow/homoseksualisci-odrebna-kategoria-wieznow/robert-biedron-rozowe-pieklo-nazizmu/>

<sup>6</sup> Paragraf 175 (entry), in: Wikipedia.pl, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paragraf\\_175](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paragraf_175) [access: 12.11.2020].



fig. 11

Krzysztof Jung  
Transformation / Love / Cocooning  
documentation of performances,  
photo: Grzegorz Kowalski  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/przemiana-milosc-kokonienie](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/przemiana-milosc-kokonienie)

survival of the nation. This is the difference between taking over the world and self-destruction. A nation with many children can take over the world. A racially pure nation with few children has already one foot in the grave, and in fifty or a hundred years it will not exist. Therefore, we must all understand that we cannot allow this disease to develop in Germany and we must fight it (...). It is very important that we exterminate them, not out of vengeance, but out of life necessity.”<sup>7</sup> Sexual orientation was treated as a public matter with homosexuality identified as going against National Socialist ideas due to its lack of reproductive potential – alongside abortion, homosexuality was a denial of the pro-family policy of the Third Reich. Furthermore, non-heteronormativity like Jewry, was seen as an alien influence on the Aryan race and even as a ‘plague’, spreading through seduction and threatening the ‘healthy’, male population. “Based on a pseudo-scientific theory, attempts were made to prove that the vast majority of homosexuals are >>seduced<< (*Verführerter*) i.e. people who were initially heterosexual and fell into the trap of >> seducers<< (*Verführer*). Seducers were supposed to be the >>real gays<< responsible for the spread of the >>homosexual plague<< (*die homosexuelle Seuche*).”<sup>8</sup>

The issue of homosexuality was also present in the Night of the Long Knives of 29-30 June 1934, during which the founder of Sturmabteilung, Ernest Röhm, was arrested and his subordinates murdered on the pretext of them planning a coup d'état.<sup>9</sup>

7 Quoted after M. Środa, *Obcy, inny, wykluczony*, Gdańsk 2020, p 151.

8 M. Borysławka, „Niewdzięczne wobec narodu” LGBT, in: Krytyka Polityczna. <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kultura/historia/kryminalizacja-homoseksualnosici-w-trzeciej-rzeszy-homofobia> (access: 17.11.2020).

9 Röhm was shot dead on 2 July 1934 after refusing to commit suicide. Cf. *Noc długich noży*, Ernest Röhm, *Sturmabteilung* (entries), in: Wikipedia.

## But sex life is no longer a private matter, because it concerns the survival of the nation

Heinrich Himmler

Röhm's sexual orientation was well known, but the NSDAP knew that he was not the only gay in the SA. As a matter of fact, the events were a manifestation of a struggle for power between the SS and the SA, but homosexuality became the official justification for the slaughter. The Reich Press Office announced: “Because of Röhm's >>unfortunate inclinations<< Führer gave the order to eliminate this ulcer ruthlessly.”<sup>10</sup> The propaganda gay figure was characterized by cowardice, perjury, degeneration, perversion, animal-like sexual drive and moral gangrene,<sup>11</sup> however, after the assassination of the SA leaders, homosexuality began to be associated with treason, with gays described as ‘anti-social parasites’ and ‘enemies of the state’ and citizens were encouraged to denounce suspicious men.<sup>12</sup>

Despite attempts to cover female homosexuality by paragraph 175, Justice Minister Franz Gürtner spoke out against it, providing the following arguments: “Debauchery is more widespread among men than among women (excluding the group of whores). It is also less noticeable in women, so the threat of depravity by following the example is much smaller.

Cases of close, friendly relations between women would make it extremely complicated to establish the facts and would increase the risk of unfounded denunciations and investigations”.<sup>13</sup>

pl, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noc\\_d%C5%82ugich\\_no%C5%BCy](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noc_d%C5%82ugich_no%C5%BCy), [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_R%C3%B6hm#cite\\_note-86](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_R%C3%B6hm#cite_note-86), <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturmabteilung> (access: 12.11.2020).

10 Quoted after *Homoseksualiści a Holocaust*, translated by: L. Ściox, in: “Nigdy Więcej” no. 14, 2004.

11 J. Szczęsny, *Retoryka antyhomoseksualna w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, in: Liberte!. <https://liberte.pl/retoryka-antyhomoseksualna-w-trzeciej-rzeszy>

12 Ibidem.

13 Quoted after C. Schoppmann, *Czas maskowania: o sytuacji lesbijek w narodowym socjalizmie*, translated by: J. Ostrowska, in: „Teksty Drugie. Teoria

Female homosexuality was an issue irrelevant to the Third Reich because of the sexist character of the 'Master race' idea. German female citizens were banned from positions of power and their role was limited to motherhood and marriage. Women's sexual orientation was also not seen as an obstacle to procreation the Nazis saw women always ready for.<sup>14</sup>

### Tools of systemic repression

"(...) before noon we had to move the snow lying in front of the block from the left side of the alleyway to the right. In the afternoon, the same snow was to be taken back from right to left. But not with a wheelbarrow or a shovel, because that would be far too easy for us, "faggots" (...) We had to put our coats on so that the buttons were on our backs, fasten them, form a type of a bag from the tails and carry the snow in it. We had to load the snow with our bare hands, because we had no gloves (...) Twenty rounds of carrying the snow, twenty rounds of shovelling it with hands, over and over again till the evening and all that on the run. That mental and physical torture - a senseless sacrifice made to foolishness – continued for six days until, finally, new prisoners with pink triangles appeared in our block and replaced us."<sup>15</sup>

H. Heger, *Men with the Pink Triangle*

After Hitler came to power on 30 January 1933, organised forms of homosexual, female and human rights movements were destroyed within a few months. Any collective manifestations of the life of minorities were banned. Investigations, roundups and arrests began. The lives of the non-heteronormative was filled with fear and dehumanising exclusion. In 1935, paragraph 175 was tightened up. From that moment a sentence could be passed without a trial and the right to appeal, based on any type of interaction with sexual overtones – a gesture, look, greeting

literatury, krytyka, interpretacja" no. 5, 2008, p. 165.

14 Ibidem, p. 166.

15 An account of the first work of homosexual prisoners in KL Sachsenhausen. H. Heger, *Mężczyźni z różowym trójkątem*, translated by: A. Rosenau, Warszawa 2020, p. 34.

– without providing any proof of guilt.<sup>16</sup> In 1936, the apparatus of systemic homophobia was extended by the Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion, with its own branch offices.<sup>17</sup> Its main task was to obtain information about people suspected of committing acts prohibited by the NSDAP. By 1940, the centre had collected data on approximately 41,000 people suspected of or convicted for homosexuality, which served as a basis for coordinating further repressions.<sup>18</sup> It is estimated that around 100,000 people were convicted for homosexuality in the Third Reich. The penitentiary history of the victims differed: a psychiatric hospital, an investigative detention centre, a high security prison and, finally, a concentration camp. Between 10,000 and 15,000 defendants were sent to the camps under paragraph 175.<sup>19</sup> Despite the fact that the hatred concentrated mainly on homosexual men, there were also women among the persecuted. If sent to the camp, the women were assigned to the "antisocial" group, marked with a black triangle, where they joined prostitutes, drug addicts, alcoholics and the homeless.<sup>20</sup>

Homosexual men were intended for social rehabilitation, as every able-bodied man, regardless of his orientation, could prove useful during the war, hence various forms of 'curing' homosexuality. Nevertheless, the mortality rate in this camp group is estimated at 60%.<sup>21</sup> Apart from prisoners of Jewish origin, this was the highest percentage. Because of a separate marking – first with 'A' for *Arschficker* (assfuckers),<sup>22</sup> and then with pink triangles – men convicted for homosexuality were an easy target of assaults by fellow prisoners and guards in the camps. This triangle was larger than the symbols assigned to

16 Homoseksualiści a Holocaust, op.cit.

17 Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion (entry), in: Wikipedia En, access: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reich\\_Central\\_Office\\_for\\_the\\_Combating\\_of\\_Homosexuality\\_and\\_Abortion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reich_Central_Office_for_the_Combating_of_Homosexuality_and_Abortion) (10.11.2020).

18 Ibidem.

19 J. Ostrowska, Afterword, in: *Mężczyźni z różowym trójkątem*, op.cit. s.

146.

20 Czas maskowania: o sytuacji lesbijek w narodowym socjalizmie, op.cit.

21 R. Lautmann, *Homosexuals & the Holocaust: Gay Prisoners in the Concentration Camps*, Jewishvirtuallibrary.org, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/gay-prisoners-in-the-concentration-camps> (access: 12.11.2020).

22 J. Ostrowska, Afterword, op.cit.



fig. 12

Łukasz Trzciński  
Corset (regime dress)  
2020, objects

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/gorset](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/gorset)

other groups to make it visible from a distance.<sup>23</sup> Prisoners were stripped of their dignity at every turn, they were called ‘camp shit’ or ‘warm hogs’, also while reporting: “When he asked the prisoner to introduce himself, the prisoner could not say his name, but had to answer – for example – as >> prisoner number 4567<<. If he asked one of us, homosexuals, then we couldn’t report like we did to the previous SS-Lagerfuehrer >>pervert number 4567<<, he demanded that we reported as >>bent motherfucker 4567<<.”<sup>24</sup> Humiliation, verbal, physical and sexual violence and torture happened on a daily basis. Prisoners with the pink triangle were treated as the weakest link of the camp’s male blocks. Jewish and gay kommandos were given the worst possible tasks. From Josef Kohout’s memoirs we learn that in KL Sachsenhausen it was clay extraction and in KL Flossenbürg – a quarry.<sup>25</sup> In such places the gruesome work, strictly controlled in terms of the efficiency of extracting building raw materials led to accidents or deaths from exhaustion. “It happened very often that the prisoners pushing the wagon lost strength and the wagon slid back down the hill. If we did not manage to stop it with wooden wedges, the wagon hit the next one, which was being pushed up at the moment. Injured bodies were thrown in the air, limbs were smashed and torn off and other prisoner were beaten with sticks. In this way, the clay mine took a heavy toll every day, people died in accidents and from exhaustion. It really deserved its name - the mine of death”<sup>26</sup>

Heavy work was not the only way to re-educate gays in camp conditions. Members of ‘homokommandos’ were subjected to

23 Mężczyźni z różowym trójkątem, op.cit. p. 29.

24 Ibidem, 74.

25 Ibidem, pp. 35-37, 50-52.

26 Ibidem, pp. 36-37.

## After Hitler came to power on 30 January 1933, organised forms of homosexual, female and human rights movements were destroyed within a few months.

medical experiments, designed to change their sexual orientation. There were “voluntary” castrations, injections of testosterone into testicles, and surgical interventions, including the insertion of an artificial gland that secreted male hormones.<sup>27</sup> The practices were usually unsuccessful. The therapy also included forced visits to camp brothels, set up since 1943 on Himmler’s orders as part of the prisoner bonus system, during which they were watched by SS men.<sup>28</sup> During the Second World War, homosexual prisoners could leave the camp by joining – voluntarily or forcibly – penal divisions, such as Dirlewanger’s unit, which fought on the eastern front and committed numerous crimes against civilians.

## From liberation to oppression

After the end of the war and the liberation of the prisoners by the Allied and Soviet troops in 1945, the men with the pink triangle were not acquitted and qualified as victims. They were denied the right to be named

survivors and the compensation for their suffering. Paragraph 175 was still in force in Germany and Austria, so if their sentence had not expired they were sent to prison as criminals to do their time. In the GDR this law was in force until 1967, in West Germany until 1969 and in Austria until 1971.<sup>29</sup> The post-war

27 Homoseksualiści a Holocaust, op.cit.; P. Fijałkowski, Homoseksualność daleka i bliska, Warszawa 2014, p. 129; P. Tatchell, Hidden from History - the Gay Holocaust, 1997, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090605101431/http://www.petertatchell.net/history/hidden%20from%20history.htm> (access: 12.11.2020).

28 J. Ostrowska, Prostytucja w obozach koncentracyjnych. Nikt już o niej nie chce pamiętać, Polityka.pl, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/historia/1515384,1,prostytucja-w-obozach-koncentracyjnych-nikt-juz-o-niej-nie-chce-pamietac.read> (access: 12.11.2020).

29 J. Ostrowska, Afterword, in: Mężczyźni z różowym trójkątem, op.cit. p. 141.



fig. 13

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas  
Akie Sam (Here we are)

2020, patchwork

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/akie-sam](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/akie-sam)

period did not bring any relief for gays and lesbians as the threats of imprisonment, loss of a job or social ostracism continued. In 1945-1969 around 50 thousand men were imprisoned in Germany for homosexual acts.<sup>30</sup> Sentences passed in Hitler's era were only annulled in 2002, namely 50 years after WWII. In 2016, Germany passed the law which entitled those sentenced for homosexuality after 1945 to compensation.<sup>31</sup>

For decades, statistics were used to prioritise the suffering of the concentration camps victims and the Holocaust narrative was strictly protected against undesirable inclusions. The memories of systemic oppression had to be concealed and socially camouflaged, and the evidence for this part of camps history had to be destroyed. "The memory of homosexual victims of the Nazi relies on just several accounts. The witnesses who dared to speak represent only a fraction of those persecuted. The ignored majority, living in fear, remains anonymous. Sometimes their tragic history is limited to a few, concise notes in court or police documents or prisoners' memories."<sup>32</sup> The first testimony brought to light was the book "The Men with the Pink Triangle" published in 1972 in Germany. To avoid consequences, the story of Josef Kohout's persecution, written down by Hans Neumann, was published under the pen name of Heinz Heger. Many years later, the author was followed by Pierre Seel ("Moi, Pierre Seel, déporté homosexuel", 1994), Gerhard Beck ("An Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin", 1999) and Rudolf Brazda ("Itinéraire d'un triangle rose", 2010). Propelled by the idea of the equality of unjustified suffering, the memory of the forgotten victims of Nazism continues to be restored, and the number of documented cases is slowly increasing.

### **Illustrated Story Lesson 9**

#### **The memory of the Nazi persecution and the forgotten**

<sup>30</sup> K. Domagała-Pereira, *Niemcy: odszkodowania dla homoseksualistów*, in: Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/pl/niemcy-odszkodowania-dla-homoseksualist%C3%B3w/a-35997506> (access: 12.11.2020).

<sup>31</sup> *Niemcy: odszkodowania dla homoseksualistów*, op.cit.

<sup>32</sup> Afterword, op.cit., p. 151.

victims of the Holocaust seems to be particularly important at a time when representatives of the Polish Government are speaking negatively about the sexual minority, inspiring their supporters' homophobia. It is enough to mention the significant words of the Polish Head of State, uttered during the presidential campaign in June 2020, when he referred to the LGBT+ minority in Poland at the rally in Brzeg by saying: "They are trying to tell us that they are people, while this is just an ideology".<sup>33</sup> At the time the President was supported by the chief of the election staff, Joachim Brudziński, MEP: "Poland without LGBT is the most beautiful"<sup>34</sup>, and the current Minister of Education and Science, Przemysław Czarnek: "Let us protect the family from this kind of corruption, depravity and absolutely immoral behaviour. Let us defend ourselves against the LGBT ideology and let us stop listening to these idiots about some human rights or some equality. These people are not equal to normal people and let us finally stop this discussion."<sup>35</sup> A hateful message is also coming from the Catholic Church. Very unfortunate was Archbishop Jędraszewski's sermon delivered during the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising in St Mary's Church

<sup>33</sup> Andrzej Duda o LGBT: Próbują wmówić, że to ludzie. To ideologia, in: Rzeczpospolita, source: Rp.pl. <https://www.rp.pl/Wybory-prezydenckie-2020/200619782-Andrzej-Duda-o-LGBT-Probuja-wmowic-ze-to-ludzie-To-ideologia.html> (access: 17.11.2020).

<sup>34</sup> J. Jaz, Europoseł Brudziński wolałby Polskę bez LGBT. Tweetował: Polska bez osób homoseksualnych i transpłciowych byłaby piękniejsza, in: Polska Times. <https://polskatimes.pl/europoseł-brudzinski-wolałby-polskie-bez-lgbt-tweetował-polska-bez-osob-homoseksualnych-i-transpłciowych-byłaby-piekniejsza/ar/c1-15023114> (access: 17.11.2020).

<sup>35</sup> K. Rogacín, Przemysław Czarnek o zdjęciu z osobami LGBT: Ci ludzie nie są równi normalnym ludziom, in: Polska Times, <https://polskatimes.pl/przemyslaw-czarnek-o-zdjeciu-z-osobami-lgbt-ci-ludzie-nie-sa-rowni-normalnym-ludziom/ar/c1-15025218> (access: 17.11.2020).

**Every few years, the sexual minority in Poland has to face the language of hatred and dehumanisation and homophobia still remains an effective political tool.**

in Cracow, when he spoke about the “rainbow plague” which replaced the red one.<sup>36</sup> There have been also other harmful narratives, which contradict current scientific and medical knowledge, such as associating paedophilia with homosexuality. Every few years, the sexual minority in Poland has to face the language of hatred and dehumanisation and homophobia still remains an effective political tool.



fig. 14

Kijewski/Kocur

*Billion and one*, 2003/13

objects (epoxy resin, cast painted), courtesy of the Propaganda Gallery

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/miliard-jeden](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/miliard-jeden)

36 Czerwona zaraza już nie chodzi po naszej ziemi, ale pojawiła się nowa, neomarksistowska, in: *TvpInfo*, source: PAP. <https://www.tvp.info/43757196/czerwona-zaraza-juz-nie-chodzi-po-naszej-ziemi-ale-pojawila-sie-nowa-neomarksistowska> (access: 17.11.2020).

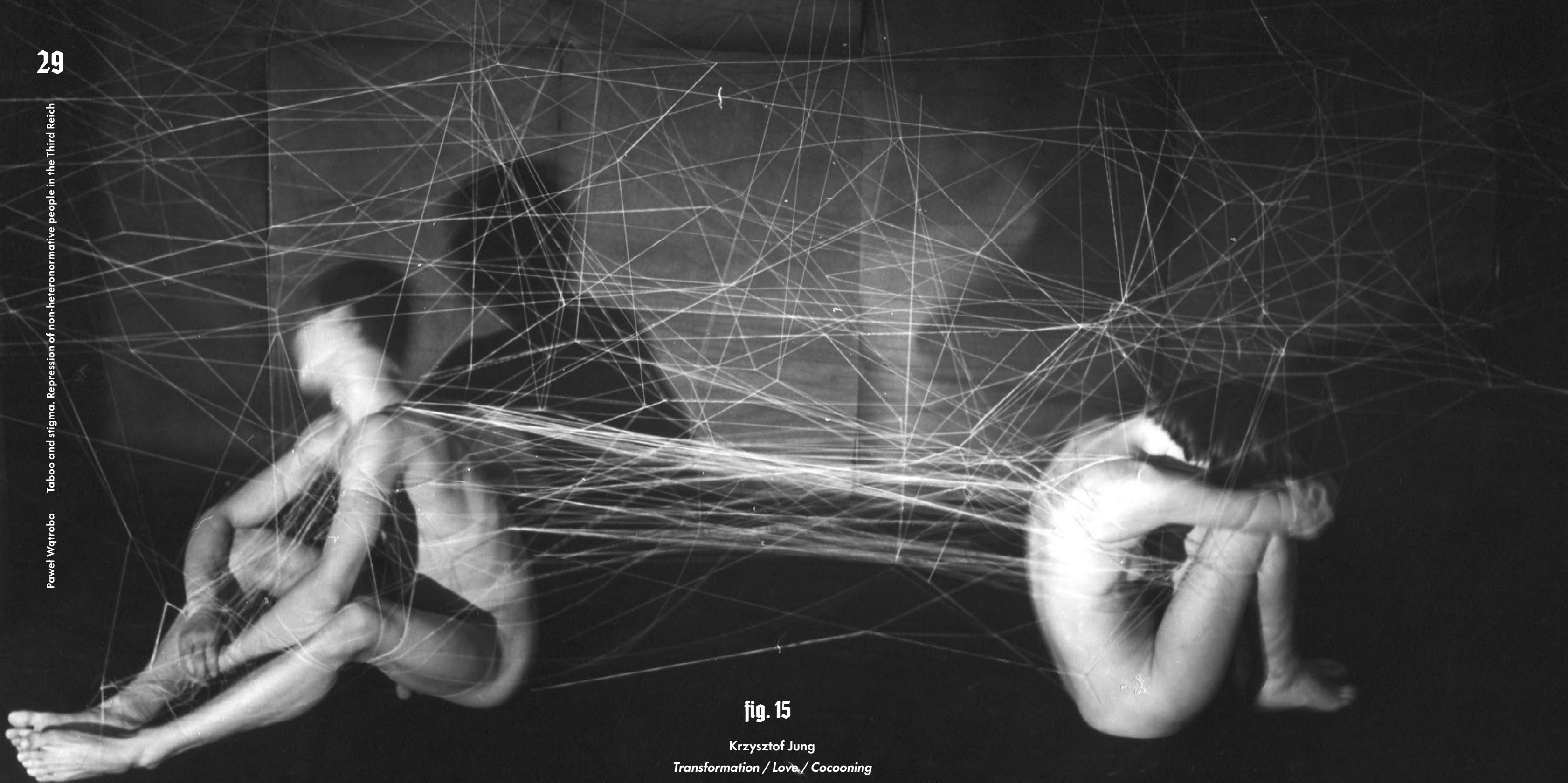


fig. 15

Krzysztof Jung

*Transformation / Love / Cocooning*

documentation of performances, photo: Grzegorz Kowalski  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/przemiana-milosc-kokonienie](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/przemiana-milosc-kokonienie)

# Ants in chocolate

**Interview with Dr Sebastian Salata**

**Maciej Cholewa**

author

## What do you do?

My field is taxonomy. In fact, it is mainly the taxonomy of ants. I describe new species, focusing on biodiversity. I concentrate particularly on ants from the Mediterranean area. I have just returned from a two-year internship in San Francisco, where I studied Madagascar ants.

**In his famous statement about the jungle, Werner Herzog comments on nature as on something originally obscene, overwhelming, filled with collective murder. In such a world, the sounds made by birds are not singing but screams of pain. He also mentions a kind of misfortune occurring in nature, which is also a human misfortune. Do you think that ants are unhappy?**

I am not sure. I think they have rather good and simple lives. Basically, their aim is to survive, to eat, and then to pass on their genes to the next generation. In this respect, most of them manage to do so. If we assumed that an ant could have a self-awareness and look at the world from our point of view, it seems to me that it would be not as much happy as proud. It would see the incredible evolutionary success, as ants are the most numerous insects when it comes to the number of species and constitute the largest part of the world biomass. They are numerous, ubiquitous and form the basis of practically every natural ecosystem outside the Arctic. I do not quite know what it means to be happy, but they would certainly be proud of themselves.

**Since the dawn of time, all texts of culture have anthropomorphised and mythologised fauna. We say that one is as hard-working as a bee and we associate well organised work of hundreds and thousands of people with an anthill. Therefore, we might see bees as noble creatures, termites as excellent architects and so on. Obviously, this applies not only to social insects but also to pets. Do you think that such an approach may be harmful? Do you often encounter myths concerning insects?**

Definitely, the most common element of the narrative concerning ants is pointing out to their diligence. This is a powerful myth. While studying literature, I discovered that up to 40% of ants move around the colony rather pointlessly. They could be called work-avoiding lazybones, so I would not overestimate their diligence.

It seems to me that the biggest problem from an anthropocentric point of view is that we really miss a lot. We can only understand those areas which we are able to communicate about. As far as ants are concerned, for a really long time no one was able to understand on what principle they actually worked, as we based our interpretations on senses such as sight. Sight is very important for homo sapiens. We see a lot, which determines

our perception of the world. On the other hand, the life of the anthill and communication within it is based mainly on chemical signals. We know and understand so little, precisely because we do not try to look at that dog or cat or nature in general from the point of view of the organisms and take into account the senses which the animals rely on while functioning in and perceiving the world. It is difficult to understand nature while

**I discovered that up to 40% of ants move around the colony rather pointlessly. They could be called work-avoiding lazybones.**



**fig. 16**

Julita Wójcik

*Mściwoj's Block 4/6, Gdynia*  
object (crocheted, starchy raft and coloured yarn, wooden table) Deposit from a private collection, courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/blok-msciwoja](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/blok-msciwoja)

standing in one point. Especially since we are already a little bit detached from it.

### Let us then try to imagine that you are a social insect.

I can certainly say that if I were to become an ant, I would rather not want to be a male. We must remember that all workers are females. When it comes to males, their lives last for just a few weeks. Some do not even have well-developed mouths, because their main role, when they become sexually mature is to leave the nest and pass on their genes.

### Can they not return to the nest later?

If they do so, they are usually killed. Being a male in a community of ants, at least from a human point of view, is hardly encouraging.

I think I would also not want to be the queen. The responsibility is too big. Her life is also a bit boring, limited mainly to laying eggs. Perhaps I would choose to be a worker or a soldier. There are some interesting ants from the *Colobopsis* genus. Their heads resemble a shield, which allows them to block the entrance to the anthill. They are bigger than regular workers and play the role of bodyguards. That could be interesting.

**It is said that human history is a history of war. There are wars, revolts and mutual misunderstanding. What is it like in the world of excellently organised insects. Can a bee or termite rebel? Leave their colony and live independently? Or get mad or commit a suicide for any reason?**

There are some forms of individualism among them. I would say that a worker ant which tries to lay eggs, which happens in some genera, may be considered a rebel. If such behaviour is spotted by the queen, the individualist usually ends badly.

Occasionally, there are also suicides. There are, for instance, kamikaze ants. When the nest is attacked, the workers run into the group of attackers, squeeze their abdominal muscles which makes the abdomen explode and splash all the insects around

with a caustic substance.

The struggle for survival in ants has a lot of forms. A specific type of non-systemic struggle for survival can be observed in social parasites. There are species of ants that do not establish independent colonies, but use other anthills. There are for example parasites that hunt workers from the anthill they are planning to use. They kill them and then rub themselves with their insides. This way they absorb the smell of the anthill, which allows them to enter it unnoticed. If this conspiracy is not detected, they kill the queen and establish their own colony.

We often do not realise what is really happening under our feet. In spring, we can see hordes of small ants. They fight fierce, deadly battles. Two colonies are competing for environmental resources side by side, so one must be exterminated. War, death and murder are in a way the daily bread of ants.

Interestingly, there are hardly any civil wars inside the colony. At least, I do not know of any. Ants know better than we that this is pointless. The aim of the colonies is not to generate conflicts, but to succeed, that is to say, to produce as many sexual forms as possible, which will then establish new colonies.

**We humans identify with certain ideas and systems of thinking. We are helped in our search for the sense in life by more or less complex narratives and stories. Philosophy, politics and church. Writing about ants, Maurice Maeterlinck mentioned with admiration the most basic, primary religion followed by ants. He wrote about the soul of the anthill. The mysticism of insects.**

If I were to talk about some insect deity, the ant messenger or something of that nature, I would point to the queen. Everything in the colony revolves around her. Her young, workers and males, who then leave the nest, spread a type of good news. Owing to reproduction and establishing new colonies the religion spreads.

In fact, a quasi-individualistic behaviour can be generally more easily ascribed to queens, because it is on their existence that the whole colony is based. But even in their case, together with insects that perform other funtions, I would interpret such

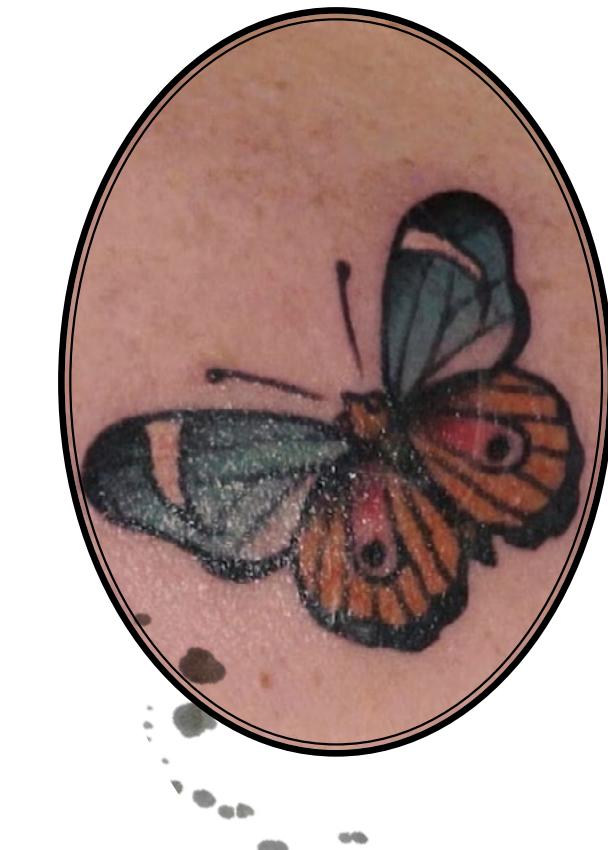


fig. 17

Tomasz Przybyłek  
*My butterfly*

2019, video, film stills

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/  
moj-motylek](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/moj-motylek)



fig. 19



fig. 20



fig. 18

Karolina Żyniewicz

Ad Mortem Defaecatam - Unnecessary Life

2020, collection / cooperation: Jakub Piątkowski (Institute of Genetics and Biotechnology, Faculty of Biology, University of Warsaw), Urszula Mikoś and Waldemar Żyła (Upper Silesian Museum in Bytom)

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ad-mortem-defaecatam](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/ad-mortem-defaecatam)

behaviour as a component of a super organism of which they are part. Perhaps this is the religion of ants and one can see it that way, although it is my far-reaching and personal interpretation.

**Can social insects teach us to organise ourselves better? Maeterlinck wrote about their absolute altruism towards each other.**

It is difficult to answer the question straight away. We could be speaking rather about manipulation than organisation. No insect decides on its own to resign from having offspring or run into the group of attackers and explode. It is not that they all do it out of some sense of duty. They rather teach us how to manipulate others to succeed.

We can, of course, glorify insects, praising them for their unconditional cooperation, but for me, goodness and altruism in that everyday, human sense is unlikely to be found in nature. Nature is harsh and ruthless.

**Is there a mystery in the world of entomology, an extremely mysterious and troubling issue that has been keeping scientists awake for hundreds of years? Is there any entomological philosophical stone? What do we not know yet?**

There are over 13 thousand ant species. There is not one, general pattern of ant behaviour, communication or reproduction. We still know very little and there are so many unanswered questions. How does a worker know where to go? We can see that it is carrying a seed. How did it know that it was supposed to pick that specific seed. That it has to head north-east because there is a lot of food? Or to clean that specific chamber? How come everything functions so efficiently? One would think that these are simple, basic questions, but they still remain unanswered.

**The work of an entomologist is rather associated with very meticulous laboratory tasks, pinned insects, or on the contrary we think of a researcher in muddy boots entering the**

**deepest recesses of the forest to spend his entire life studying a particular species of beetle. What type are you?**

What I love in my field work is the fact that I can combine those two approaches... Sometimes I feel like Indiana Jones, when I have to get dressed, take a backpack and go somewhere for a fortnight. You have to feed yourself get some food. When I was working on my doctorate thesis, I lived in a car for three months. I had to go round entire Crete and it was not worth getting back to my flat. I had to start a fire, find food, bathe in streams or in the sea. That was wonderful, I love such things. I love being close to nature, when you start feeling its part again.

And then you return. As a taxonomist I need to study the subject literature to verify if the specimens I have caught have been described before. This involves reading books published, for example in the 19th century. I need to translate them from Russian, French or German. Then there is the extraordinary feeling that I am part of a larger, historical and scientific process. And then there comes the lab work, which means sticking, pinning, looking, measuring, taking pictures. Actually, a lot of biologists work this way because science requires flexibility. First, you live in the forest, then you spend all days in the lab. I do think it is an interesting job.

**Have you ever been severely bitten? Maeterlinck described a species of wandering ants that went across Africa and destroyed everything on their way. When the insects appeared, people simply abandoned their villages. Are there any extremely dangerous social insects? Can they be found in**

**War, death  
and murder  
are in a way  
the daily  
bread of ants.**

**Poland?**

We see that little creature. Sometimes hairy, sometimes not. It has more legs than we and moves in a way we do not understand, so we automatically assume that it is a predator that wants to threaten us somehow. But it is not. Hundreds of times smaller than we, the creature has no interest in engaging in any conflict with us, who can end its life with our little finger. My heart hurts when I see someone killing an insect, because this is indeed an uneven fight. Insects have no interest in harming. If anything bites us, it always does it to defend itself or its young. Nothing can kill us in Poland. If anything strange flies around our house, if it looks bizarre or hairy, I would encourage you to let that organism out.

### **Even bloodthirsty hornets and wasps?**

The produce any venom requires a lot of energy. Insects use it as the last resort. It is the same with vipers. Many people believe that when a viper bites you, like in the movies, you need to immediately suck the venom out or cut off the leg. Interestingly enough, many of those bites are dry. It simply does not pay off for the viper to waste the venom, as it knows the human will not make a meal, so it prefers to spare the substance for something it can kill and eat. Nature can be terribly brutal, but the arthropods and arachnids in Poland are no threat to us.

Great arachnids from the tropics may indeed be dangerous, but they will certainly not follow us into the cities. Generally, any offensive on their part is our fault. If we put a finger into a hole, which is in fact someone's home, we must expect that the home will be protected.

**The director we mentioned earlier observes that nature seems to him to be a type of an unfinished project. These words are particularly relevant at a time when we are discussing climate disaster and the Anthropocene. What do you think will happen? Will our bones be cleared of meat by insects or will they die with us? Do they need us for any purpose?**

I hope that in some way, we will reflect and learn a different approach. I am not sure where this comes from, but as a rule, we automatically choose to counteract. Man versus nature. We forget that we are part of the system. We need to initiate processes that will allow us to assimilate with nature. To be its element, a component that does not introduce a complete chaos but tries to cooperate.

I would not say that nature is an unfinished project, because there is no architect who designed it from beginning to end. It is a very dynamic process, subject to constant change generated by constant adaptation to the existing conditions and evolutionary pressure. We create the pressure and there is no doubt that a lot of organisms fail as a result. They perish.

Nature is extremely flexible. We can observe foxes or other animals running around cities. Nature enters those areas and manages to cope somehow. But after the apocalypse that will come, it will be much poorer.

### **Will it come?**

It will. It is already happening. It is difficult to predict what exactly will happen, but after the disaster it will be rather boring here for some time. On a biological scale. For hundreds, thousands or millions of years. It will be boring, but then a new life that we do not know yet will flourish. However, I hope that we will somehow manage to survive and function in the new world, if there is such a world. I think in that world there will be much fewer of us. We will be more inclusive, living close to nature. After all, we are just one of many species. Subordinating the whole world just to us will end badly, because this is a place for many organisms. We focus too much on ourselves.

**It is well known that evolution is going on. What can the future of insects look like? Will we one day fight against great spiders or mutant swarms like in class B movies?**

As I said, it is hard to say what will happen in the future, but as far as I know, when it comes to the size of insects, the trend has

rather stabilised and they will not get any bigger. The largest Polish ant is about 1.5 cm long. The morphological system makes it impossible for them to be larger, so unfortunately, we are unlikely to see a one-metre ant. Or a tarantula. I can guarantee that.

**Have you ever eaten ants in chocolate? Our culture is one of the few in which eating insects is taboo. Why do you think so many people find insects so disgusting?**

Actually, we must remember that we do eat insects, although we are unaware of that. As far as I know, there is a standard of 20 elements of insects for such an such unit of chocolate. So, while eating delicious chocolate, we may also be tasting insects. Once I was offered to try an insect shashlik, and despite being an entomologist, the fact that I grew up in this very particular culture prevented me from eating, which I still regret. Last year, however I tried an interesting product - yoghurt with an addition of cockroach flour. It had a very interesting, caramel taste. Although I knew that this powder consisted of insects, I did not see them. There were no legs, no antennae so I did not feel any resistance to eating. Most likely, insects are the future of our catering industry and people are already thinking not about whether or not to eat but rather how to serve them. My San Francisco boss, Brian Fisher, founded a biodiversity centre in Madagascar, a country considered to be one of the poorest in the world. The country is affected by deforestation – the forest is cut down in order to make space for farming to satisfy the need for food. Fisher is working on cricket farms which, although they cover a much smaller area, are greener and produce much more protein than could be obtained from

a conventional farm. Many farmers express their willingness to switch to that form of production. This is cool, but we must remember that Madagascar is inhabited by people for whom insects are part of their diet. As far as Europeans are concerned, we will probably have to clench our jaws and prepare for the fact that sooner or later, also for us, insects may become one of the primary sources of food. I am pleased about that, particularly when I think how all these poor farm animals are treated here, how they suffer and, to make the matter even worse, how much pollution is produced as a result of breeding them.

I am glad that I have been to San Francisco, because it was a journey into a slightly different reality. In one of the parks, for example, I saw a man taking a pig for a walk. He treated it like a pet. We associate these animals with a pigsty, meat production and farms, but there is an entire literature confirming that they are aware of what is going on, feel pain and are social animals, able to form bonds. If we tried to show people how they communicate, how they are able to feel as much as dogs or cats, it would be much easier for us to change our eating habits. I am serious when I say that the scene with the pig on a leash was one of the reasons why I decided to make myself familiar with the cockroach flour. Since then, I have also felt uncomfortable even about thinking of eating a meat ball.

**The work of an entomologist, especially that related to museology, seems very aesthetic. All these cabinets, not only with beautiful butterflies, but also with carefully arranged ants, woodworms and so on. Do you see artistry in your**



**fig. 21**

Maciej Cholewa

*The soul of its anthill*

2020, object: metal frame, bread,  
cooperation: Kajetan Wichrowski,  
Mr Wylenzek

[zycieludzi.kronika.org/pl/praca/  
dusza-jej-mrowiska](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org/pl/praca/dusza-jej-mrowiska)

**profession or can we talk about artistry in insects? Which of the social insects do you find most beautiful? Do you even look at them in these categories?**

I do. There is no doubt that the people who work with the collections are artists and this shows in many ways. They express the artistry by arranging their collections in a specific way. Some of the creators protect their assemblages, and you need to get a special permission to even touch a pin. While visiting various museums I could see how they competed against each other in who would arrange ants' antennae or legs more beautifully and who would take better photographs. So there are canons and a lot of competition. We have great artists, who take beautiful pictures, as well as those less talented, and the fact that someone cannot photograph their collections well can sometimes come up in conflicts. The photographs are aesthetic and often beautiful. Even from my perspective, those publications that have beautiful illustrations and good photos are more readable. They often show structures that are truly extraordinary. I am often surprised by the beauty of that micro-world. Sometimes I find it difficult to imagine how something so small can have such a complicated structure when it comes to the skeleton, for example. But to see it, you have to have really good pictures.

When it comes to insects or – indeed – ants I often speak about their chitin skeleton, the structures they are able to produce. The spikes, dents and thickenings on their surface are incredible. So are the colour schemes. Modifications of mandibles or the structures that allow the antennae to hide. I often feel happy, knowing that I am going to study a certain species group, because it is aesthetic, symmetrical, intriguing and simply exciting.

They are extremely creative architects when it comes to the skeletons. Oh, here we have our anthropocentrism again. Of course, the ants did not invent it themselves, it is the result of an evolutionary process. They are not even able to see it, because they have very poor eyesight and do not base their communication on visual stimuli.

**Is there a species of social insects that is exceptionally characteristic of our region, so when people all over the world speak about it, they go: oh, this is this famous Polish ant.**

A national ant? I'm sorry, but no. The fauna of Central Europe is interesting, but not as spectacular as in the tropics.

**Are ants feminists? The role of the female forms in their communities is perhaps a little more important than that of the male.**

I am not sure how to understand the word feminism in this context, but indeed, these are matriarchal societies. What is more, how they work is definitely one of the strongest proofs that we could do better if not just men stood at the top of the hierarchy of power but, of course, that is just my private opinion. 99% of the ant community are females. The males generally exist to reproduce and apart from that they are not necessary.

This can also be observed in communities of other insects. The females are the leaders. Males of different species sometimes have harems, but they are based on aggression and, to be honest, it does not look very interesting.

**What should we do when an unexpected visitor appears in our house?**

When we see an ant in our house, instead of killing it with a flip-flop, we can give it some sugar. What I mean here is that we must learn to live with insects. Let us give them some space. The ants really do not want to kill us.

Let us not destroy their environments, let them function. Let us be more inclusive. Let us not turn everything around us into places that are meant to satisfy just our needs. We need to create spaces in which there is room for other organisms too, so that they have a chance to maintain their populations. Because when we keep destroying this environment around us, this entire complicated interdependence system and the buffer which conditions even the fact that we can breathe, we will really

suffer. Civilisation diseases, allergies and the like are precisely the effects of that practice of eliminating all natural elements from our environment. Also those as small as ants.



**fig. 22**

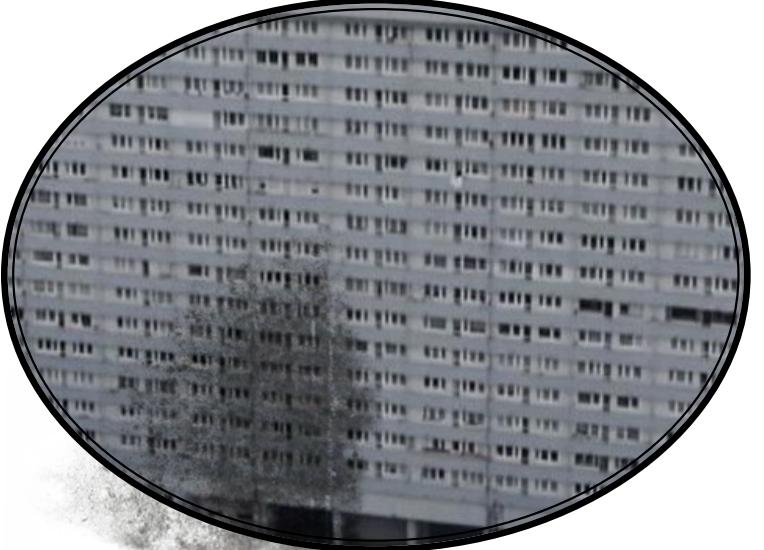
Michał Smandek *The spirit of the Hive*  
2020 (wood, honeycomb, honey, beehive, cover, beeswax)  
Poland, Sisters, The new World Map, Enjoying the Abundance (Erasing the Land), Enjoying the Abundance ( A Temporary City)  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/duch-ula](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/duch-ula)



fig. 23

Maciej Cholewa

*The soul of its anthill*(2020, object: metal frame, bread), cooperation: Kajetan  
Wichrowski, Mr Wylenzek[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/dusza-jej-mrowiska](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/dusza-jej-mrowiska)



**fig. 26**

Teresa Czepiec *Superunit*  
2014, video  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/filmy](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/filmy)



**fig. 25**

Piotr Bujak *The Life of The Ants*  
2018, obiect  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/zycie-mrowek](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/zycie-mrowek)



**fig. 24**

Łukasz Surowiec  
*Extinction*  
2020, fotografie  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/wymieranie](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/wymieranie)



fig. 27

Jasiek Zoll

Women's strike 30.10.2020

2020, drone photography

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/  
praca/strajk-kobiet](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/strajk-kobiet)

**fig. 29**

Witalij Manski  
*Under the Sun*  
2015, video  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/filmy](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/filmy)

**fig. 28**

Franciszek Orłowski  
*Tightening the screw*  
2017, photographic documentation of the activity and exhibition view  
[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/historia-dokrecania-sruby](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/praca/historia-dokrecania-sruby)

Dorota Hadrian *Oratorium*

Jasiek Zoll

*Strajk Kobiet 30.10.2020*

Łukasz Surowiec *Wymieranie*

Hubert Czerepok *To skandal by Polak  
nie miał odwagi cywilnej by uderzyć  
bezbronnego człowieka*

Piotr Bujak *Życie mrówek*

Kijewski/Kocur *Miliard jeden, 2003/13*



Małgorzata Mirga-Tas *Akie Sam (Tu jesteśmy)*

Krzysztof Jung *Przemiana / Miłość / Kokonienie*

Julita Wójcik *Blok Mściwoja 4/6, Gdynia*

Jaśmina Wójcik *Ucieczka z ula, Bunt robotnic*

Tomasz Przybyłek *Mój motylek*

# Życie Ludzi

plan wystawy;  
parter,  
I piętro,  
II piętro

Franciszek Orłowski *Historia dokręcania śruby*

Michał Smandek *Duch ula*

Małgorzata Szandała *Święto wiosny*

Łukasz Trzciński *Gorset (u-strój)*

Maciej Cholewa *Dusza jej mrowiska*

interaktywna wersja mapy

[zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/mapa](http://zycieludzi.kronika.org.pl/mapa)

**fig. 30**

Exhibition view  
The Life of Humans

**44**

TO SKANDAL BY POLAK NIE MIAŁ OOWAGI CYWILNEJ  
BY UDERZYĆ BEZBRONNEGO CZŁOWIEKA



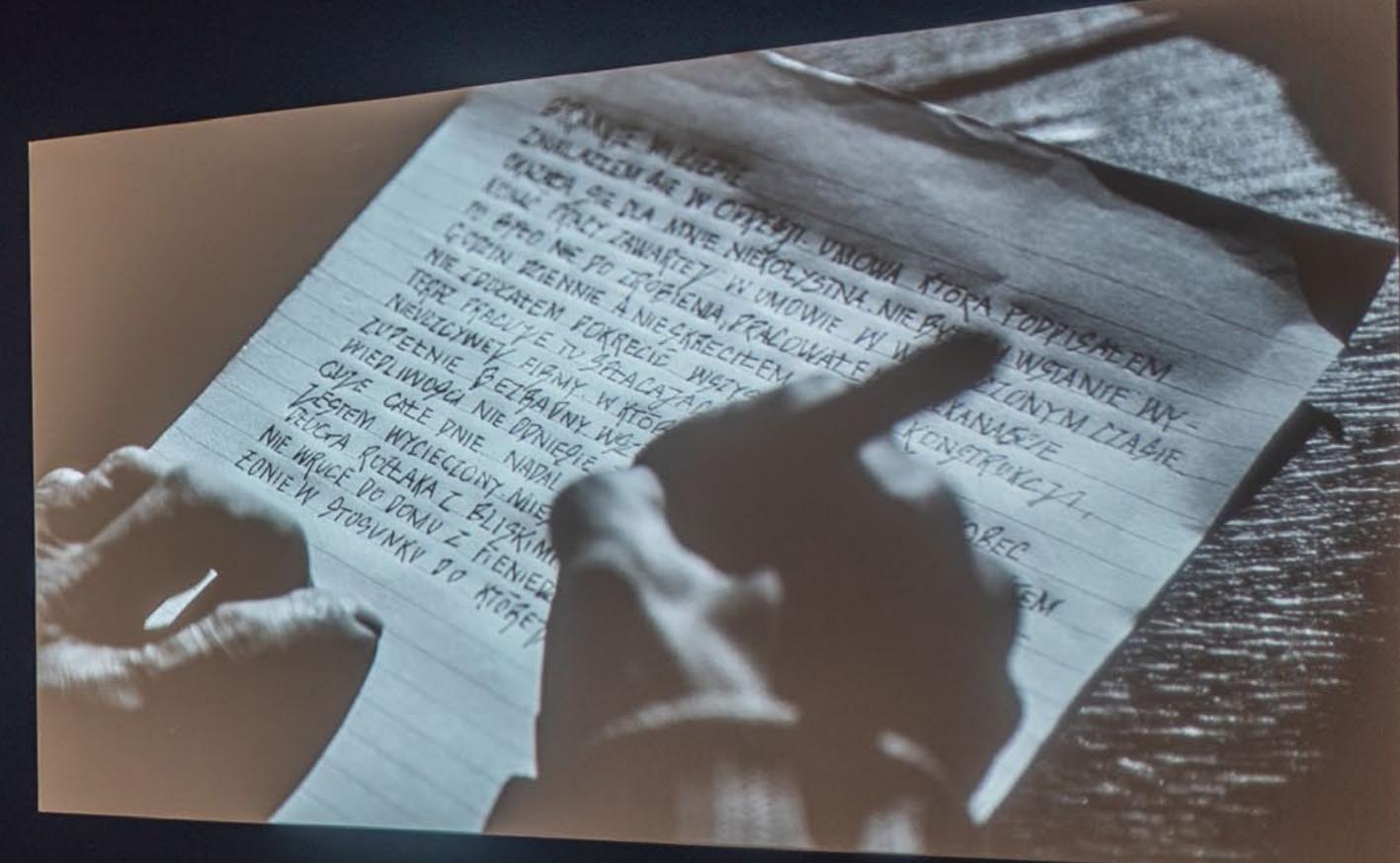


fig. 31

exhibition  
*The Life of  
Humans*

fig. 32

exhibition  
*The Life of  
Humans*



# Catalogue

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# Exhibition

## ARTISTS

Piotr Bujak, Maciej Cholewa, Hubert Czerepok, Dorota Hadrian,  
Krzysztof Jung, Kijewski / Kocur (Marek Kijewski, Małgorzata Malinowska),  
Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Franciszek Orłowski, Tomasz Przybyłek, Michał Smandek,  
Łukasz Surowiec, Małgorzata Szandała, Łukasz Trzciński, Jaśmina Wójcik,  
Julita Wójcik, Jasiek Zoll (Mr. Fly Guy), Karolina Żyniewicz

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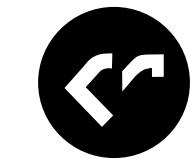
Galeria Propaganda, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, Jakub Piątkowski,  
Kajetan Wichrowski, Pan Wylenzek, Waldemar Żyła

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Narodowego.**

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