Fragments of research for Gently Running Downwards

## Liliana Zeic

PIERŚCIEŃ E RING) 1

Oh, the ring goes round and round Round and round a círcle And who gets it, and who gets it Better not tell about it

Does this photograph show a tiger nursing piglets after her own cubs died?

Tigress\_ found footage 1

Oh, the ring goes round and round Keeps changing its place Don't look at me, don't look, don't look at me, don't look I don't have the ring



# Małgorzata Miśniakiewicz Eeny, meeny, miny, moe, Catch a tiger by the toe...

A tigress surrounded by cubs and piglets masqueraded as her offspring needs to select her own offspring or else she will be punished. If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, meeny, miny, moe... this nursery rhyme separates one from the other, and the game ends when a group is finally selected and the tigress is challenged by the phoney pigs she mistook for her offspring.

A doctored, 'fake-news' photo from a Thai zoo of a supposedly mixed-species tiger family became a viral illustration on the Polish internet of the conspiracy theory of Cultural Marxism. This conspiracy theory claims that a culture war against traditional Christian values and 'Western culture' is being waged by liberal institutions and academics-including Frankfurt School intellectuals, Marxist scholars, and critical theorists. Cultural Marxism is at times termed neo-Bolshevism, anti-culture, neogenderism, the gender ideology, a civilisation of death, or the long march through the institutions, according to different brands of right-wing politics or far-right or altright corners of the Internet.

If a vision of Adorno doing Satan's work by teaching homosexuality to children and promoting excessive drinking in a bid to replace the class war with the gender war is a bit much to fathom, here come the memes. So the Bengal tigress embodies Poland (or sometimes Europe for those slightly less nationalistically inclined) deceived by acreeping neo-Marxist ideology, represented here by the deceptive piglets suckling at her mighty tit.

JAWOROWI LUDZIE (SYCAMORE PEOPLE)<sup>2</sup>

Sycamore, sycamore, sycamore people! What're you doing here? We're here building bridges For the county sheriff We let all the maids through One last has to stay put.

"thousand horses we let through, one last has to stay put"

#### we already had the refugees, gender ideology, the feminazis, the communists

The 2015 electoral campaign that brought the ruling Law and Justice party to power was fuelled by anti-immigration fear-mongering, highlighting an alleged threat that Muslim refugees would pose to Polish women and families. Ever since, long-term systemic challenges—including economic and employment issues, international policy, a demographic crisis and the depopulation of the countryside, as well as immediate political corruption and moral scandals—have been smoke-screened by greater phantom threats in a political game of 'tag a public enemy'; the greatest hit in Carl Schmitt's authoritarian playbook.

MAC7FK (POPPIES)<sup>3</sup>

#### I would like this to be about someone else

It is through becoming 'it'; chasing and hiding, playing 1. Oh you white dove oh you tíny bírd have you seen, have you heard

how they sow poppies? like that, like that, they sow poppies.

like that, like that, they sow poppies.

hounds and doe and blind man's bluff-in choreo graphies of exclusion and of singling-out-atrandom, by learning the advantages of belonging to the larger group, that we learn the mechanisms of social power structures as kids. Playing by the rules that demand movements and interactions, that end in one person standing opposite alone, emerges as a shared trope in children's games throughout different cultures. In order to win we learn to hide, or to run as fast as we can to avoid being caught. And the

best way not to lose is to be part of the group that frames and facilitates the chase.

#### not be afraið to be "unrealistic"

(Children imitate sowing with their hands) The policy of fear and the perpetual Schmittian evocation of a menacing enemy to traditional family and conservative values—over the years shapeshifting within a repository of left-leaning, progressive ideas-have become fixtures in Polish 2. Oh you white dove political and social life. This right-wing playbook ostracises refugees, Ukrainians, Muslims, oh you tíny bírd feminists, environmentalists, communist Jewry, women's-rights activists, cyclists have you seen, have you heard and vegetarians, 'gender ideology', bolsheviks and neo-Marxists; yet nearly how poppy is growing? none of these have been as furiously like that, like that, and degradingly targeted as the LGBTQIA+ community. Government officials and Catholic poppy is growing. Church dignitaries use phrases such as; 'ideology of evil', 'rainbow pestilence', 'homosexual invasion' and 'propaganda' (Children raise their hands) to describe this non-heteronormative and non-cisgender minority. Politics are made by pressure groups rather than by people who seek to promote the common 3. Oh you white dove 4000 oh you tíny bírd have you seen, have you heard At the local government level, homophobic propaganda and how poppy is blooming? partisan opportunism have been like that, like that, manifest in legislation—often lobbied by the ultra-conservative poppy is blooming. Catholic organisation and think tank, The Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture – who are widely known for proclaiming (They raise their arms, putting their hands "LGBT free zones'. Despite together and then apart) their legal irrelevance and blurry declarations of family values, their adoption in regions encompassing about a third of the country (an area larger than Hungary) not only stigmatises the LGBTQIA+ 4. Oh you white dove community but also is considered a violation oh you tíny bírd of the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. According to the Atlas of Hate, have you seen, have you heard which maps these discriminatory resolutions, around 12 million people in How poppy's maturing? Poland now live in 'LGBT-free zones'. Like that the poppy forms. The authors of the Atlas have been brought to court for defamation by some local governments, frequently represented by lawyers connected with Ordo Iuris, (They clench their fists, showing in actions that can be seen as strategic how poppy heads form.) (...) lawsuits against public participation. It's a lingering feeling, one that you get used to In as much as right-wing POJEDZIEMY NA ŁÓW actors strategically resort to normative methods in order (WE SHALL GO A-HUNTING)<sup>4</sup> to tighten the grip of biopolitics, the corporeal effect of ultra-conservatism Johnny came by the grove, goes beyond the oppression of particular sexual and reprothe green grove. There he found a maid, ductive practices. The bodies of individuals subjected to discriminatory policies he thought she was a doe. and propaganda not only unwillingly become sites She was standing crying at the forest's for negotiating socially accepted norms, edge. they become dispossessed of He set his hounds upon her, their physicality and their right to self-determination, in the let them off the leash. name of the equivocal values of an alleged majority. Minority stress—which comes from prejudice and discrimination—is experienced on a physical level, and manifested in barely describable sensations. It can be seen as ideology incarnate, a bodily response to political reality; one that grows over time, remains nearly imperceptible and hardly remedied. A queer body thus becomes the primary and final site of a politics that aims to reject it. whatever they asked for, they could be sure to obtain at least half of it The political alliance between the ruling party and the Catholic Church has resulted OJCIEC ABRAHAM in drafted a number of conservative (FATHER ABRAHAM)<sup>5</sup> legislations and have played an important role in shaping the language of public debate. As queer people were called an 'ideology', The group goes around the círcle sínging 'foetuses' were replaced with Father Abraham had seven sons 'unborn children'. The introduction of an almost complete ban on Seven sons had Father Abraham abortion in 2021, via a legislative path of dubious legality, spearheaded And they sat down and didn't eat in 2016 and – despite marginal social Just sang like that support and unprecedented women's protests in 2020-is one of the examples of the political power of the Church and its conservative allies. As bedrooms and wombs became battlegrounds of national identity, the biopolitical reach of right-wing religious conservatism is embodied in a feeling that your chest gets stuck to the back of your stomach. frame our issues in terms of "rights"

> The war against sexual and reproductive rights, which battles over abortion, access to contraception, IVF treatments, sexual minorities rights, adoption, sexual education and even divorce, is framed as a fight for Christian-inspired values that-supposedly-reflect the 'Natural Law', regardless of its' selective and subjective interpretation. According to campaigners, this so-called 'Natural Law' is countered and violated by a 'Cultural Revolution' that promotes the liberal values of equality and anti-discrimination and leads to the decline of 'Western civilisation'. According to the manifesto, 'Restoring the Natural Order: an Agenda for Europe', the reversal of such laws can be obtained by litigation, lobbying, and policymaking. This manifesto outlines a series of strategies, including debunking and usurping the opponent's 'victim status'; and mimicking the language of human rights to create alternate terms.

### You have to cut, cut, cut very thin slices, slice after slice and put it in our mouth.

CIUCIUBABKA (THE BLIND MAN'S BUFF)<sup>6</sup>

The participant called the blind man's buff stands in the middle of the circle; they are blindfolded. One of the remaining participants of the game spins them around and asks:

Rather ironically, in a war against 'cultural Marxism' right wing strategists employ so-called 'salami tactics' as explained by Mátyás Rákosi, a Hungarian Stalinist politician. This 'divide and conquer' approach to eliminating opposition and dominating a political landscape relies on gradually advancing an agenda while keeping the true long-term

motives hidden. Another

strategy is going on the offensive and always

demanding too much,

knowing that at least a part of your seemingly excessive claims will be met. One such example

> could be calls for a total ban of abortion

that shift the public

debate to negotiating conditions under which

termination of pregnacy should be forbidden.

appearing extremist or antagonistic, a

position radically

There is no fear of

Blind man's buff, what are you standing on? -On a barrel. - And what's in the barrel? -Cabbage and acid.

-Well then blind man's buff, catch us!

The blind man's buff, moving blind, tries to catch someone as soon as possible and, after touching them, recognize the person

(give the name).

When they do so - and it is not an easy task – this person becomes the blind man's buff as punishment, and the game begins again.

different from calls for sensibility and sensitivity towards the feelings of a supposed conservative majority that are expected from the LGBTQIA activists. The systematic advancement of conservative policies in Poland has changed not only the language of public debate but also threw liberalisation of sexual and reproductive rights out the Overton's window. The national cognitive landscape is populated by unborn children and LGBT ideology-creatures widely unheard of several years ago.

PAN ZELMAN (MR ZELMAN)<sup>7</sup>

There goes, There goes Zelman There goes, There goes, his brother There goes, There goes, his whole family

> What does Zelman want What does his brother want What does want his whole family Zelman wants a maíd Hís brother wants a maíd His whole family wants a maid.

The maid's not ready yet The trousseau's not sown yet Go away Zelman (...)

Zelman wants a maíd His brother wants a maid His whole family wants a maid

What field has Zelman got? A Romaní field Zelman`s got

We don't have maid, we won't give a maid to such a field Go away Zelman (...)

Zelman wants a maíd Hís brother wants a maíd Hís whole famíly wants a maíd

What field has Zelman got? A German field Zelman's got

Go away Zelman (...)

Zelman wants a maíd Hís brother wants a maíd His whole family wants a maid

What field has Zelman got? A Ukraínían field Zelman's got Oh we have a maíd We will give a maid to such a field.

#### Mostly I think the European Union would be better off...

An insistence on traditional values defined through religious and national morality seems to presume cultural homogeneity and specificity. Yet though a Catholic worldview is presumably dominant in Poland, the framing of the ultra-conservative agenda in terms of a Natural Law allows for lobbying across European countries and in the US, which, in line with the 'Restoring the Natural Order: An Agenda for Europe' manifesto, has been undertaken by various organisations since at least 2013. The broader geo-political message appears to be saving 'traditional values' by dismantling the EU and promoting nationalism Curiously, ideas around the salvation of Christian Western civilisation takes greatest hold in the so-called postsocialist states of Eastern Europe. As in Poland, there is inscribed a Messianic role of saving Europe (and the phantom 'West') from its egalitarianism, which, rather than being its constitutive characteristic, is described as a weakness and a vice. For many who grew up on the eastern flank of the Iron Curtain that was drawn aside after 1989, European identity is not only aspirational, but also welcomed and elected; a conviction that the world chosen as ours

would be better off without us is not only another form of dispossession from one's self-definition and sense of belonging, but also forges a feeling of entrapment.

#### I would like this to be over at last and to begin to be about someone else

As the streets of the cities are gradually taken over by anti-abortion billboards and the sound of mass was blasted from the churches for coronavirus fearing worshippers, the joy and collectivity of a Pride march becomes a deliriously dissociative experience for some of those who live

with minority stress. Yet even the simple wish to no longer be the focus of state sanctioned ostracism, of simply not being a target, comes here with an admission of guilt. Because for one to cease being the enemy requires a

new enemy be found. A recognition of guilt from the hope that someone else will be attacked instead is the final blow in a trumped up game of bigoted dodgeball. Where solidarity

is challenged, a desire to no longer be singled-out, not have to hide or be chased, means that the game is far from over, and players are

merely regrouping. At the time of writing, Afghan refugees are being held without food and water at the Belarusian-Polish border and a state of emergency is being proclaimed.

... If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, meeny, miny, moe...



TYGRYSICA (THE TIGRESS)

Smash cultural marxism\_found footage 1

The tigress has to find her child. Half of the group are her tiger children, half of it is not — they are pigs. But she doesn't know which are which. If she chooses wrong, she is punished. She stands in the middle, the group form's a circle around her. She chooses by the means of a counting out rhyme.

> Eeny, meeny, míny, moe, Catch a tiger by the toe. If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, meeny, míny, moe.

> > or

Hana, mana, mona, míke, Barcelona, bona, strike, Hare, ware, frown, venac Harríco, warríco, we, wo, wac

She chooses half of the group: they become her children. They come to her in the middle of the circle. Only then she discovers which of the children is a pig and which is a tiger.

The Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture Foundation, as well as the subjects connected therewith make a broad use of available legal means and frequently sue for protection of personal rights in similar cases. In March 2020 the Ordo Iuris Institute announced that they would begin legal proceedings against the authors of the "Atlas Nienawiści" (Atlas of Hatred). Until now, with the support of the Institute, there have been filed four lawsuits concerning the protection of personal rights of local government institutions, while two subsequent lawsuits are supposed to be filed soon. The Institute also sued, among others, Agnieszka Holland (for claiming that the Institute introduces fascist acts of law) and Anna Maria Żukowska, a Parliament member (for calling this organisation "the institute for fascist culture"). Similar lawsuits were filed, with the support of Reduta Dobrego Imienia-The Polish League against Defamation Foundation, against Marta Lempart and Klementyna Suchanow.

'LEGAL INFORMATION pertaining to the issue of legal infringement upon personal rights or copyright through circulating the installation Gently running downwards', Emilia Barabasz Law Office, 8th April 2021.

Lawsuits concerning the protection of personal rights as such seem to be used due to the chilling effect as desired by the plaintiffs. This is inscribed in the trend of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). It is an increasingly common phenomenon whose aim is frequently to scare off people who work in journalism, social activism or artistic fields. Additionally, as a result of these factors, the probability of filing such a lawsuit is relatively high; it also carries the burden of a considerable financial risk.

'LEGAL INFORMATION pertaining to the issue of legal infringement upon personal rights or copyright through circulating the installation Gently running downwards', Emilia Barabasz Law Office, 8th April 2021.

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