

# Sadomasochistic Colonization of the Other – In the Other and the Self: “But That’s Poland”

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Sadomasochistic fascism is commonplace in today’s world; this impulse is the seed of own modest, ultranationalist iteration of self-colonization. To free oneself, then, is a matter of sublimation, or of joining with the “human family” and other species, pushing toward diverse forms of life, coalitions between cultures (as Zygmunt Bauman proposed), and the celebration of difference (following Julia Kristeva). This is a matter of cultivating hospitality towards the Other and (as Cezary Wodziński wrote), hosting-otherness.<sup>1</sup> This takes on special meaning in our part of Europe, as we know from the excellent postcolonial scholarship of Renata Salecl, Maria Todorova and Nataša

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<sup>1</sup> In Polish, the term *gość-inność* (hosting-otherness) involves wordplay – the word for “hospitality” (*gościnnieść*) includes the word for “otherness” (*inność*). (Translator’s Note)

Kovačević, the curatorial projects of Natalia Chermalych, and finally, from what is inscribed on our own skin.

Here in Poland, we have been colonizing ourselves since time immemorial and have colonized multiple Others (the female Other in particular) with similar aggressiveness. Today's fascist permutation of colonization, however, is new. I believe we can credit Maria Janion for first bringing this dynamic to light. In fact, we have Janion to thank for bringing to Poland (if not to Eastern and Central Europe overall) Jewish studies, women's studies, queer studies, and finally, the phenomenon I will describe as the foment of theory on the Uncanny provoked by Maria Janion's notion of "uncanny Slavdom" (as she entitled her book). The insights this book brings to postcolonialism have been elaborated by Karolina Krasuka in *Encyclopedia of Gender (Encyklopedia gender)* and Stanley Bill, at Ha!art's recent conference, *Writing Literature, Reading Society*. In her book, Janion locates the founding myth of Polish anti-semitism in the "contaminated masterpiece" of the *Non-Divine Comedy* whose traces Janion maps from *Zygmunt Krasiński: Debut and Maturity (Zygmunt Krasiński. Debiut i dojrzałość)* to *Hero, Conspiracy, Death: Jewish Lectures (Bohater, spisek, śmierć: Wykłady żydowskie)*, which Janion refers to as his *Jewish Lecture*. The claim (an unconcealable aletheia of our moment) is bitinglly true: "Auschwitz is 'here, in our backyard,' and in Europe." In keeping with Dorota Krawczyńska's study of Henryk Grynborg, Janion argues that Poland had no proper mourning period after *ha-Shoah*. In her book *Humanities: Therapy and*

*Understanding*, she maps the traces of fascism: “Fascism waged a war on man – this is its essence as a totalitarian system. It elevated ideology above truth and consciousness, above man and mankind. Its natural consequence was therefore the depersonalization of the individual, the severing of man from mankind, and ultimately, the destruction of man as a moral and physical entity in the concentration camps.” Even earlier, in *Romanticism, Revolution, Marxism (Romantyzm, rewolucja, marksizm)*, Janion offers a psychoanalytical reading of fascism’s roots: “The adaption of Gothicism to demonism is a fundamental issue of modern German culture. This issue has taken on and must take on an openly political appearance due to Hitler’s strategic manipulation of myth (in this case, the myth of demonism) as technique. Thomas Mann, who took on the task of “‘exposing demonism’ in *Doctor Faustus*, simultaneously feared his own unwitting complicity in the ‘creation of a new German myth. He feared flattering Germans by foregrounding their ‘demonic nature.’ He therefore intuited the dangerous ambiguities latent in this problem and proceeded with ‘intellectual caution.’ [...] But Mann seized this myth from fascism. ‘We see what looks like a reversal on the battlefield – the enemy’s weapon turned against him.’ In Mann’s book, myth is wrenched from the hands of the fascists, and even its most obscure linguistic secrets are humanized. This is how Mann characterized his work – and rightly so.” Finally, we have the groundbreaking series *Transgressions (Transgresje)*, which consists of images and texts reinterpreted by Maria Janion and her students.

Following Maria Janion, we have Piotr Piotrowski's study *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe* (in Anna Brzyska's brilliant translation) and the original Polish text (titled *Agorafilia*), which departs from Hannah Arendt's notion of "the right to have rights." Piotrowski exceeded his role as curator and art historian (his exhibition of Zofia Kulik's work, *From Siberia to Cyberia* [*Od Syberii do Cyberii*]) was censored by the National Museum in Poznań). With Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, he coined the idea of the critical museum. He was also a great innovator (alongside Janion) in the humanities and public life. He polemicized Ewa Thompson's take on postcolonial theory and forged his own vision of our region of Europe. He brought this vision to life in the form of two exhibits, one in Cluj-Napoca and the other in Lublin. Both shows explored queer "emotional minorities" and elaborated on Piotrowski's notion of the critical museum. The exhibitions were organized in the context of the international festival Transeuropa and featured the work of Anastazja Mikhno, Franko B, Igor Grubić, and performance artists engaged in LGBTQ activism. Before the Festival of Equality in Lublin, Piotr Piotrowski gave a public lecture on the critical museum. Both Lublin and Cluj are multicultural cities home to many minority groups. Until the Holocaust, they were major centers of Jewish life and were historically hubs of radical nontrinitarian activity. If we extrapolate from Piotr Piotrowski's ideas to posit an anthropology of the city, then Cluj and Lublin qualify as sanctuary cities (an idea originating in the Hebrew Bible and carried on by Levinas, Derrida, and Wodiczko). These cities are critical

and self-critical. Self-colonization broaches certain questions: how do we forge new ideas? Our most substantive lesson was the (non)memory of the Holocaust. We can also turn to the Louvre's exhibits on Derrida and Kristeva. How should we study, preserve, and exhibit objects so seemingly incompatible with museology, like the work of Alina Szapocznikow or Erna Rosenstein? Intertextual and counterintuitive assemblages such as those featured in Joanna Mytkowska and Agata Jakubowska's show *In-elegant Objects (Niezgrabne przedmioty)* are one effective strategy. The counterintuitive exhibition methods used by Dorota Jarecka and Barbara Piwowska in *I Can Only Say It Unconsciously (Mogę powtarzać tylko nieświadomie)* are another. The museum, straddling past and future, can and must, as Piotrowski reminds us, partake in the transformations unfolding in the present. In Poland, there is an urgent need for museums devoted to women, refugees and immigrants more generally, as well as minorities and non-able-bodied people. We ought to create "glocal" museums – museums that are intercultural, pluralist, and non-national, or perhaps national in the sense of a multicultural ethics. We need museums that position us as the heirs of all traditions, where we might learn to feel accountable toward society in all its pluralities, here and now. Piotrowski was inspired by Chantal Mouffe's agonistic notion of democracy, as well as Claude Lefort's idea of democracy as a diversity of life paths.

In his study *The Meanings of Modernism (Znaczenia modernizmu)*, Piotrowski diagnoses the political landscape

of Central and Eastern Europe. He highlights (alongside telling cases of economic disenfranchisement) instances of misogyny and homophobia. He characterizes the queer community's circumstances as the legacy of real existing socialism. In *Agorafilia*, Piotrowski observes that "demanding rights for those who have been deprived of them to varying degrees – demanding their right to rights (Hannah Arendt's phrase) – is one aspect of post-communist agoraphilia. Andrzej Turowski's unrealized exhibition planned for the National Museum *Democracies, Democracies (Demokracje, demokracje)* was meant to convey a political reflection on these themes. Piotrowski's *Critical Museum* project counters self-colonization by reflecting on the politics of culture and culture of politics. We can also look to scholarship on exhibiting cultures in Poland. The performance group *Let Them Watch (Niech nas zobaczą)* was described by the LPR Party (League of Polish Families) as a "depravation of the nation." Then let us observe other exhibits according to this new subversive optics. Let us follow Piotr Piotrowski and establish models for the new, the open, and the non-national in the historically necessary critical museum.

Predating Janion and Piotrowski, Narcyza Żmichowska (as read by Grażyna and Ursula Phillips) bears mention, as do Aleksandr Brückner, Wilhelm Feldman, Meir Balaban, Jan Stanisław Bystron (and his text *National Megalomania (Megalomania narodowa)*), although Joanna Tokarska-Bakir is more qualified to speak of Bystron, Juliusz Kleiner (and his postwar article on humanism), Maria Żmigrodzka, and

finally, two figures very dear to me – Zygmunt Bauman (to whom I will return at the end of this text) and Manfred Kridl. Kridl coined the integral method of literary criticism and served as an anthologist of democratic thought in Poland. In Wilno-Vilnius-Vilne, Kridl was in conversation with Czesław Miłosz. Irena Sławińska has informed me that in his seminars, they read “Slovo a slovesnost,” the journal associated with the Prague School of Structuralism. At Columbia University, I met Manfred Kridl’s daughter, Elizabeth Valkenier, a scholar specializing in postcolonial Central Asia. Returning to Janion and Piotrowski, we can say that they, too, transformed the landscape of the humanities. The School of Janion consists of Ewa Graczyk, Ewa Nowacka, Zbigniew Majchrowski and company in Gdańsk, Agata Araszkiwicz, Katarzyna Bratkowska, Kazimiera Szczuka, Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez, Marek Kwapiszewski, Monika Rudaś-Grodzka, Barbara Smoleń, Beata Polak, Tomasz Polak, Joanna Pośluszna, Robert Reszke, and last but not least, the writers Izabela Filipiak, Renata Lis and Marek Bieńczyk (a non-exhaustive list). The School of Piotrowski’s roster, meanwhile, features names like Agata Jakubowska, Izabela Kowalczyk, Dorota Jarecka, Małgorzata Lisiewicz, Magdalena Radomska, Marek Wasilewski, Jarosław Lubiak, Filip Lipiński, Jarosław Trybuś, Paweł Leszkowicz, and finally, Anna Demczuk and Jakub Dąbrowski – the authors of the two-volume book *Censorship in Polish Art After 1989 (Cenzura w sztuce polskiej po 1989 roku)*.

Reading Janion and Piotrowski, we learn that perspectives on gender, ethnicity, and class (“class is not a nat-

ural category,” as David Ost reminds us), and “emotional orientation” can and should be engaged more intensely in scholarship, activism, and art. In her book *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*, Imogen Tyler objects to “post-ideological” scholarship, arguing as follows: “My hope is that this book reads as an unabashed return to critical vocabularies, energy and oppositional politics” (I have Małgorzata Paprota’s study to thank for drawing my attention to this book). For decades, Angela Davis has been advocating and acting on this same position. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues: “Identitarianism can be as dangerous as it is powerful, and the radical teacher in the university can hope to work, however indirectly, toward controlling the dangers by making them visible.” No wonder Spivak so tirelessly demands a voice for the subaltern.

We might also consider hospitality toward the Other. The elevation of hospitality as a virtue has a legacy extending back to the Bible (in the non-sexist translation *Bibel in gerechter Sprache*): “Love the stranger,” and to the Qu’ran, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, Homer’s epics (as read by Cezary Wodziński), Immanuel Kant, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Zygmunt Bauman, Krzysztof Wodiczko and, as Bartosz Wójcik has reminded me, the Afro-Caribbean poet Lorna Goodison.

Pericles tells us: “We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners.” A verse from the Hebrew Bible, analyzed by Fromm, Cixous and Kristeva,

reads: “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (New American Standard Bible).

Psalm 94, meanwhile, issues the following diagnosis: “They slay the widow and the stranger and murder the orphans” (New American Standard Bible). For this reason, “You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge” (MacArthur Study Bible). Erich Fromm offers the following commentary on this verse: “This principle defines love for the stranger as love for other human beings – for someone who is simply and exclusively human (exclusively, since it is not my blood that flows in his veins, nor is it my religion he lives by, my language he speaks, and so on.” Paweł Dybel, reading Fromm, writes of “a certain conception of God and faith:” “Latent in this understanding is the original conception of man in existential terms and ... a genuinely communist notion of society. This is intrinsically tied to the Old Testament’s notion of man discarding his belongings to pursue his faith more intensely and somehow regain authentic access to himself. Of equal significance is the New Testament’s portrayal of faith as the process by which man creates himself (Christ, born of us) and establishes a set of [egalitarian] rules to define communal relations within the Christian community.” This model sets a precedent for social justice and informs, for Fromm, the mysticism of Amos and Meister Eckhart, and for Bergson, Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva – the Jew-

ish-mystic-activist Teresa of Ávila. Kristeva writes in her (749-page) book *Thérèse mon amour* (published by Columbia University Press as *Teresa, My Love*): “Je vous salue, Thérèse.” The Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth says: “I was *xenos*, and you took me in;” “I was a stranger, and you took me in.” In their Polish translation of this line, Remigiusz Popowski and Michał Wojciechowski expand “you took me in” with the addendum “to accept into a group, to host.”

In *Pan Tadeusz*, Mickiewicz, the “European from Nowogródek” (Irena Grudzińska-Gross) writes: “The gate wide-open proclaimed to passers-by that it was hospitable, and invited all to enter as guests.” In his book *The Freedom of Light*, Przemysław Tacik has the following to say of the Jewish-Egyptian writer Edmond Jabès: “*The Book of Hospitality* is a book in two senses: it outlines the concept of hospitality and simultaneously tries to practice hospitality toward that which it invokes and analyzes. Consistent with the endings of all of Jabès’ books, the content converges with the conditions of its writing – a statement is only possible when one performatively practices what one states.” Referencing Immanuel Kant and Seyla Benhabib, Sylwia Nagrodkiewicz reaches the following conclusion: “To be a guest is therefore a right to which all people are entitled.”

The phenomenon of Polish self-colonization produces a lack of hosting-otherness. In this country, we turn away refugees. I will never forget Weronika Fibich’s production of *Tolerated Stay* (*Pobyty tolerowany*) at the Kana Theater. It

was more than a play: it was an aesthetic, ethical, emotional, and political experience. It explores the most pressing issue of our moment: our relation to the Other. A passing flash of hosting-otherness in a hostile world... *Tolerated Stay* depicts the experience of refugees from Chechnya – their exile, nomadism, and trauma from the war. Weronika Fibich and Ewa Łukasiewicz’s theater constructs a “turpistic”<sup>2</sup> “battlefield landscape” in the Caucasus, an open conversation with the audience about otherness, and finally, a communal feast in the spirit of hosting-otherness. *Tolerated Stay* must be seen and experienced. We must practice hospitality toward refugees in Poland.

Yet another problem is posed by a lack of class hospitality. The contemporary response to Stanisław Wyspiański’s *The Wedding (Wesele)* is Piotr Brożek’s film *Nonmemory (Niepamięć)*. The film comments on class conditions in contemporary Poland as the lingering shadow of feudal society. This is a shadow we all live in. Daniel Beauvois’ *Le noble, le serf et le revizor* rings true today. Andrzej Leder and Jan Sowa have commented on *Nonmemory*, and Paweł Krysiak has posed the question: “What’s really so bad about being a peasant? Perhaps shame is the key thing here. I remember how twenty years ago, I wasn’t exactly eager to broadcast the fact that I come from a small village. But do students today feel this same shame?”

And the greatest tragedy: a lack of hospitality toward the Jewish people. Irena Grudzińska-Gross and Jan Tomasz

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<sup>2</sup> This term references the Polish literary movement “turpism” (*turpizm*). (Translator’s Note)

Gross have laid this reality bare. They are Socrates, rousing us from our stupor of self-content. In his underappreciated book *Ghastly Decade*, Gross writes: “we must reckon with the fact that however much we want to deny this issue, this image of Poland in the eyes of the world – and therefore in the consciousness of Poles who do, after all, reside in the world – will persist in a perspective defined by the catastrophic suffering of Polish Jews. This is a task for the Polish intelligentsia: they must take up the mantle of earlier writers (Wyki, Andrzejewski, Miłosz, Błoński) and confront this subject, not “to comfort the heart” or “defend our good name,” but in the name of historical accuracy and a more rigorous reflection on the ethics of social life. [...] Just as white Americans must educate themselves about slavery and racial discrimination, Russians must learn about Stalinism, and Germans about the cult of Hitler, so must Poles (because of the Holocaust) honor the historical persecution of Jews on their land. Otherwise, we will never be able to live at peace with our own identity.”

Is there a way out of self-colonization, and if so, what does it look like? Perhaps it would involve practicing hosting-otherness toward refugees, immigrants, minorities, disabled people, and the economically disenfranchised. Scholarship as social activism – this was the pursuit I tried to articulate in my book on hospitality, entitled *Dream? Democracy!* This is why I remain so invested in the work of Ewa Majewska, Andrzej Leder, Mikołaj Iwański, and Jan Sowa. There is so much territory to explore in Polish liter-

ature (where exploration does not imply expansion in the name of patriotism). Already, Kazimiera Szczuka has indicated a way forward: “just what is Zuta Młodziakówna’s pesky calf in *Ferdydurke*, linked as it is with the legs Kopyrda somehow had ‘on his forehead?’ What is the nudity and eternal youth of Albertynka from the *Operetta*? What does Lena’s mouth mean? And what about the mouth of Katasia in *Cosmos*? Are all these things jokes? Obsessions? Myth? A new humanism? Why, surely all of the above. Or could this be a new project of gender consciousness?”

There is so much left to discover in Polish art and in what Łukasz Ronduda has deemed its “cinematographic turn.” Also significant is the work of female directors like Izabela Gustowska, Anna Baumgart, Irena Nawrot, Urszula Pierogończuk and Karolina Breguła. Participatory art centers like the Rewiry Workshop of Socially Engaged Art (Pracownia Sztuki Zaangażowanej Społecznie – Rewiry) play an equally vital role. We can also cite recent scholarship on visual art, such as Agata Jakubowska’s work, Griselda Pollock’s essays on Alina Szapocznikow, Dorota Jarecka and Barbara Piwowarska’s book on Erna Rosenstein, and Iza Kowalczyk’s blog *Terrible Art (Straszna sztuka)*, which offers commentary on current events in the art world.

We also have much to learn from scholars of Polish culture abroad: Ursula Phillips, David Crowley, Geneviève Zubrzycki, German Ritz, Knut Andreas Grimstad, Hans-Christian Trepte, Tapani Kärkkäinen, and Ian Bratcher. These scholars regularly engage questions of

feminism and queer theory, and their insights are not to be overlooked. And finally, there is the class perspective (espoused by scholars like Daniel Beauvois) on colonization and self-colonization.

Scholarship on gender, religion, and atheism, such as Elżbieta Adamiak's work in Poland (*Quiet Presence (Milcząca obecność)*) and her entry to the Encyclopedia of Gender), Elina Vuoli's work in Poland (like Kristeva, she sees potential in the Mary narrative) and in the Netherlands, the work of Yolande Jansen.

Of equal importance are initiatives in pedagogy and public programming; the ever astounding Ewa Domańska has this to say of the services rendered by Hayden White: "Together with the former Dean of Humanities Helen Moglen, White developed the program [History of Consciousness at University of California in Santa Cruz] and hired Donna Haraway and Teresa de Laurentis for its division of women's studies. Both quickly became scholars of global renown. In 1992, the acclaimed black feminist revolutionary Angela Davis joined the program. In the 1960s, her name had been listed among the FBI's most wanted. As director of the program, White refrained from hiring his own students and instead sought out strong figures who shared his vision for interdisciplinary research and socially and politically engaged scholarship. Soon after, the program began recruiting students among ethnic minorities. Until the end of the 1980s, HistCon (History of Consciousness abbreviated) turned out more doctoral degree-holders from minority

groups than all other universities in the California system combined.” At the same time, the phenomenon of radicalization (George L. Mosse) disproportionately impacts gender and sexuality, while the so-called “brown turn”<sup>3</sup> has consequences for all of us. Tadeusz Kroński has posed the rhetorical question: “Is there a way out?” There is no way out of contemporary fascism – unless it is through hosting-otherness.

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir has identified indications of contemporary fascism while Adam Zagajewski has written: “Ladies and gentlemen, fascism is nigh.” Roman Kuźniar expresses similar sentiments. Krystyna Duniec led a momentous seminar (with the participation of Antoni Michnik and others) on fascism in our world. It is my belief that today, around us (and within us), sadomasochistic fascism has spread.

In Poland, Wiktor Marzec has written on sadomasochism. Paweł Leszkowicz has mapped the trajectory of S&M in Polish art from Bruno Schulz to Jerzy Nowosielski and Dorota Nieznalska. I was already interested in sadomasochism when I was studying under Julia Kristeva. For a seminar taught by Maria Janion, I wrote the article *Of Our Sadomasochism* for the journal “Teksty Drugie.” Later on, with Joel Lockard, a specialist on American slavery, I proposed a thesis on the special brand of sadomasochism that reigns over Central Eastern Europe, now fiercely

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<sup>3</sup> Here, “brown” (in Polish, *brunatny*) references the Nazis’ brown uniforms and characterizes the current conservative turn in Poland as an instance of history repeating itself.  
(Translator’s Note)

opposed by feminist and LGBTQ resistance movements. The thesis invoked Freud and Larry Wolf's *Inventing Eastern Europe* and included our own readings of images and texts. Our essay *Sex Slavery and Queer Resistance in Eastern Europe* appeared on University of California, Berkeley's *Bad Subjects* platform and was reprinted by Dominika Ferens, Tomasz Basiuk, and Tomasz Sikora in their volume *Out Here*.

In *The Captive Mind 2* (a condition that persists and even gains traction today!), Ewa Majewska and Jan Sowa argue that “Neoliberal propaganda seeks to enslave the mind and seize the imagination so that it can no longer critique the socio-economic status quo or seek alternatives. In the social imaginary dominated by the political right, there is no space for figures indicating the presence of intolerance and hate, stereotypes and repressions, or economic inequalities in our social world. Nor are there images of ‘another world,’ freedom, equality, or peace.” Majewska diagnoses the contemporary indefinite state of exception, and more recently (in an article co-written with Kuba Szreder), the phenomenon of “contemporary fascism.”

Irena and Jan Tomasz Gross call evil out: “the pillaging of Jewish property during World War II was a common experience shared throughout Europe. From the Dnieper river to the English Channel, from Thessaloniki to Corfu, no social class resisted the temptation. To the question of what a Swiss banker and Polish peasant may have in common (aside from their humanity and immortal souls),

we might answer (only a little blithely): ‘a golden tooth salvaged from the body of a murdered Jew.’”

So, this is our ‘sweet European fatherland.’ Janusz Tazbir has already come out with the book *Cruelty in Modern Europe (Okrucieństwo w nowożytnej Europie)*. In her novels and essay “*Bulgarie, ma souffrance*,” Kristeva explores amorality in our part of Europe. Today, Central Eastern Europe casts out refugees – a gesture Jan Tomasz Gross has astutely compared to the treatment of the Jewish people in this region during the Holocaust.

According to Agata Araszkiwicz, we are “haunted by smoke.” This figure references a poem by Zuzanna Ginczanka that Krystyna Kłosińska interpreted thusly: “This poem-testament to the days of the Holocaust simultaneously parodies (following Villon) the great poetic testaments of Horace and Słowacki as well as itself – jeering at its own form and content. ‘The other broadcasts its own otherness’ writes Araszkiwicz, ‘from the heart of Polish poetry and literature.’” Andrzej Leder, reading Amos Oz’s novel *Story of Love and Darkness*, writes of the Równa (in Ukrainian, Rivne and in Yiddish, Rovna) of Ginczanka’s birth: “This pulsing small-town life, so characteristic of the Jewish presence in interwar Polish culture, has been irrevocably lost.” In *Revolution Dreamed (Prześliona rewolucja)*, Leder psychoanalyzes the heart of Europe.

In his underappreciated essay *On Identity Troubles in a Dense World (O tarapatach tożsamości w ciasnym świecie)*

– published in Wojciech Kalaga’s volume *Dilemmas of Multiculturalism / Dylematy wielokulturowości*), Zygmunt Bauman astutely wrote: “A phantom makes its way across the planet – the phantom of xenophobia. Old and new, never entirely extinguished or freshly fomented tribal sects and feuds have encountered one another, mixed, and fused into one, fraught with the anxieties and obsessions of an entirely new breed: a fear for personal safety condensed out of old and new uncertainties and precarities of liquid-modern existence. This combination is truly infernal.” The way out of this infernal combination – out of self-colonization – is through anti-fascism, anti-classism, and a newly assessed humanism of consciousness, languages, the arts, and the role of the public intellectual (incorporating a sense of Kristeva’s ‘vulnerability’ (*vulnerabilité*) into the system of republican ideals). Janion, Piotrkowski, Bauman, Beauvois, the Grosses, Leder, Majewska, and Sowa all subjectively and laboriously work to free us from self-colonization. Perhaps this is a social turn (as poet, critic and activist Igor Stokfiszewski has suggested); we can also consider Sylwia Nadgrodkiewicz’s study *Seyla Benhabib: Feminism and Politics (Seyla Benhabib: feminizm i polityka)*, which represents a synthesis of the new approaches to social thought found in the political philosophy of Benhabib (a Yale professor of Jewish descent raised in Istanbul) and simultaneously offers a panorama of the contemporary social sciences. Cultural studies (and particularly, British cultural studies and the cultural analysis of Mieke Bal and Griselda Pollock) continues to draw attention – here, Ewa Domańska notes a tendency toward insurrection and upheaval.

Perhaps I am counting, above all, on emancipatory grass-roots movements, so valued by Rosa Luxembourg, who fiercely deplored the centralism of apparatchiks.

Jan Sowa writes: “The neoliberal hegemony’s most effective line of defense is to forbid people from dreaming.” If we dream of breaking free from sadomasochistic and fascist self-colonization – it all depends on us. Let us concede (both with and against Kristeva) that we are all refugees, women, queer, the economically disenfranchised, and the disabled.