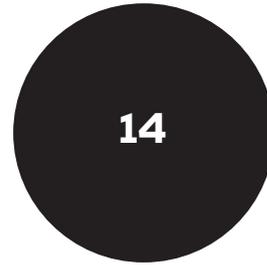




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Aleksander Kmak

Images in a Time of Breakdown

Translated by Arthur Barys

Images of migrants under control

The claim that meaning acquires social legitimization through representation, particularly pictures, is perhaps unremarkable, yet one cannot help but notice that this observation has been strikingly confirmed in the context of the so-called “migrant crisis”. This is particularly evident in the fact that the very act of creating an image and the freedom to frame an issue are expressions of power,¹ as are images of those fleeing violence and war, often migrating to other continents in search of aid. Due to the inherent ethical challenge – can we represent people fleeing poverty and persecution, and if so, how? – as well as the political task assigned to images of migrants (to reinforce the “us” vs. “them” divide or, conversely, to evoke an empathetic reaction), the pictures accompanying the arduous and multi-stage journeys of migrants form a diverse, incohesive set of images that run the gamut from photos of huddled masses packed onto makeshift boats that could at any moment sink into the waters of the Mediterranean or off the Australian coast, to the famous photograph of the body of Alan Kurdi on a beach in Bodrum, Turkey.

What meanings, then, do the images currently circulated by the media construct? As scholars have observed, the dominant visual models of today serve to reinforce a widespread campaign of the politics of fear, the sealing of borders, and the framing of the refugee crisis as an issue of internal security rather than a humanitarian matter.² This applies particularly to the tendency to eschew individual portraits of refugees, captioned with the subject’s first and last name, in favor of pictures of large groups of people with no clearly recognizable facial features; the latter images, in the view of theoreticians, dehumanize the migrants,

stripping them of subjectivity and political agency while frequently casting doubt on their motives for migration.³ This critique of such images is based on the common-sense conviction that the individual story of the victim offers the most relevant insight into the crisis and provokes a more compassionate response⁴; additionally, scholars argue that audiences are more likely to identify with a migrant woman carrying a child than they would with a boatload of healthy-looking men. This is confirmed by what is referred to in social psychology as the “identifiable victim effect,” which describes the observation that people are more likely to express compassion for identifiable individuals, while the likelihood of empathy decreases as the number of victims increases and their individuality is blurred.⁵

The above observations notwithstanding, it is worth considering an alternative option in which the range of possible attitudes towards migrants is not exhausted by the dichotomy of fear and compassion proposed by the cited Australian scholars.⁶ Furthermore, it is doubtful whether a direct relationship can be drawn between pictures and the reactions they provoke, as this claim fails to account for what is perhaps the most important feature of contemporary visual culture: its unprecedented vitality, and the diversity of channels through which audiences access images. Therefore, it is necessary to consider not just the subject of these images, but, more importantly, that which is most difficult to perceive in them: a visual component that cannot be reduced to a layer of meaning and references to the real world. In other words, we must examine the very form that images of migrants may assume, so as to avoid the mistake of reducing pictures to empty vessels that impartially convey information, but are themselves devoid of any meaning. Recognizing the agency of images will enable us to develop a new perspective that will challenge the prejudices directed at both the migrants and their likenesses.

The visualization of images-as-migrants

But how do we discuss images using their own language? Is it even possible? An answer in the affirmative is hinted at in the self-referential gestures made by visual artists who have spoken out on the subject of the migrant crisis. One sensational

example is that of the film *Havarie* ("Accident", [it would be useful to give a translation here] dir. Philip Scheffner, 2016), an iconophilic contribution to the discussion on migrants within the realm of visual culture – one that, paradoxically, has thus far remained rather blind to images themselves. Screened in the main competition at the New Horizons Film Festival in Wrocław, the film went practically unnoticed,⁷ while the thematically-related documentary *Fire at Sea* (*Fuocoammare*, dir. Gianfranco Rosi, 2016) garnered significant acclaim on the film festival circuit, winning the Golden Bear in Berlin and the European Film Award for Best Documentary. Though it makes a powerful statement in the debate on the migrant crisis, Scheffner's film isn't concerned with the specific mechanisms used to cope with migrants undertaking the life-or-death journey to Europe; instead, the director embarks on the exceptionally bold formal experiment of problematizing their images. *Havarie* is a four-minute recording – stretched out to a duration of ninety-three minutes – made by an Irish tourist aboard the cruise liner *Adventure of the Sea*, depicting an inflatable dinghy carrying a group of men spotted off the coast of Spain by the ship's crew. Terry Diamond, the author of the recording, twice points the camera back at his own ship; we see the other passengers on deck as they watch and record the event. Save for these two moments, the shot is filled with the rhythmically undulating waters of the sea and a tiny black dot representing the migrants' boat. The imperfect nature of the shaky, out-of-focus image is amplified by Scheffner's slow-motion rendition at one-twentieth of the film's original speed. The director has also modified the soundtrack, adding actual recordings of exchanges between the crew of the ship and the coast guard, as well as remarks by refugees and immigrants living in Europe, who talk about their expectations and the reality of life in the West, as well as the determination that drives migrants to undertake the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea.

If we were to apply to *Havarie* the diagnoses proposed by the theoreticians cited above, we would discover not only that the film is incapable of evoking a compassionate response of any sort, but that it is in fact a harmful instance of the dehumanization of the migrants, condemned as they are to inhabiting the background of a blurry shot. Yet Scheffner's film achieves precisely the opposite:

among European films produced in recent years, *Havarie* is one of the most vocally supportive of the migrants. More than a mere elucidation of the ethical consequences of "Fortress Europe," it illustrates the very issue of the representation of the crisis by discussing life and the circulation of both images of migrants and images-as-migrants. This is apparent not just in Diamond's openly self-referential gesture of filming other bystanders – some of whom are themselves recording the event – but also in the stretching out of the short video to the impossible format of a feature-length film, each second of which corresponds to a single frame of the original recording. There is no escape from the blurry black spot in *Havarie*, no option of averting our gaze or focusing on anything else.

The visualization of the image reveals at once the greatest ambition of Scheffner's project, namely, to capture and testify to the stories of specific migrants while rewriting the history of the cinematic image. If cinema has employed certain visual modes from the very beginning of its existence, then the German director challenges their status as the natural rules of cinematic representation, attacking in particular the ostensibly unquestionable category of visibility. The principle of mimesis, which states that images are to be regarded as transparent reflections of reality, is subjected to a peculiar form of deconstruction in *Havarie*: while the image is a recording of a certain real and unscripted experience, its immediacy in fact disarms the cinematic appeal of the story it depicts. The documentary convention of Scheffner's film is intensified to the point that it becomes the topic of the picture itself, particularly in light of the subject, which is heavily burdened with meanings yet presented using a convention that ostensibly suggests objectivity. The self-referential gestures in *Havarie* effectively emphasize the function of media as opaque co-creators of meaning without discrediting the viewing experience as inherently artificial.

Scheffner appears to be a practitioner of a theory put forward by Bruno Latour in his denunciation of the mythical disjunction between social constructivism and factual determinism;⁸ in the scholar's view, this apparent dichotomy is merely the result of our utopian conviction in the existence of a discoverable, inherent truth that remains independent of interpretation and over which critical thought holds

absolute reign.⁹ Meanwhile, Latour observes, so convinced is science of its own autonomy that it itself becomes an idol that simulates detachment from the existing social and cultural context, where in fact it requires as much knowledge as it does belief, though “the Moderns” fail to perceive this.¹⁰ In place of a harmful dichotomy between truth (fact) and its distorted image (fetish), Latour proposes a consolidation of these ostensibly exclusive categories in the form of the “factish”: both the object itself and its image.¹¹ This observation in turn opens up the concept put forward by Latour – whose interests lie mainly in the anthropology of science – to applications in visual culture and a discussion about the power and weakness of pictures, to which – without question – there has always been attributed a certain vitality and suggestive power.¹² And yet the very assumption of a drive to manipulate the viewer, to distort his or her judgments and desires is, as W.J.T. Mitchell writes, evidence of the ambiguous status of the image, if not its weakness.¹³ Scapegoated images are in fact the voices of subjugated minorities that want attention yet invariably struggle to articulate their needs and demand their fulfillment. Thus, not unlike minorities – Mitchell refers to racist depictions of Black men¹⁴ – pictures are at once too visible and insufficiently visible, bound to the viewer by a knot of hatred and adoration. They evoke awe as lenses through which the truth about the world converges, while inciting disdain as deceitful and fabricated apertures that obscure this truth.

Latour’s notion of the “factish” is useful in the study of images in that it permits us to progress beyond the choice between idolatry and iconoclasm. This third path thus requires neither fervent faith in the veracity of the depiction nor the tolerance of its particular autonomy; rather, it emphasizes the inseparable nature of the parts that constitute this dichotomy. Images are so effective, active, and real precisely because they are created, artificial, and subjective. Scheffner comes to the same realization in his film, and thus overcomes the impasse of either overstating or understating the power of pictures. While the Australian theoreticians opt to



refugees – Terry Diamond's recording, published on YouTube.com on September 16, 2012

perceive the image as thoroughly subjected to the control of social psychologists, i.e. essentially an empty, hollowed-out medium, and while the editors at Polish Television (TVP), in their infamous video segment, sought to present the “true” image of “actual” migrants as barbarians out to pillage and conquer Europe,¹⁵ *Havarie* performs a much subtler task, namely that of the “factish.” It displays a prepared and arbitrary image – along with its various consequences – while arguing that it is precisely the blurriness, crudeness, and clumsy framing of the picture that allows us to observe in it the truth about migrants who rely on our help. The aesthetic of weakness and imperfection also sheds light on the correlation between the status of the image and the people crossing the Mediterranean: the goal, in both cases, is to reveal our own susceptibility to injury, destruction, or at least distorted interpretations. Images-as-migrants exercise no actual power over their viewers; on the contrary, they are at the mercy of the viewers’ judgment and good will, and demand nothing but our attention.¹⁶

Frames of weakness, frames of the weak

This relationship is not the sole foundation of *Havarie*’s self-referential aesthetic. Its formal opaqueness brings up the concept of the frame – a concept that emerges as a result of the “factish” structure of the image, as it is only by assuming the presence of constraints, arbitrariness, and conventions that we may consider pictures as being framed. Judith Butler refers to this indirectly in disputing Susan Sontag’s claim that photographs do not offer an interpretation of what they depict, but merely point to a topic.¹⁷ The philosopher argues that pictures are inevitably anchored in a specific normative order, while the framing of images – i.e. the cropping, focusing, lighting, and the use of color – remain transparent as a way of naturalizing the actions of the authorities reflected – be it the author’s intention or not – in each depiction.¹⁸ Exposing the effects of the frame enables us to trace the relationship between authority and representation, and to perceive the elements that are excluded from the visual field, though they in fact structure it and simulate its natural, objective or obvious character. As Butler writes, the point isn’t merely to identify what lies on either side of the frame, but, more importantly, to perceive the

elements that – in various circumstances – cross this boundary, lack permanent status, and are particularly susceptible to dynamic pressures from those in power.¹⁹ This applies particularly to such issues as the fragility of the lives of those humans who – in an era of torture as committed in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib – are entitled to human rights. These rights can be suspended at any moment and the detainees' deaths are rarely duly mourned.

Images, particularly in their migrant, dynamic, minority form, are therefore in every instance an element of the politics of recognition or framing of life that is capable of resisting the dominant order. By exposing its nature as just a film – and yet not just a film – *Havarie* engages in a debate with the methods used to represent migrants, and with the very act of representation itself. Balancing on the brink of visibility, this cinematic presentation appeals to us to recognize the figure of the migrant as a person particularly susceptible to harm, one who is granted the “potential” right to live, and perhaps even an uncertain status as human. The semipermeable boundary of the frame is certainly recognizable as a symbol of visual oppression, but Scheffner's work argues that this border is one that can be shifted and negotiated, one whose existing criteria of reference can be challenged, with open, self-referential perspectives proposed in their stead. Though the word *havarie* – meaning a breakdown, emergency or shipwreck – may evoke a sense of unease, it also bears the promise that, once all other options have been exhausted, an appeal to some higher instance will not go unheeded. Scheffner's film is therefore more than just another in a series of depictions of migrants: by displaying the political frames by which these images are delimited – the need to show the clear and incontrovertible truth about the thing itself and to create a “powerful image,” to borrow a phrase from David Freedberg – and by making a “factish” statement while suspending his belief in the power of such declarations, Scheffner depicts the story of migrants as the story of images.

But if any story does indeed emerge from this film, it must be a minority story of weak images that hinges on its own paradoxical nature, as the combined categories of history and weakness seem oxymoronic. Yet, as the theory of visual culture proposed by Hito Steyerl demonstrates, such inept pictures are precisely

the domain in which the contemporary circulation of images occurs. In questioning the very materiality of the image, Steyerl argues that blurry, pixelated pictures are a reversal of their acceleration, increasing accessibility, and mobility.²⁰ The small files that crop up on the internet challenge the dominant high-quality aesthetic, resisting hegemony of any sort,²¹ and by bearing traces of digital deterioration, repeated retransmission, and their state of constant movement, these poor images express more than just the messages assigned to them; they are also a palimpsestuous testimony of their own relationship to the viewers, who in turn cease to be passive consumers and assume the role of active co-creators of pictures.²² Thus, Steyerl continues, the poor image becomes a category that describes the state of pictures in general, testifying "to the violent dislocation, transferrals, and displacement of images – their acceleration and circulation within the vicious cycles of audiovisual capitalism."²³

The aesthetic of imperfection espoused in *Havarie* is particularly relevant in light of the film's subject matter. While the common perception of migrants is that they pose a threat not just to the social order (e.g. the imminent threat of Sharia law to replace the effeminate and lax laws of Western countries), but also to the economy (the imminent collapse of the welfare state, which can't afford to support refugees²⁴), and while racism is increasingly associated with class hatred and a fear of the poor as figures that threaten to destabilize the hegemony of capitalism,²⁵ the low-resolution images in *Havarie* pose a threat to the polished, elite media images that claim a monopoly over cognition. Scheffner's film postulates a kind of visual relativism – not an obvious stance, even in the internet era – the rejection of the privileging of any aesthetic over another, and the adoption of experiment as the most effective tool for critical reflection. Such an experiment with the visuality of imperfection casts doubt on the dominant aesthetic models and visual regimes, questioning both their natural character and their practicality.²⁶ Yet this experiment requires a constant awareness of the presence of the image, not as a transparent Albertian window to the world, but as an active co-creator of meanings. In this instance, Steyer's weak aesthetic helps us to go beyond the picture and approach a broader condition of images, concentrating not on the

topic, but on the visible artifacts and imperfections apparent in material representations. These flaws then become none other than the frame described by Judith Butler.

The aporia of the detail

If we were to employ the useful distinction that exists between the *picture* and the *image* – a distinction that is not always clear in Polish and which I intentionally apply inconsistently in this essay – we could interpret *Havarie* as a film that accentuates the role of the picture: a direct, visual presence that does not always fall within the frame of the image's abstract references. Tenuously associated with the development of the plot, these pictures undermine the cozy vantage point of the viewer/consumer of pictures, a viewer/consumer who has learned not to perceive elements of representation that aren't necessarily required to automatically convey meaning. It should be noted, however, that this difference – one that is both deeply rooted in, and poses a threat to, the image – is by no means limited to the cinema. One important point of reference is the theory proposed by Georges Didi-Huberman. Taking the painting as his point of departure, he makes the claim that an abstract spot of paint on the canvas forms an ambiguous, aporetic detail that threatens that which is depicted in the painting.²⁷ The threat stems from its refusal to adhere to the principle of mimesis; it is a visual surplus, at once too weak and too powerful vis-à-vis the communicative function of the painting. Yet at the same time, Didi-Huberman writes, this explosion of matter constitutes the profound subject of painting and the actual content of all paintings.²⁸ This affirmation of the detail fails, however, to resolve the fundamental problem, namely that of visibility. As Didi-Huberman observes, it is impossible to view at once both the detail and the painting, or to synthesize the material trace and the abstract sense it may produce. The detail, not unlike Barthes' punctum, forms a gap in the study; it disarms the comprehensible nature of the depiction, and its extremely self-referential character invalidates references to the artwork as a coherent story. Drawing upon examples from literature, Didi-Huberman mentions a scene from Proust's novel *In Search of Lost Time*, in which one of the characters,

Bergotte, literally dies from the intensity of his encounter with a patch, or *pan*, of paint in a Vermeer painting – a spot that eclipses all the rest of the picture, making it “a beauty that was sufficient in itself.”²⁹ Exhausted by his obsession with a “little patch of yellow wall, with a sloping roof,”³⁰ Bergotte disregards Vermeer’s canvas as a view of Delft; rather than an urban landscape, he sees the picture as just a spot of yellow paint.

Another illustration of the aporia of the detail – its invalidating yet ennobling effect on a painting – can be found in another Proustian example, namely the scene in which the narrator kisses Albertine only to discover, with horror, that his beloved has broken up into fragments before his eyes, losing her external integrity when observed at such close proximity: “during this brief journey of my lips towards her cheek, it was ten Albertines that I saw; this one girl being like a many-headed goddess, the head I had seen last, when I tried to approach it, gave way to another.”³¹ The film scholar Linda Williams points to this scene as an illustration of the compensatory nature of the cinematic experience: that which is invisible and impossible to the participants is nevertheless possible and visible to the audience.³² The visual pleasure thus simulates the wholeness that is lacking in the direct encounter. *Havarie* breaks this compromise in a radical manner. While film traditionally stitches into a seamless whole the incoherence and inconsistency of experienced images and the striking power of the detail, Scheffner’s film makes these aspects visible by blazing a trail for a completely different film-viewing experience, one that dispenses with choosing between the detail and the whole. If it is impossible to see the detail itself, as it has no extrinsic meaning, then Scheffner’s sloppy, out-of-focus shots essentially preclude the perception of anything but the detail, which is all the more relevant considering that the abstract spot in *Havarie* is a specific dinghy crammed with people. Here we encounter an iconographic trope, a model of an insufficiently yet overwhelmingly visible image; it has been a long time since such a surge of homogeneous pictures was accompanied by such little consideration of what those images actually are. This is especially true if we consider that the exacerbated status of the image is inextricably linked to the current state of crisis, as visual scholars have observed, pointing out the surplus of

images of war and the parallel lack of its appropriate representation.³³ The death of specific people in contemporary images of war is deferred by the illegibility of the pictures, which often require specialist interpretation and which “emphasize a certain impression while erasing the details.”³⁴

Scheffner takes the opposite approach, turning the aporia of the detail into the subject of the image itself. By exposing the frames of the visual workings of the crisis, he problematizes what we see and why we see it. Rather than show the face of a migrant, much less a heartwarming picture of a family determined to adopt the Western way of life, Scheffner compels us to direct our gaze at this invisibility, to face an image that speaks about this specific boat as much as it does about the ambivalent position of pictures in general. Even if the images of migrants that are shared online, reprinted in newspapers, and featured in every news broadcast are seen as having enormous political influence – typically as “evidence” that migrants don’t need help and are only drawn to Europe for its social benefits – the exact opposite is true: not only are they images of minorities, they are images-as-minorities, pictures susceptible to manipulation, ones that demand power and attention rather than possessing them in any real way.

Defective images leaning into the future

The image as an actor in a meaning-producing network should absolutely be regarded as separate from the views of Bleiker, Campbell, and Hutchison – outlined at the beginning of this essay – who are correct in calling for the humanization of the image of refugees in Australian and international media, yet treat the picture as inherently neutral, something that can be designed from start to finish. This is apparent, for example, in their demand for “visualizations that present refugees simply as human, with all the associated complexities.”³⁵ However, this raises questions as to whether the category of the person is transparent and legible when dissociated from the image, which is merely intended to depict the individual. As we retrace the history of the representation of migrants, we discover that images of men and their families fleeing persecution in Eastern Bloc countries play entirely different roles than modern-day pictures of women from the Global South do. As

Heather L. Johnson argues, the three shifts that have occurred in the framing of refugees – their racialization, victimization, and feminization – have led to them being deprived of political interests and agency.³⁶ If, in the face of the resurging concept of the nation-state, political activity is becoming associated with citizenship and affiliation, then – Johnson claims – the contemporary figure of the refugee as aberrant and stateless itself entails a forced surrender of these rights, which subsequently become the privilege of the few.³⁷ Depicting the refugee as “a person” assumes identical cultural implications for images of men and women and fails to account for the shift that has occurred since the 1990s in the symbolism of refugee status. In the public imagination, this image is no longer one of political refugees persecuted by anti-Western totalitarian regimes, but a mass of nameless, impoverished immigrants with no life stories of their own, for whom there is no room in “Fortress Europe.”³⁸ While the authors note that images of the “ideal victim”³⁹ are encumbered with gender stereotypes (e.g., the mute woman as a victim of fate rather than the failure of global politics), they appear not to notice that by calling for humanitarian depictions that appeal to our sense of compassion, they reduce the role of images to hostages of conservative politics in which pictures serve no purpose other than to reinforce existing convictions about the Other.

The image serves an important function other than that of depiction, namely, it problematizes both visual media and the way in which we use our vision. As Didi-Huberman argues, the picture is not exhausted by its subject; on the contrary, its value is decided by an indistinct, abstract visual component that is irreducible to an intelligible system of signs or indexation. Though visible at first glance, this component is imperceptible to an eye trained to ignore it. It is precisely this unlearning of viewing that is discussed in *Havarie*. Scheffner contends that in order to finally perceive the ethical significance of the migrant problem, we must adopt an entirely different mode of viewing, one that includes that which is traditionally excluded from the field of view, as flooded as it may be with media representations of migrants. A critical interrogation of images of refugees from the perspective of visual culture studies is encouraged not just by the correlation between the status of the voiceless minority and images demanding attention, but also by the crisis of

various types of representation that is genetically inscribed into the discipline; recall that the category of visualization and visuality is closely tied to the exceptional state of war, in which the power of vision, or, more aptly, visual intuition, could make all the difference between victory and defeat in battle.⁴⁰ Scheffner thus does not aspire to create a documentary that would explain the migrant problem, but to create a critical picture about images-as-migrants while taking a clear position in the ethical debate on the principles of hospitality and aid. The transition from an order in which the debate on migrants is conducted from conflicting, mutually exclusive positions to an examination of the matter of the film itself – of *Havarie* and every other film – as a story about fleeing from compulsory visibility allows the director to take an empathetic stance towards migrants as part of a policy of help and support, one that is integral to a broader approach in which solidarity and the recognition of our wide-reaching, mutual dependencies and symbiosis set the limit for of the most urgent tasks facing art and the humanities as a whole.⁴¹ By strategically leaning into the future and granting visibility to a patch of film matter – a blurry black spot in a sea of blue – *Havarie* talks about migrants by displaying the process of their depiction, while examining the pictures not as hostages of short-term politics, but as co-creators of meaning, ones whose lives and desires are not always predictable. In this sense, the film opens itself up to the unknown future.

Footnotes

1 Heather L. Johnson, "Click to Donate: Visual Images, Constructing Victims and Imagining the Female Refugee," *Third World Quarterly* 32 (2011): 1017.

2 Roland Bleiker et al., "The Visual Dehumanization of Refugees," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 48 (2013): 411.

3 Ibid., 412.

- 4 Roland Bleiker, David Campbell, Emma Hutchison, "Visual Cultures of Inhospitality," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* (26) 2014: 196.
- 5 See Karen E. Jenni, George Loewenstein, "Explaining the 'Identifiable Victim Effect,'" *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* (14) 1997: 235–257.
- 6 Bleiker, "Visual Cultures," 198.
- 7 Even the industry press failed to mention the film in its coverage of the competition. See Michał Piepiórka, "Krajobrazy wewnętrzne," *Kino* 9 (2016): 50–53.
- 8 Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2010), 18.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid., 2.
- 11 Bruno Latour, "A Few Steps Towards the Anthropology of the Iconoclastic Gesture," *Science in Context* 19, no. 1 (1998): 65.
- 12 W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 10.
- 13 Ibid., 33.
- 14 Ibid., 34–35.
- 15 The opening sequence of the television program *Minęła dwudziesta*, broadcast October 31, 2015, on TVP Info, featured fast-paced footage of violent clashes between a group of mostly black men and law enforcement officers. As a reaction to an announcement made by Gdańsk mayor Paweł Adamowicz regarding the city's intention to welcome refugees, the images alluded to the threat to public safety in Europe allegedly posed by the unrestrained influx of migrants holding completely different values. At the same time, the racist and xenophobic overtones of the footage sparked protests from many viewers and organizations, who saw the sequence as a violation of journalistic ethics. The footage was soon removed from

all websites belonging to TVP. See Aleksandra Kozłowska, "Gdańscy imigranci protestują przeciw 'rasistowskiej ideologii w TVP Info,'" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 15, 2016, accessed January 18,

2017.<http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35636,20975709,gdancscy-imigranci-protestuja-przeciw-rasistowskiej-ideologii.html>

16 Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?*, 48.

17 Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010), 66.

18 Ibid., 67.

19 Ibid., 71.

20 Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux* 10, November (2009), accessed August 8, 2017. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image>

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Alex Rotas, "'A Soft Touch': Racism and Asylum-Seekers From a Visual Culture Perspective," in *Racism, Postcolonialism, Europe*, Graham Huggan, Ian Law, eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 78.

25 Ambavalaner Sivanandan, "Poverty is the New Black," in *Beyond September 11: An Anthology of Dissent*, ed. Phil Scraton (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 114.

26 Łukasz Zaremba, "Męki obrazów," *Widok. Teorie i praktyki kultury wizualnej*, 5 (2014), accessed September 15, 2016.

<http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/169/284>

27 Georges Didi-Huberman, "Appendix: The Detail and the *Pan*," in *Confronting*

Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 229–271.

28 Ibid., 231–232.

29 Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol V: The Captive & The Fugitive*, C.K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, trans. (London: Modern Library, 1993), 244.

30 Ibid.

31 Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol III: The Guermantes Way*, C.K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, trans. (London: Modern Library, 1998), 499.

32 Linda Williams, *Screening Sex* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 56–57.

33 Łukasz Zaremba, "Czy 'wojny z terroryzmem' również nie było?," *Widok. Teorie i praktyki kultury wizualnej*, 2 (2013), accessed September 15, 2016.
<http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/46/83>

34 Ibid.

35 Bleiker, "Visual Cultures," 199.

36 Johnson, "Click to Donate," 1027.

37 Ibid., 1028.

38 Ibid., 1027.

39 Bleiker *et al.*, "The Visual Dehumanization of Refugees," 406.

40 Nicholas Mirzoeff, "On Visuality," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5 (2006): 54.

41 Ewa Domańska, "Humanistyka afirmatywna," *Kultura Współczesna* 4 (2014): 124.