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THE PERFORMATIVE NARRATIVITY OF BIOPICTURES IN THE CONTEXT OF BIOPOWER, BIOPOLITICS AND A "WAR OF IMAGES" AFTER 9/11AS THE EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPORARY CLONOPHOBIA AND ICONOPHOBIA

Abstract: The essay attempts to outline the main aspects of visual culture studies as the emergent theoretical formation of the performative narrativity of biopictures in the context of biopower, biopolitics and the "War of Images" as the examples of iconophobia and clonophobia. The subject of the performative narrativity of biopictures has been taken up in a discussion on some main ideas that seem to have been fundamental both for the negative and positive aspects of W.J.T. Mitchell's agency concept of "visual subjects" in the context of meaning reproduction and iterability. The concept of biopictures also includes notions such as the very idea of an analogy to living forms of organisms, which is a metaphorical relationship, similar in the nature of things to the relation between biological and social bodies. The narrative issues of biopictures are addressed in the scenes where we see the velociraptor with the letters of the DNA code projected onto its skin, in Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993), and the anonymous storm troopers who march off to their deaths, in George Lucas's *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002). Performative biopictures can be considered as living organisms, thematically referring to visual digital techniques and genetic engineering. Writing on biopictures as the tools of biopower and biopolitics, Mitchell recalls Michel Foucault's and Giorgio Agamben's concepts in which biopower and biopolitics have participated in the fundamental process of neoliberal power and creating living beings while exercising control over them. In the paper, the narrative and performative features of image as a "visual subject" have been described in feminist theory, cultural studies (Jacques Lacan, Stuart Hall) and visual culture studies (Nicholas Mirzoeff). The paper contains descriptions of the photo-collage *From Dust to DNA* by Kevin Clarke and Mikey Flowers, and a mural on the viaduct on the road to Tikrit, depicting Saddam's clone army. These artworks have been discussed in the context of the "War on Terror," in which all contemporary terrorism is bioterrorism based on the "suicide metaphor" of an "autoimmune disease" used by Jacques Derrida. The essay concludes with a reference to Mieke Bal's "close reading" concept, in which performativity is combined with narrativity, as narrators can assign agency to the subject of narration and they embody anxiety over the processes of image making and destroying (iconoclasm).

Introduction: the reference of an image to narrative and politics

In the scope of the discussion on attempts to explain the term "visual culture" and the references of an image to narrative, Svetlana Alpers's concept that has been described in her book entitled *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*[1] seems interesting. The issue of visual representation led to the emergence of Norman Bryson's semiotics of the image[2] which included a need for the definitions of the "language of images" and "visual communication" concepts. As for narrative, Alpers openly admits to being inspired by Michael Baxandall, but she chooses Dutch painting of the seventeenth century as the material for her iconographic analysis. Alpers refers to the fundamental dichotomy between "textual culture" and "visual culture." She observes that the concept of narrative is relevant for Italian Renaissance art (Quattrocento painting), as behind the paintings from this historical period there is a textual substitute based on the narrative portrayal of some story. By contrast, Dutch painting of the Golden Age cannot be described in this way, as it is not associated with any narrative.

In the light of these considerations, the polemic between Georges Didi-Huberman and Alpers also seems interesting. Alpers questions the thesis of Leon Battista Alberti who said that a painting is a kind of narrative or *historia*.[3] She believes that the reduction of an image to narrative or a story is a theoretical misunderstanding because the meaning of visuality in Dutch painting is to be found just under "the surface of images." What we see is all there is to see and understand, and visualization becomes a goal in itself. Didi-Huberman partly agrees with Alpers's opinion and concedes that the *View of Delft* (1660–1661) cannot be assigned to any story. From this point of view, Johannes Vermeer's painting, analyzed by Didi-Huberman, does not refer to any source textual equ-

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[1]   See S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, First Edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984. The term "visual culture" appeared for the first time with reference to, like in the book by Svetlana Alpers, M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York 1988.

[2]   See M. Bal and N. Bryson, *Semiotics and Art History*, "The Art Bulletin" 1991, Vol. 73, No. 3, pp. 174–208. In the essay "Semiotics and Art History," Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson discussed a methodological approach to image meaning as the key concept in their theoretical perspective of the semiotics of the image.

[3]   See L.B. Alberti, *On Painting*, transl. C. Grayson, ed. M. Kemp, "Penguin Classics," Penguin Books, London and New York 1991. In his concept of *historia*, Leon Battista Alberti calls *historia* a painter's greatest work.

ivalent. He bluntly writes that "The *View of Delft* is just a view."[4] Alpers thinks that this painting allows us to see what the old Dutch city of Delft (with its topography, architecture, urban landscape and people) looked like in the times of Vermeer.

The *View of Delft*, in Dutch: *Gezicht op Delft* (1660–1661) by Johannes Vermeer, in Dutch: Jan Vermeer van Delft (1632–1675), an oil painting on canvas, the Mauritshuis in The Hague, https://www.mauritshuis.nl/en/explore/the-collection/artworks/view-of-delft-92/.

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4   G. Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of Certain History of Art,* transl. John Goodman, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania 2005, p. 240.

However, in his polemic, Didi-Huberman talks about a completely different visual model. A painting is deprived of meaning, it does not tell any story, but shows us the painter's way of seeing reality (meaning is replaced by seeing). Didi-Huberman calls this model "visual reflection", i.e. the ability to create a transparent and highly accurate representation of the subject (this depends on the painter's technical skills).[5] In the case of the *View of Delft*, the subject is urban landscape, where it is difficult not to notice a huge amount of various details and objects. Alpers claims that Dutch painting of the seventeenth century was connected with the theory of seeing. As an example in support of this thesis, she mentions the invention of *camera obscura*, which was used by Vermeer, as linking his painting mode with photography. Thus, a painting, like a photographic image, was subordinated to the artist's perception.[6]

The performative narrativity of biopictures according to W.J.T. Mitchell

General considerations on the performative narrativity of biopictures can be found in the writings by W.J.T. Mitchell, which have been related to the problematics of biopower and biopolitics. In this context, Mitchell quotes Foucault who argues that currently "we have entered (...) into the age of biopolitics."[7] From Thomas Lemke's point of view, contemporary mechanisms of biopower and biopolitics have taken the form of "the control of the human as individual body and at the human as species."[8] The performative narrativity of biopictures has been specified in a statement by Mindy Fenske saying that "Images in W.J.T. Mitchell's appropriation of advertising vernacular, 'have legs' (...)."[9] In Mitchell's collection of essays, *What Do Pictures Want?*, we read: "Every advertising executive knows that some images, to use the trade jargon, 'have legs' – that is, they seem to have a surprising capacity to generate new directions and surprising twists in an ad campaign, as if they had an intelligence and pur-

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[5]   Ibid., p. 241.

[6]   See S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing...*, pp. 169–221.

[7]   W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 The Present*, The University of Chicago Press, 2011, Chicago and London, pp. 70–71. The writings of W.J.T. Mitchell (*What do Pictures Want and Cloning Terror*) have been associated with "The foundational trope of the biopicture (that, K.C.) has obvious resonances with what Michel Foucault called 'biopolitics' and 'biopower' (...)." Ibid., p. 70.

[8]   T. Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, transl. E. F. Trump, New York University Press, New York and London 2011, p. 38. Here, Thomas Lemke, while defining biopolitics in the context of Michel Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism and his approach to biopower, refers to M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collčge de France 1975–1976*, transl. D. Macey, Picador, New York 2003, pp. 242–243.

[9]   M. Fenske, *Tattoos in American Visual Culture*, First Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2007, p. 23.

posiveness of their own."[10] Such understanding leads to the translocation and transposition of Mitchell's agency concept into the context of the reproduction of meaning and iterability. Fenske states that this procedure of the narrative and performative perspective raises the issue of agency (pointing to who is acting and who is the causative agent is). The notion of image as a quasi-agent prompts us to wonder how images act and whether they can actually be "visual subjects."[11] Mitchell's approach to the issue of image agency is revealed in the literal meaning of his book's title (What Do Pictures Want?). Fenske convinces us that images act like people ("living things"), they want something from us and they have their own free will, while *picture* or *image* treated as a "visual subject" or agent can be "(...) used as a medium of communication, or (...) a social actor."[12]

For Mitchell, *pictures* and *images* that become *agents* or "visual subjects" are endowed with the physical properties of a living organism.[13] In his essay entitled "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," Mitchell examined the performative narrativity of agency which "(...) is a more nuanced and balanced approach located in the equivocation between the visual image as instrument and agency, an image as a tool for manipulation, on the one hand, and as an apparently autonomous source of its own purposes and meanings on the other. This approach would treat visual culture and visual images as go-betweens in social transactions, as a repertoire of screen images or templates that structure our encounters with other human beings."[14] In this perspective, images can be the object of human activities or they play a role in "visual subjects" considered either as human subject actions or as subjects (agents) acting to themselves. Thus, images can be objects for human subjects, which is particularly conspicuous in the case of iconoclasm. Alternatively, images themselves can be acting as subjects. Mitchell asserts that "A picture is less like a statement or speech act, then, than like a speaker capable of an infinite number of utterances. An image is not a text to be read but a ventriloquist's dummy into which we project our voice. When we are offended by what an image 'says,' we are like the ventriloquist insulted by his own dummy."[15] This sentence shows the performative translocation from the position of an image being treated like a text or a speech act, to the position of an image being treated like a "visual subject" (or

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[10] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2005, p. 31.

[11] M. Fenske, *Tattoos in American Visual Culture*..., pp. 23–24.

[12] Ibid., p. 24.

[13] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?*..., pp. 12–13.

[14] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture*, "Journal of Visual Culture" 2002, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 175.

[15] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?*..., p. 140.

an agent) that is able to act and constitutes a "go-between" or "social actor" in social transactions.

Examples of the performative narrativity of biopictures are located in the "living things" that are advanced products of biotechnology and information sciences. The issue of biopictures was first addressed in the iconic science-fiction movie, Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993). In Mitchell's opinion, here it is possible to find the concept of biopictures as "living things" in "a memorable scene of biocybernetics run wild,"[16] symbolized by a velociraptor with the letters of the DNA code projected onto its skin. The "digital dinosaur" broke into the computer room of the Dinosaur Park and accidentally turned on the projector with a film informing tourists about the *Jurassic Park*, which included the DNA code. According to Mitchell, the dinosaur featured in this scene performs the role of a "terrorist," since the English word "dinosaur" consists of two words: "deinos" (terror, terrible, terrifying) and "sauros" (a lizard). The "digital dinosaur" or velociraptor from *Jurassic Park* has been made using digital computer animation and the interplay of two branches of science developing in a parallel manner: genetics and information technologies, as well as has been "brought back to life by cloning" "from extinct DNA."[17]
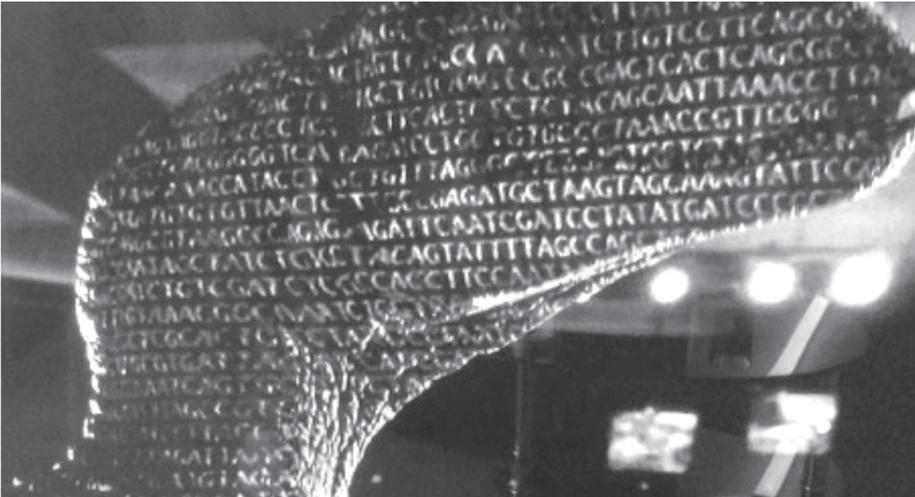
A still from Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993) depicting a "digital dinosaur" or velociraptor with the letters of the DNA code projected onto its skin, after it has broken into the computer control room of the Dinosaur Park and accidentally turned on a film projector.

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16 W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror...*, p. 71.
17 Ibid., pp. 72–73.

Images used in *Jurassic Park* operate as biopictures (living things) and they thematically refer to digital imaging technologies and genetic engineering. The appearance of the DNA code on the surface of a velociraptor's skin (in the abovementioned scene of *Jurassic Park*) can be compared by analogy to revealing the ASCII code of digital images, which enables their animation, endows them with "life" and gives them features possessed by living beings (biopictures). For the author of *Cloning Terror*, the velociraptor from *Jurassic Park* becomes a figure for the way in which contemporary biopictures operate, as livingthings, thanks to the use of digital media. Mitchell claims that the velociraptor "(...) is the first explicit avatar of the biodigital picture, or simply the 'biopicture,' understanding that this refers to the new conditions of an image-life in the age of biocybernetics, the times of cloning and computing. The biopicture, then, is the fusion of the older 'spectral' life of images (...) with a new form of technical life, epitomized by the contemporary phenomenon of cloning and the development of digital imaging and animation."[18]

In biopictures, Mitchell seeks the analogy to life forms, which is a two-way and metaphorical relationship, similar in the nature of things to the relation between biological and social bodies. One should notice that not only have images always been referred to and compared to living organisms, but organisms, in the notions of "species" and "specimen", have also constituted mirror reflections of biological taxonomy. Images are "imitations of life", but each time in a different way. The difference between images and *pictures* can be understood as the difference between *species* and *specimens*. Mitchell claims that "Species (...) are like the generic images that pick out types and stereotypes that can be repeated in different individual specimens."[19] As Mitchell states, *images* are to *pictures* what *species* are to *specimens*, or categories to their members.

Thus, biopictures do not resemble representations or simulations, but they are replicas instead – "living copies" made with the help of biocybernetics. The "biodigital picture" is an example of a biopicture. Mitchell thinks that its emergence is connected with "A new version of the pictorial turn (which, K.C.) has taken place in the last twenty years or so. It is a turn toward the 'biopicture', or (more precisely) the 'biodigital picture', the icon 'animated' – that is, given motion and the appearance of life by means of the techno-sciences of biology and information. The twin inventions of computers and genetic engineering have produced a new twist in the ancient trope of the pictorial turn, and especially in that aspect of images that has likened them to life forms – and vice versa."[20]

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[18]   Ibid., p. 73. Mitchell claims the following about the biopicture: "The revealing of the code of life on the dinosaur's surface suggests, by analogy, the revealing of the digital codes that make its cinematic animation possible." Ibid.

[19]   Ibid., p. 70.

[20]   Ibid.

Biopictures resulting from new advances in biotechnology are living beings, a good example of which is the cloned sheep called Dolly. The concept of living images, which has emerged due to the encounter of digital technologies with biology and of physics with aesthetics, is the reason why Horst Bredekamp claims that "The most obvious instances of the schematic image act, on account of the very term traditionally used for them, (...) literally 'living pictures', or more comprehensively 'living images'."[21] In this sense, we can talk about image-making techniques analogous to image cloning, which takes place with the use of biocybernetic and digital technologies, and genetic engineering.

Mitchell thinks that "The terrorist and the clone, then, are the mutually constitutive figures of the pictorial turn in our time."[22] Moreover, contemporary social life is entangled in a war against global terrorism, increasingly inclining us to build metaphors that are not only related to biopictures as living organisms, but also draw our attention to their viral nature resulting from cloning and genetic engineering. The global circulation of images on the Internet is very rapid and has been compared to cancer, a viral infection or an autoimmune disease where various life forms (biopictures) grow, reproduce and mutate faster than antibodies in our defence systems. Mitchell believes that "(...) terrorism and cloning, like life forms and images, were locked in a relationship of mutual analogy."[23] A terrorist is often depicted as a clone, a faceless robot, masked, anonymous, thoughtless, reminiscent of pathological, suicidal or viral forms of life. Clones embody various religious and aesthetic fears which reduce human beings to an instrumentally treated commodity.[24]

Biopictures as tools of biopower and biopolitics

Biopictures are the tools of biopower and biopolitics, that have been introduced to the fundamental human rights. With their help, government control over human bodies and the population is exercised. Mitchell refers to Michel Foucault who claims that "(...) we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the former, does not

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[21] H. Bredekamp, *Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency*, transl. E. Clegg, "Image – Word – Action," First Edition, Walter de Gruyter Verlag, Berlin and Boston 2018, p. 78.

[22] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror*..., p. 74.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Bruno Latour argued that humans should negotiate with machines and consider them as their allies, but the rejection of the idea of anthropocentrism means that human beings can be treated as commodities and objects of exploitation. See B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, "Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies," First Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York 2005.

exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists at a different level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments. Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species."[25] Biopower can be understood as the local "operator" of biopolitics, which constitutes the essential element in the development of the democratic systems of neoliberal capitalism. This sociopolitical system has only been able to survive because of its control over the human population. The age of biopolitics began with the transition from the negative power of the sovereign over the instruments of death to positive control over the life of human populations. Foucault mentions a few mechanisms of biopower and biopolitics, including control over the proportion of births and deaths.[26]

Therefore, biopictures operate within the fundamental process of neoliberal power over the production of living beings and exercising control over them. This is an update in the development of new political, democratic and economic institutions, as well as information and biocybernetic technologies, which enable the management of sexuality and the genetic engineering of human populations. In the age of biocybernetic reproduction, the body is becoming a place of a drastic intervention of biopower/biopolitics and genetic engineering, and the human population performs the role of a database which can be freely manipulated. In his book *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault claims that the era of biopower began when "The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various institutions-universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops, and there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of 'biopower'."[27] According to Mitchell, cloning based on the interplay between "the revolution

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[25] M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended...*, p. 242.
[26] Ibid., p. 243.
[27] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1: An Introduction, transl. R. Hurley, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, New York 1990, pp. 139–140. Michel Foucault sees the beginning of the era of biopower as responsible for the rise of neoliberal capitalism.

in information sciences" and "the one in biotechnology to inaugurate an age of 'biocybernetic reproduction'" has become "the most dramatic and symbolic innovation," or, to formulate it differently, an experimental field for biopower and biopolitics. In this light, Mitchell claims that "The body becomes the site of increasingly drastic intervention at the same time that populations are reduced to databases."[28] Mitchell also believes that the performative agency of biopictures can be attributed to what Foucault called "biopower," in which transformations of governmental control over bodies and populations result "in the fact that it fosters life or disallows it to the point of death, whereas the sovereign power takes life or lets live."[29] This is why contemporary human actions are oriented more towards increasing the power of control over life and death.

Mitchell refers to Giorgio Agamben who introduced the term "bare life." This notion helps us understand the connection between biopictures and biopower/biopolitics. For Agamben, biopolitics is the power over "bare life," which refers to two issues: politicized life as such and control wielded through biopower which has produced various technologies of control. Referring to Agamben seems justified, for he claims in *Homo Sacer* that "bare life" "(...) is not simply natural reproductive life, the *zoē* of the Greeks, nor bios, a qualified form of life. It is, rather, the bare life of homo sacer and the wargus, a zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man and beast, nature and culture."[30] Biopictures not only become tools of wielding biopower and biopolitics, but they also influence the nature of controlled social processes which make human existence dependent on machines and the instruments of control all the time. Foucault wrote about them in the context of American neo-liberalism and the *homo oeconomicus* model.[31] In the view of these concepts, it has been identified "(...) to the extent that, in practice, the stake in all neoliberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo oeconomicus* as partner of exchange with a *homo oeconomicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of (his) earnings."[32]

According to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, searching for sanctioned models by the scopic regimes of identity takes place using photographic images in advertising messages. Researchers refer to the "docile bodies" concept by Michel Foucault, in which disciplinary procedures make "ideal bodies" for

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[28] See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror...*, p. 71.
[29] T. Lemke, *Biopolitics...*, p. 36. Thomas Lemke quotes M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended...*, p. 241.
[30] G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, transl. D. Heller-Roazen, First Edition, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1998, p. 109.
[31] M. Foucault *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collĕge de France 1978-1979*, transl. G. Burchell, ed. M. Senellart, Palgrave Macmillan. New York 2008, pp. 249–253.
[32] Ibid., p. 226.

the new economics, politics and warfare of the modern industrial age, bodies that function in factories, military regiments and schools. However, in order to construct "docile bodies," disciplinary institutions must be able to constantly observe and record the bodies they control, and ensure the internalization of disciplinary individuality within the bodies being controlled. That is, the discipline must be exerted without excessive force by moulding the bodies into the correct form through careful observation methods. This requires a particular form of an institution, exemplified, Foucault argues, by Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. Sturken and Cartwright claim that: "Photographic images have been instrumental in the production of what Foucault called the docile bodies of the modern state – citizens who participate in the ideologies of the society through cooperation and a desire to fit in and conform. This happens in the vast array of media and advertising images that produce homogeneous images for us of the perfect look, the perfect body, and the perfect pose."[33] For this reason, we are subjected to "biopower" mechanisms that can lead to exclusion.[34] To avoid this, we can work together in trying to match the ideologies by adopting a conformist attitude. The mechanism includes social media which are becoming "identity media" that affect the appearance of our bodies. This tendency is related to the issues of "biopower," understood as a set of mechanisms leading to the inclusion of the biological features of the human species in the area of biopower strategy.

The narrative and performative features of images as "visual subject"

The category of "visual subject" is defined in feminist context as a term which refers to the notion of an "identity."[35] Other interpretations position it in the field of cultural studies (Michel Foucault and Start Hall) and visual culture studies (Nicholas Mirzoeff). What is more, this concept fits within discourses on Foucault's panopticism and Martin Jay's ocularcentrism. The sense of being an entity that is supervised and at the same time entangled in gaze, can be summarized in Foucault's aphorism: "Visibility is a trap."[36] This aphorism has been

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[33] M. Sturken, L. Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Third Edition, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 2017, p. 114.

[34] M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collčge de France 1977-1978*, transl. G. Burchell, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009, p. 3.

[35] See A. Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts*, Routledge, London and New York 2012, and A. Jones, *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject*, Routledge, London and New York 2006. Feminist theory puts the notion of "identity" (as a modern European concept) in the context of seeing, which attributes meaning to other people as "visible difference."

[36] M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, transl. A. Sheridan, Second Edition, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, New York 1995, p. 200.

taken up by visual culture theorists. However, if Foucault's entities arise in the process of exercising power, in visual culture studies they become "(...) the entities that come into being at the points of intersection of visibility with social power."[37] It is worth noting that Foucault does not research visuality but "visibility," because he states that "(...) the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. (...) In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible (...). Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. (...) The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen."[38] Mirzoeff cites the example of a "blind man" who, at the beginning of the panoptic era, became the object of a particular state concern. This century has witnessed the inception of the first state institutions for the blind, e.g. the Paris Institute for the Blind where Louis Braille served as professor and established the invention of the tactile language for the blind. The "blind man" was a construct made by panoptic institutions for the purposes of social care, as it rendered seeing and being seen – two main panoptic categories that have become very problematic.[39]

In his essay "The Question of Cultural Identity," Stuart Hall distinguishes three types of subjects: "Enlightenment," "Sociological," and "Postmodern".[40] Let us transfer this subject typology to the area of visual culture. The first of the types is defined as a Cartesian subject, whose essence is included in René Descartes's statement: *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"). Descartes's

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[37] N. Mirzoeff, *The Subject of Visual Culture, in: The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. N. Mirzoeff, Routledge, London and New York 2002, p. 10.

[38] M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish...*, pp. 201–202.

[39] See N. Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, First Edition, Routledge, London and New York 1999, pp. 95–97.

[40] See S. Hall, *The Question of Cultural Identity*, in: *Modernity and its Future*, eds. S. Hall, D. Held, T. McGrew, Polity Press and the Open University, Cambridge and Oxford 1992, pp. 281–290. In his essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Stuart Hall presents two different definitions of "cultural identity." He first "(...) defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common." The other definition "(...) recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become.' We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities (...)." S. Hall, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, in: Identity: *Community, Culture and Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford, First Edition, Lawrence and Wishart, London 2003, pp. 223–225.

rational subject has been placed at the centre of Western European culture. In visual culture, one can find a subject model which was formed much later, corresponding to the "Enlightenment" subject. However, it is not guided by the reason, but by seeing (which is the result of the ocularcentrism paradigm). This subject has been characterized by the statement: *Video ergo sum* ("I see, therefore I am") which appeared in visual culture with the invention of photography.[41] The second model distinguished by Hall has been called the "Sociological" subject, as it has been shaped by identity and social processes. In the area of visual culture, it can be seen as an analogous model of subjectivity, shaped by the social functioning of the visuality mechanism. This subject category is formulated at high-level generality and can be compared to the "visual subject" specified by Mirzoeff, guided by the Lacanian sentence: "I see myself seeing myself."[42] The last model of Hall's typology is the "Postmodern" subject which is composed of many different fractal identities and an internally contradictory "self" capable of unifying every element into one whole. In the area of visual culture, this subject's equivalent is the process of shaping identity by visual media. This visually mediated process is a tool of a new type of subject-making. Mirzoeff believes that "The boundaries of the visual subject are under erasure from within and without. Today it is possible to feel constantly under surveillance and (...) at all as we move from the gaze of one camera to the next. For the crisis of the visual subject has been brought into sharp relief under the symbolic influences of globalization and digital culture. In the short life of the Information Age, this is perhaps the most interesting moment in which to attempt digital criticism."[43]

Clonophobia and iconophobia as embodiments of contemporary fears

Forbidding people to make images in God's likeness can be associated with the prohibition to make any images at all, which is a preventive move in this context, since image-making by people can become an act of creating living things. Every image is alive, so by making images we are "playing God" who creates living beings. Mitchell believes that by image-making people impiously try to "play God with technology."[44] This conviction results from the fact that images are alive, multiply like viruses and have been involved in iconophobia/

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[41] J. Murray-Brown, *Video Ergo Sum*, in: *Video Icons and Values*, eds. A. M. Olson, C. Parr, and D. Parr, State University of New York Press, Albany 1991, pp. 17–31, 150–151.

[42] J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, transl. A. Sheridan, in: *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. J. A. Miller, Book XI, W. W. Norton Company, New York and London 1998, p. 80.

[43] N. Mirzoeff, *The Subject of Visual Culture*..., p. 11.

[44] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror*..., p. 32.

clonophobia.[45] Biopictures, in turn, refer to various life forms, image cloning and genetic engineering. In her book *Tattoos in American Visual Culture*, Mindy Fenske claims that "Images, from this point of view, are living things. The particular form of life is not, however, analogous to an acting individual agent or subject. Instead, the images' life is rather more similar to the potential for life imagined in, for example, religious icons or, seen another way, the reproducibility of a biological virus. In the first case, images live because of the human tendency to attribute life. There is a propensity (both historical and cultural) to approach images 'as if' they have immanent power and life. (...) Images also live, however, because of their reproducibility. Like the unpopular virus, which can only reproduce itself by joining with or passing through another cell, images are replicated and modified and incessantly circulated."[46] Mitchell speaks of images as living things which become involved in the processes of iconophobia, spreading fear similar to clonophobia. This phenomenon is connected with the notion of iconoclasm (destruction of images) that is characteristic for contemporary culture rooted in iconophobia – a fear of new image forms and new visual technologies.

According to Mitchell, clonophobia is the postmodern version of "the old modernist fear of the crowd and the masses." In one of the scenes of *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002) by George Lucas, we see anonymous storm troopers who "in a crowd would lose their individuality, but regain it when they left it."[47] The storm troopers constitute "the clone army" in which a faceless clone and "the specter of the 'monstrous double' or 'evil twin' perfectly simulates the 'donor' or 'parent' organism,"[48] as well as is similar to other clones not only on the outside, but also on the inside, at the level of "deep copies" of the DNA code. The storm troopers "are not clones (plural); 'they' are 'a clone' (collective singular)."[49]

The problem of clone identity and the associated notion of clonophobia may be connected with another pair of terms: image and iconophobia. It turns out that clones can function as biopictures or "superimages" and clonophobia can be compared to iconophobia, which is one of the most persistent phobias in the history of humanity. From the perspective of the Judeo-Christian tradition, making Adam "in the image of God" may seem to be a human cloning act. One can see it even more clearly in "the cloning of Eve from the rib of Adam"

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[45]   See W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?...*, p. 90.
[46]   M. Fenske, *Tattoos in America Visual Culture...*, p. 23.
[47]   W.J.T. Mitchell, Cloning Terror..., p. 75.
[48]   Ibid., pp. 74–75. The "clone" has been known as "the specter of reproduction without sexual difference that leads quickly to fantasies of unleashed homosexual reproduction; the figure of the macho gay male." Ibid., p. 74.
[49]   Ibid., p. 75.

A still from George Lucas's *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002), depicting "the masses of anonymous "cloned storm troopers" who "march off to their deaths" and constitute an update of "the old modernist fear of the crowd and the masses."

or in the coming of the Antichrist, who is supposed to be the "clone of true Christ" (?). Moreover, the immaculate conception is interpreted by Mitchell as "the implantation of an embryonic life form in the womb of the Virgin Mary."[50] In this context, biblical discourse confirms the belief that only God can perform a cloning act comparable to the act of creation.

Mitchell emphasizes the fact that iconophilia/iconophobia exist only for the people who recognize or believe that images are alive. However, the life of images is not an individual, but a social matter. Images live in genetic series, reproduce themselves and havea simultaneous, collective existence. Mitchell talks about biopictures as pseudo-forms of life, parasites of human host organisms. The social life of images can take different forms which manifest themselves in cloning. It is based on particular logic of an image, which approaches biopictures as viruses. However, for Mitchell, "If an image is an icon, a sign that refers by likeness or similitude, a clone is a 'superimage' that is a perfect duplicate, not only of the surface appearance of what it copies, but its deeper essence, the very code that gives it its singular, specific identity. Cloning might be called 'deep copying', since it goes beneath the visual or phenomenal surface to copy the inner structure and workings of an entity, especially the mechanisms that control its own reproduction (and the very code that gives its specific identity, K.C.). Cloning has become an image of image-making itself, a metapicture of the most advanced form of image production technology in our time."[51] In this way, cloning is remetaphorized as a figure substituting all

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[50]   Ibid., p. 32.
[51]   Ibid., p. 29.

kinds of processes associated with copying, imitation and image reproduction. In his book *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Mitchell claims that metapictures are "pictures about pictures – that is, pictures that refer to themselves or to other pictures, pictures that are used to show what a picture is."[52]

Thus, returning to the personification of postmodernist "clonophobia" as the irrational fear of a clone who is "one of us," we refer to a fear which is a reflection on modernist ochlophobia, i.e. the fear of a crowd. Mitchell thinks that, as an example of a biopicture, "(...) the figure of Dolly the Cloned Sheep is not frightening because she is a wolf in sheep's clothing, but because she is a *sheep* in sheep's clothing, impossible to distinguish from a 'real thing' by visual, or even genetic, examination."[53] A clone is more dangerous than the easily identifiable "other," or one who is racially different, and it may look the same, thus becoming impossible to classify. As Mitchell states in one of his books, *What Do Pictures Want?*, cloning, including image cloning, combines information sciences with the biotechnological revolution, thus inaugurating the age of biocybernetic reproduction[54] and becoming the most symbolic innovation of biopower/biopolitics. At the level of image-making, this innovation can be compared to the invention of the digital picture which was as innovative as the invention of photography or film in the previous centuries. Mitchell calls "the 'biodigital picture'" "the principal symptom of this transformation"[55] and claims that "cloning takes the logic of the image as a figure of resemblance, similitude, and coping to the limit of virulence, toxicity, and insidious invisibility."[56] What results from these considerations is that reproduction is not the only image-making mechanism which also involves changes in the image transformation process, leading to image production through analogue-to-digital conversion. The same principle can also be found in genetics: cloning does not serve the purpose of producing an enhanced copy of the parent organism, but its "improved" copy.

The narrative "War of Images" as the global "War on Terror"

Biopictures are taking part in the narrative "War of Images" understood as a global "War on Terror," in which their role has grown exponentially. They migrate around the planet at a high speed, as well as undergo mutation and

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[52] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1994, p. 35.
[53] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror...*, p. 76.
[54] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?...*, p. 318.
[55] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror...*, p. 71.
[56] Ibid., p. 76.

transformation. The global circulation of images on the Internet resembles an "autoimmune disorder" or a viral infection. The concept of "War on Terror," similarly to a war against a viral disease or tuberculosis, may lead to strengthening "the enemy (who is treated, K.C.) as an emotion or a tactic (as if one could make a 'war on flanking maneuvers')." The idea of "War on Terror" is derived from figurative expressions that are treated as a war metaphor of "maximum effort." For this reason, Mitchell understands "War on Terror" as the metaphor of Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty" and Richard Nixon's "war on drugs."[57] Comparing the logic of an image to a "War on Terror" results in us seeing biopictures as viruses, autoantibodies or dormant cancer cells.

In the light of the discussion on "War on Terror," Mitchell puts forward the thesis that all contemporary terrorism is actually "bioterrorism" because only the final effects of terrorist attacks "may be a spectacle or an iconized event, (but, K.C.) the *means* are generally invisible."[58] For this reason, biopictures can participate in a "War on Terror" or, indirectly, in terrorist attacks. They have been described using the "suicide metaphor" of an "autoimmune disorder" or "Autoimmunity" used by Jacques Derrida.[59] The philosopher proposed the logic of "an autoimmunitary process" and he extended it "without limit in the form of an implacable law" as "strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-*suicidal* fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its 'own' immunity."[60]

In the context of "War of Images," a significant example of a biopicture is the photo-collage *From Dust to DNA* (2001) by Kevin Clarke and Mikey Flowers, and Dennis Grady's DNA portrait showing the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the twin towers of the WTC. As for the visual aspect, a characteristic biocybernetic element of a biopicture appears in this artwork: the DNA code is floating in the air, instead of smoke and ash. Mitchell claims that "The Clarke/Flowers image is a reminder of the biodigital picture that was already inscribed in the twin towers, their monumental flaunting of doubleness, twin-ness, and architectural cloning, and hints at the ironic coincidence of cloning and terror in the summer of 2001."[61]

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[57]   Ibid., p. 21.
[58]   Ibid., pp. 83–84.
[59]   See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picturing Terror: Derrida's Autoimmunity*, in: *The Late Derrida*, "Critical Inquiry" Book, eds. W.J.T. Mitchell and A.I. Davidson, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2007, pp. 277–290.
[60]   G. Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, First Edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2003, p. 94.
[61]   W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror...*, p. 83.

Photomontage, a collage portrait of Dennis Grady's DNA sequence, *From Dust to DNA* (2001), published courtesy of Kevin Clarke and Mikey Flowers aka Michael Collarone, from the book entitled *Mikey Flowers 9/11 Ashes to Ashes, Dust to DNA* (2002).

Returning to the "suicide metaphor" of an "autoimmune disease" used by Jacques Derrida, it means it is possible to treat contemporary terrorist attacks as reactions in which the immune system destroys its own cells instead of producing antibodies. In this sense, the attack on the WTC was "quasi-suicidal," but not because the terrorists committed suicide in the act of perpetrating it. The attack on the WTC was, as it were, an attack from "within" the United States that had stretched their "tentacles" all over the global world. For this reason, the entire world is Americanised and the terrorist attack on the WTC did not come from the "outside" but from the "inside" of this world, and thus it was not an attack carried out by "aliens."[62] The same argumentation can be applied to deconstruction which, in a way, "attacks" the foundations of classical philosophy with the help of its own logic. These metaphors make one aware that the mechanisms and phenomena concerning the biological attributes of the human species can become subject to political strategies of terrorism or biopower/biopolitics.

In the light of the reflections on "War of Images," another example of the biopicture acquires special significance: an exceptional mural which, during the invasion of Iraq, was often reproduced in numerous press photographs. It was painted on an overpass on the road to Tikrit and it depicts "Saddam's army emerging as a stream of military might from the doors of a mosque in Mazar." This mural looks just like "the clone army emerging from the womb of the mother ship" in George Lucas's *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. In the former case, it is "a religious crusade, or rather a countercrusade that combines images of massed Arab armies" and "the latest in high-tech weaponry." A press photograph depicting this mural was published in the *Chicago Tribune*, portraying "the fundamental contradictions of the whole invasion of Iraq understood as a War of Images." What is possible to notice is "the fantasmatic character of Saddam's military machine, which is quite literally being penetrated and bypassed by a lone American Humvee speeding its way toward Tikrit."[63] Mitchell thinks that the press photograph seems to reframe "Saddam's Imaginary Army" of clones "inside the actual force of (the) real" military, while "a detail in the mural painting (...) prophesies the reality (...) to unfold before the U.S. invasion force."[64] This biopicture operates as an element of biopower, since it touches upon the issue of the "reproduction" of the "clone army" endowed with crowd psychology.[65] Individuals in a crowd are identical twins deprived of individuality. They are similar to each other – not only externally, but also internally, at the level of the DNA code.

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[62] See Ibid., pp. 44–54.
[63] Ibid., p. 87.
[64] Ibid., pp. 87–88.
[65] See G. Le Bon, *The Crowd*, transl. R. A. Nye, Second Edition, Routledge, New York 2017. Gustave Le Bon's model of the crowd treats it as a unit composition and every individual member loses his/her individuality in it.

"U.S. Marines (...) roll toward Tikrit," comes from the daily newspaper *Chicago Tribune* [April 15, 2003]. Stephanie Sinclair's photograph depicting Saddam Hussein's "Phantom clone Army" emerging as "a stream of military might" from the doors of a mosque in Mazar, in a mural placed on an overpass on the road to Tikrit, published courtesy of the *Chicago Tribune*/PARS International Corp.
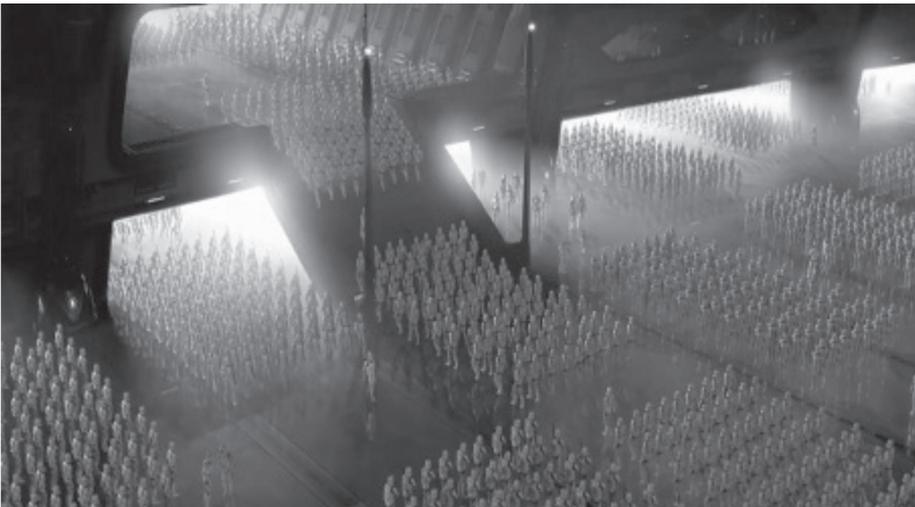
A still from George Lucas's *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002) depicting the "clone army" emerging from the womb of the mother ship.

Conclusion: the issue of "Image and Narrative" in the context of "Grand Narratives"

Fenske seeks performativity meanings which would be used in visual culture studies by "focusing on the process of meaning instead of on its discursive of representational products." Another meaning of this notion can be related to "the artistic activity of creating visual imagery as performative."[66] Narrativity and performativity are thus related to the reproduction of meaning. We may treat biopictures as narrative and performative images, because they mimic the qualities of a live performance or serve communicative functions, and refer to narrative movies (Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* and George Lucas's *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*). However, the origin of the "performative" notion is linguistic and refers to the procedures of citation. Images can be cited like texts and, in this way, they acquire performative features. A special category of such images are biopictures which, by participating in the contemporary "War of Images," have launched a "War on Terror" and acted like living beings. Biopictures are narrative and performative, because we find them in artworks and movies. Narrative and performative images operate according to metaphorical methods, in which a reader's activity produces outcomes described by the visual communicative functions.

As for the issue of "Image and Narrative," it would be very interesting to hear opinions on iconoclasm as "Grand Narratives" in the critical cultural theory of recent years, against the background of the theory of biopictures conceived as "living images". "Grand Narratives" and Metanarratives are terms introduced by Jean-François Lyotard in the postmodern philosophy manifesto.[67] A narrative theory of narratives of historical meaning has been constructed similarly to the theory of metapictures ("pictures about pictures") which comprise the postmodern aesthetics of self-referential images.[68] In *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Mieke Bal calls for "close reading" in which performativity has been combined with narrativity when "To talk about narrators, for example, is to impute agency to a subject of narration, even if this subject is not to be identified with the narrator."[69] In *What Do Pictures Want?*, Mitchell suggests that answers to the central questions of visuality which have

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[66] M. Fenske, *Tattoos in American*..., p. 20.
[67] See J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, transl. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, "Theory & History of Literature," First Edition, Manchester University Press, Oxford and Manchester 1984.
[68] See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory...* op. cit., pp. 35–82.
[69] M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Ch. Van Boheemen, Fourth Edition, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, and London 2017, p. 16.

been formulated by Mieke Bal's *Narratology* "(...) must be sought in the specific, concrete images that most conspicuously embody the anxiety over image-making and image-smashing in our time."[70] In this sense, these attempts to "depict iconoclasm" are some symptoms of the "pictorial turn."

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70 W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?...*, p. 12.

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PERFORMATYWNA NARRACYJNOŚĆ BIOOBRAZÓW W KONTEKŚCIE BIOWŁADZY, BIOPOLITYKI I „WOJNY OBRAZÓW" PO 11 WRZEŚNIA JAKO PRZYKŁADY WSPÓŁCZESNEJ KLONOFOBII I IKONOFOBII
(streszczenie)

W tym eseju podjęto próbę nakreślenia głównych zagadnień studiów kultury wizualnej jako wyłaniającej się, formacji teoretycznej performatywnej narracyjności bioobrazów w kontekście biowładzy, biopolityki i „wojny obrazów" jako przykładów ikonofobii oraz klonofobii. Przedmiot performatywnej narracyjności bioobrazów został podjęty w dyskusji nad niektórymi, głównymi ideami, które wydawały się fundamentalne zarówno dla negatywnych, jak i pozytywnych aspektów podmiotowej koncepcji działania „podmiotów wizualnych" W.J.T. Mitchella w kontekście reprodukcji znaczenia i iterowalności. Koncepcja bioobrazów obejmuje również takie pojęcia, jak sama idea analogii do żywych form organizmów, która jest metaforyczną relacją, podobną z natury rzeczy, do relacji między ciałami biologicznymi i społecznymi. Narracyjne kwestie bioobrazów są podejmowane,w scenach, gdzie widzimy welociraptora z literami kodu DNA wyświetlanymi na jego skórze w *Jurassic Park* Stevena Spielberga (1993) oraz anonimowych Szturmowców, którzy maszerują na śmierć w *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002). Performatywne bioobrazy można uznać za organizmy żywe, tematycznie odwołujące się do wizualnych technik cyfrowych i inżynierii genetycznej. Mitchell pisząc o bioobrazach jako narzędziach biowładzy i biopolityki, przywołuje koncepcje Michela Foucault i Giorgio Agambena, w których biowładza i biopolityka uczestniczyły w podstawowym procesie neoliberalnej władzyoraz tworzenia żywych istot podczas sprawowania nad nimi kontroli. W tym eseju narracyjnej performatywne cechy obrazu jako „podmiotu wizualnego" zostały opisane w teorii feministycznej, kulturoznawstwie (Jacques Lacan, Stuart Hall) i studiach kultury wizualnej (Nicholas Mirzoeff). Artykuł zawiera opisy kolażu fotograficznego From Dust to DNA Kevina Clarke'a i Mikeya Flowersa i muralu na wiadukcie na drodze do Tikritu, przedstawiającego armię klonów Saddama. Te dzieła sztuki zostały omówione w kontekście „Wojny z Terrorem", w której wszelki współczesny terroryzm jest bioterroryzmem, opartym na „samobójczej metaforze" „choroby autoimmunologicznej" uży-

wanej przez Jacquesa Derridę. Esej kończy się odniesieniem do koncepcji „bliskiego czytania" Mieke Bal, w której performatywność łączy się z narracyjnością, ponieważ narratorzy mogą przypisać działanie podmiotowi narracji i ucieleśniają obawy związane z tworzeniem i niszczeniem obrazów (ikonoklazmem).

Słowa kluczowe: performatywność, narracyjność, bioobraz, biopolityka, biowładza, wojna obrazów, wojna z terrorem, ikonofobia, klonofobia.

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