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Radical shift and the cultural policy of emotions. Contemporary iconosphere of refugee crisis

Judging by the linguistic usage and contexts in which the epithet "radical" occurs, it seems reasonable to say that its natural environment are those ideologies, religions and beliefs whose prime motivation is (or happens to be) hatred. Hatred is a very complex emotion, and it turns out to be universally and classically human. Metaphorically speaking, hatred is genetically encoded. It is illustrated in Nadine Labaki's *Et maintenant, on va où?* (2011) in a simple, witty and bitter way. The very first scenes of the film already indicate the problem by showing, first, the result, and only later the cause: the first scene presents an array of black-clad women returning from the funeral, which is sharply contrasted with the second scene which in a slapstick comedy manner shows the struggles of men trying to catch a TV signal using an old antennae. The story is set in a small Lebanese village in a province located deep inland, where both the Muslim and the Christian communities live together. They co-exist in relative harmony, although the number of freshly-dug graves and minefields around constitute only too pregnant a backdrop for the fragility of a seeming state of balance. The main axis that edifies the tension in the film are the actions of women trying to sabotage the television broadcasting. They want to protect their men against pernicious knowledge about a new conflict on religious grounds flaring up in the country.[1] It is obvious from the scene that when bits and pieces of this information penetrate the minds of the male part of the rural population, immediate bloodshed will ensue. In many interpretations of this tragicomedy, its message is often reduced to a mere feminist manifesto. However, Labaki speaks a more universal language by showing hatred in a state of a continuous readiness and how its potential energy can turn into

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[1] Although it is not stated directly in the film, what we can find here is the accretion of fears against repeating the massacre of the Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila (1982) perpetrated by the Christian militia.

kinetic energy. Hatred can be easily triggered by a small stimulus. It should be noted at the same time that this stimulus is not religion only, but it can also be the specifically manipulated awareness of the difference between the sides of the conflict, which is sufficient as a pretext for a wider conflict. Naturally, in a comedy-like simplification we have a chance to look at the problem of the co-responsibility of the media. The common awareness is that it is always expressive situations and radical standpoints and attitudes that are most likely to receive media attention. Their extrapolation to a large population group promotes, in turn, all sorts of fundamentalist attitudes. Certain reservations have to be made here, namely that the mass media are a tool for radicalisation rather than its direct cause. Fundamentalisms understood as a desire to obtain a monopoly on the "ideological furnishing of the world" have existed for a very long time, but the problem is that in certain conditions they gain in intensity.

Europe struggling with a migration of people[2] on a large scale in recent years seems to be entering such a dangerous phase. Right-wing populists saw an opportunity to make political capital by announcing an invasion of Islam threatening the order of the Christian world. The infamous New Year sexual assaults in Cologne[3] and a series of terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016 provided additional arguments for arousing xenophobic sentiments. Apart from the media images showing overcrowded boats and marching crowds of refugees we will also remember the scenes from the Syrian border, where a camerawoman representing a right-wing Hungarian television station N1TV "stepped out of her role" and started kicking Syrian children[4]. This was not an isolated incident, as in many European cities there was an increase in racist assaults and beatings. Viktor Orbán ordered the construction of special fences and called voluntary fighting squads to patrol the Hungarian borders. A bizarre act of symbolic violence happened in the Market Square in Wrocław, where the Polish nationalists

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[2] The idea refers to the so-called migration crisis which lasts from 2011 and is understood as a massive influx of refugees to Europe, caused mostly by the war in Syria, but also by the extermination of the "infidels" by ISIS in the Middle East and in North Africa. Thousands of the so-called economic migrants "joined in" this wave of immigration (the refugees from various fallen countries who did not only flee from poverty but mainly from violence and chaos were unfortunate enough to have been quite mindlessly included in this category).

[3] Even though one year later the German *Bild* admitted to fabricating the facts, the articles in the magazine sparked social outrage and fuelled xenophobic fears. Read more (in Polish) at: http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,50352,title,Frankfurt-masowe-gwalty-ktorych-nie-bylo-Kolejna-antyimigrancka-falszywka,wid,18703145,wiadomosc.html (access: 17 II 2017).

[4] Petra Laszlo did not escape criminal liability. The incident, which occurred in September 2015, went viral after a footage of her actions was uploaded to the Internet. Read more at: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/petra-laszlo-camerawoman-hungary-sentenced-kicking-refugees-170113053529272.html (access: 15 I 2017).

in protest against Arab immigrants decided to burn an effigy of … a Jew[5]. During the rally they chanted slogans such as "Poland united without Islam", so their choice of iconography was rather peculiar – in what way was a burning effigy of an orthodox follower of Judaism supposed to affect the Muslim world? Piotr Rybak, the originator of the event, explained in court that the effigy symbolized George Soros, who, he thought, financed bringing Islamic immigrants to Europe. Once again, Oscar Wilde's maxim "Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious" remains valid in our times.

Legitimising xenophobic behaviours by means of patriotic values has become a norm. The effectiveness of this strategy is proven by the growing public support of right-wing populists (Marie Le Pen) or the results of presidential elections (Donald Trump in the USA). A Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik is doing everything in his power to get in front of TV cameras to become a living martyr and the real defender of Europe against the influx of Islam. But, as we remember, on 22nd July 2011 he dealt "Eurabia" an indirect blow – he murdered the representatives of the youth organization in the Norwegian Labour Party and set a bomb under Prime Minister's headquarters. On religious grounds, the Islamic State propagandists are successful in recruiting new ISIS fighters on the territory of Europe on the one hand, but on the other hand there still are a few priests in the Polish Catholic Church who support nationalist radicals contrary to what Pope Francis preaches.[6] The radicalisation of religious beliefs and terrorism lead to important revaluations and to polarizing social tensions caused by these phenomena. This, in effect leads to a growing number of conservative and xenophobic attitudes even among those Europeans who have remained indifferent so far.

So maybe we should conclude at this point and say that Samuel Huntington's prophesies about the clash of civilizations have been fulfilled?[7] After all, it is some kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy: it is easy to set people at variance to create conflict on a local or wider scale. The best binder for the community is one common enemy. It is a truism today to say that people have an inclination to hate each other for being different than respect each other for what they all agree with. Paradoxically, this state of affairs makes radicals on both sides happy – the anti-immigrant right wing willingly and tendentiously quotes Huntington, and ISIS is grateful for an opportunity to radicalize moderate Muslims (both those living in Europe for generations and the

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[5] Piotr Rybak was sentenced to 10 months in prison. After the verdict was announced, he expressed his outrage before TV cameras and said that the Polish court disgracefully treated a Polish patriot and accused the Polish judiciary of being part of the "Jewish Masonry".

[6] Rev. Jacek Międlar is a representative (fortunately in the minority) example of a priest known for his anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic and homophobic views. Under pressure from his superiors he decided to leave the Congregation of the Missionaries. http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/ksiadz-jacek-miedlar-popieral-narodowcow-przeniesiony,artykuly,379854,1.html (access: 15 I 2017).

[7] See S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), Warszawa 2003.

newcomers). Slavoj Žižek writes: „And one should also note that this goal greatly overlaps with the goal of anti-immigrant racists — they both want a full and unequivocal 'clash of civilizations'. But the same final outcome is nevertheless reached in this roundabout way: nihilist self-destruction"[8]. This leads to a tragicomic situation in which white fascists call their opponents Islamo-fascists. Hence, Žižek asks: "But from a critical standpoint, is not religion always a kind of clothing, not the heart of the matter? Is not religion in its very core a 'form of subjectivization' of people's predicaments? And, in turn, does this not imply that such clothing in some sense the 'heart of the matter', the way individuals experience their situation: there is no way for them to step out of their world and somehow see, from 'outside', how things 'really are'?"[9]

In the new circumstances of radicalized discourses those left- and liberal-oriented get lost, especially that they would prefer to stick to moderation and common sense. Postmodernism taught us reluctance to imposing anything on anyone and, in effect, created a climate of distrust of different categories of involvement. As a result, intellectuals withdrew from debates, which gave conservative populists a chance to put their views forward. The former (intellectuals) do not want to be accused of indifference and scream: "We don't tolerate intolerance!" and "We hate hatred!". Therefore, in order to discredit anti-immigrant communities, Blaut's theory of cultural racism started to be recalled. The enthusiasts of this anthropological concept seem to retouch religious elements from the sphere of today's tensions in the name of political correctness. In Blautian terms, racism that was founded on religion was the domain of the nineteenth century, and only later followed a more "scientific" phase of racism based on biological arguments (1850-1950). In short, cultural racism is a belief that the underdevelopment of the Third World countries is not a result of their people's "inferior race" but is an effect of a slower pace of modernization of these regions. According to this belief, the solution to the problem is subordinating this part of the world to the European model of progress, so implementing the so-called "neo-colonialism without prejudice". Although this theory turned out to be a significant contribution to a critical postcolonial discourse, the very category of cultural racism, and in particular its contemporary re-contextualizations, may raise some doubts. How is this term useful in recognising the complex nature of today's conflicts? It is important to say that any kind of racism is cultural racism, because religion and the natural sciences with their achievements and beliefs founded on them are all elements of culture. Can this be a useful tool for describing the tensions between radical Sunnis and Shiites? Or between a racist skinhead from Poland and a moderately religious owner of a kebab stand? Or between animal rights activists and the supporters of

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[8] S. Žižek, *Against the Double Blackmail. Refugees, Terror and Other Troubles with the Neighbours*, Penguin Books 2016, p. 88.

[9] Ibidem, p. 88.

ritual slaughter of animals in the European Union? Perhaps it would be possible to unite all these disturbing social phenomena under the label chauvinism? It could even be called cultural chauvinism (which may, in fact, be convenient, as it would be distinguished from other rather peculiar incarnations of chauvinism, e.g. national, male, female chauvinism, etc.). Either way, chauvinism denotes pride of one's fanatical devotion to a cause and a belief in the ideals of one's social group, which feed on prejudice and contempt. Populists add up to this mixture a whole array of anxieties and the fear of strangers, terrorists, as well as the fear against multiculturalism. At the same time, they proclaim that they have ideas and a monopoly on power, which will help them deal with all the dangers. And when the power is in their hands the only thing left to do is maintain it and control the fears, which (paradoxically) is easy because of new terrorist attacks (these are hard to avoid, as the provocations on the part of various contempt industries are plenty, they range from the satires produced by *Charlie Hebdo* to right-wing extremists' actions). Management through crisis and employing the rhetoric of the clash of civilizations, in fact, make fanatical Islamist bombers and "true defenders" of the European civilization play on the same team. No wonder that Viktor Orbán with such high zest repeated the slogan: "All terrorists are immigrants", which went viral immediately, and not only in the right-wing media. In this way, we enter the zone which can be labelled as securitisation, and which is understood by Zygmunt Bauman as a tendency "to shift the question of migration from the sphere of social, moral and even economic problems to the sphere of security". Similarly to American people after "9/11", the Europeans are voluntarily giving up their privacy and legitimize states of emergency announced by the authorities, thus agreeing on being searched without a warrant, or on seeing the army or the police bearing long firearms in the streets.

The above-mentioned slogan by Viktor Orbán activates all the like-minded individuals to track down potential terrorists not only along borderland migration routes but also among their Muslim compatriots living in Europe for generations. Such and similar conspiracy theories were literally disarmed in a simple and ostentatious way in the film *Dheepan* (2015) – certainly, the most interesting image dedicated to the problem of migration. Jacques Audiard, the film director, at the very beginning of the story equips his characters with typical terrorist attributes that are shown and talked about on the right-wing portals and online forums. From the first scenes we learn that Dheepan is a terrorist with the Tamil Tigers. To leave Sri Lanka and get to Europe he must create a false identity for himself and set up a temporary fake family with other randomly picked refugees. Despite this, the viewer is willing to sympathise with the characters in overcoming further obstacles. When they are accommodated in a block of flats in the French suburbs, we actually expect the protagonist to use his combat experience and fight with the drug mafia controlling the whole residential area. In addition, the filmmakers fortunately avoided unnecessary pathos and simplifications in the descriptions of the so-called culture shock. This "confrontation of civilizations"

has even become self-mocking (in the case of Europe), especially in the scene showing Dheepan trying to sell kitschy carnival gadgets in the street. His face, marked by his past experiences, is here grotesquely adorned with plastic fluorescent ribbons and other glowing trash for contrast. The dense atmosphere of the film makes the viewer feel uncomfortable: the situation is hopeless, though it could be worse. Ontological safety is not to be found, in such circumstances any safe point of reference seems salutary. This beautifully illustrates a poor number of alternatives for immigrants: their fate depends on whether they can rely on their families, or whether they are able to find help from support organizations, from the mafia or some terrorist cell.

Such and similar film narrations serve as a tool for asking difficult questions and searching for even more difficult answers. However, they normally reach relatively limited groups of viewers – regular festival goers and art house cinema audiences. Dominant opinion-forming factors are still the news media and – increasingly – the social media. Unfortunately, in both cases the information is broadcast as a flickering image supported by a concise commentary, and it is reported along with short streams of messages (more and less important) which flow in an equally rapid way. So, the public opinion and moods around the migration crisis are often shaped ad hoc. They are either made on the spur of the moment or are shaped by the publicist's views, and when the situation calls for it, the images evoke the feeling of solidarity with immigrants by, for example, using emotional frames showing mothers embracing their children, rescuing drowning people or closing up on blood-stained, yet alive children, taken out from the ruins of the Syrian Aleppo. The photos awarded during the last editions of the World Press Photo Exhibition are set in a similar convention – they are aesthetic and poignant, as is required by this convention. But, in more conservative right-wing circles the scenes showing refugees as harbingers of chaos and individuals unworthy of help are more popular, for example the images of angry immigrants waiting on the borders and throwing away bottles of water given them or fighting with border patrol. To illustrate and prove theses about the Islamic invasion in Europe the media chose takes showing dense crowds of young men – potential jihadists. Presumably, it is the social media that popularized the strongest icon of the migration crisis – a photo of a dead body of Alan Kurdi went viral on the Internet. The cadaver of the Syrian boy was returned by the sea and was found on the Turkish beach near Bodrum, and it was photographed by Nilüfer Demir (a Turkish press photographer). Later that day this image was cloned by thousands of Twitter users and by the most important information portals of the Western and Arabic world. On the following day it hit the covers of the world's newspapers. This image changed the consciousness of millions of people and had an impact on language. In articles and in Internet comments the word "migrant" was suddenly replaced with the word "refugee" – which, naturally, has its own ideological and philosophical dimension. In a visual sphere the photo lived to see hundreds of "tribute" paraphrases and references in memes, cartoons, performances, sculptures, street art etc. The boy

was victimized mostly in Muslim communities, where he was given the status of a martyr[10]. A certain kind of trans-sacralisation even happened: San-Anton church in Madrid recreates nativity scene with Alan Kurdi (Muslim child) posing as baby Jesus (December 19, 2015). On the other hand, the very same photo was used as a tool for counter-propaganda. And also this time European right-wing extremists and ISIS fundamentalists found themselves on the same side of the (iconoclastic) fence. The former created conspiracy theories either saying that the photo was faked or blaming Alan's father for being irresponsible about his son; the latter used this photograph as a warning for those fleeing from the Caliphate (or their vision of it)[11]. In spite of all this, Alan Kurdi's image unexpectedly hit the nail on the head[12]: it satisfied the need for historical documentation and significantly moved not only pro-refugee activists but also those people who remained indifferent to the migration crisis until then[13]. People's reactions were not limited to shallow comments and kitschy lamentations. Seeing was translated into doing. The performative power of this photograph has been proven by a wide range of corollaries – from social initiatives and movements (voluntary organizations, foundations, collecting money, clothes) through the feedback in the art world, to political actions.

Visual culture has a potential to be "immune" to the disastrous effects of "contamination" by radical anti-immigrant nationalists and religious fundamentalists. The key issue is to find a way for a visual vaccine to permeate the cultural ideological bloodstream. There are no ready-made recipes for creating successful viral videos and iconic images which will stay in the collective memory for a longer period of time. Many artists are trying to come up with some positive tactics through asking difficult questions either to resolve social tensions or at least to make us aware of the sources of our prejudices. Such artistic methods include various artists' attempts to reach personal testimonies of refugees and then translate them into the language of art. Krzysztof Wodiczko has a significant experience in this field – in 2012 he displayed his work "The New Mechilinians", recorded speeches of illegal immigrants, on a façade of the town hall in Mechelem (Belgium). The immigrants' faces were masked in

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[10] theological justification for turning someone into a martyr – hijrah, or migration, escape from the war.

[11] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/09/islamic-state-alan-kurdi-photo-magazine-dabiq-syrian-refugees (access: 15.01.2017)

[12] The photo was copied very willingly because it was not so drastic and it was not censored by Internet algorithms searching for such (drastic) content. Neither did it reach the limit of social media users' and public media editors' sensitivity. At the same time, it had a certain sublime quality about it (also in the Kantian sense) and responded to the narcissistic-voyeuristic needs of its viewers.

[13] Alan Kurdi's photograph had political corollaries and gave rise to various initiatives supporting refugees, which is discussed in the 2nd part of the report *The Iconic Image on Social Media: A Rapid Research Response to the Death of Aylan Kurdi*, op. cit., pp. 38-55.

such a way that only their eyes were visible, and the shape of the building together with the images of the faces resembled a head in a balaclava. The convention used by the artist is a provocative contrast of meanings and associations – after all, such masking of identity is characteristic of terrorists. However, the audience in Mechelem were listening to testimonies of the people who seemed lost in the new reality and who were overwhelmed by legislative and socio-cultural barriers. Another paradox here is that one needs to wear a mask to be able to speak openly and without fear, it would seem that a covered face uncovers individual truth(s). Wodiczko's work shows a precipice that still exists between official declarations of universal respect for human rights and everyday lives of immigrants. Wodiczko states: "There is contradiction between illegality and humanity"[14]. Who then is the addressee of these messages? Passers-by, officials, other immigrants, the art world? When one looks at this type of work from the perspective of postcolonial criticism it might seem that its artist is, in fact, a racist (!). The radical logic (popular in academic circles lately) could as well lead to allegations that the white representative of the Western culture with a sense of superiority preaches to the newcomers about the benefits of becoming part of his culture. Such attitude may ultimately lead to silencing artists and art curators and making them stick to a new, mutated and terrorizing form of political correctness. Perhaps this is the reason why curators invite artists with an intercultural background to do "special artistic tasks" because they simply are more authorized to express artistic opinions about the clash of civilizations. In this way, Wodiczko would be "excused" as someone who emigrated from the communist Poland to Canada many years ago to finally settle in the USA. Just like Bouchra Khalili - a Moroccan-French visual artist, raised between Morocco and France, living in Berlin.

She uses a similar artistic tactics to Wodiczko's, since in *The Mapping Journey Project* (8-channel video, 2008-12)[15] she also worked with migrants and used the metonymic formula *pars pro toto*. This time, however, the immigrants' narratives are accompanied by the lines they draw on the maps. The immigrants' stories thus concentrate on escape, crossing borders and overcoming barriers, struggling with border guards, and handling ones emotions which accompany the process. The viewer is (con)fused by the abstractness of the maps as representations of national cultures and is made aware of the painful reality proving any attempt to cross cultural boundaries difficult, if not impossible. Official maps have little in common with the hidden geographies where political boundaries do not meet with actual spheres of religious, national, mafia and corporate influences. Winding were the migration paths, we learn from the press ads accompanying the exhibition: "Each of the videos is

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[14] The film and the interview with Krzysztof Wodiczko talking about this project can be found here: https://vimeo.com/49069127 (access: 15.01.2017)

[15] Her work was displayed during the 10th edition of Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates, 2011) and at Galerie Campagne Première Berlin, 2012.

based on Bouchra Khalili's encounters with undocumented refugees, who describe their journeys by marking their own zigzagging routes on the surface of a map. Only the map and the hand of the narrator are visible in the video. In *Mapping Journey #6* (2010), a young man, who is ultimately trying to reach Italy, travels from Afghanistan via Pakistan to Teheran. He then walks to Istanbul and continues his journey via Bulgaria, Hungary and Vienna to Munich, Belgium, England and Paris. He finally ends up in Rome, where he wants to stay and lead a normal life. The Mapping Journey Project challenges the normativity of cartography and aims to "map" an alternative cartography of the Mediterranean area, that is based on eight illegal journeys, that make apparent a geography of resistance"[16].

Bouchra Khalili, *The Mapping Journey Project*, 2008-12, Source: http://www.bouchrakhalili.com (access: 13 II 2017).

Banksy, a British celebrity of street art, decided to express his engagement in a very peculiar way. He combined pragmatic aid with symbolic irony of the art world: he dismantled his dystopian amusement park Dismaland and turned it into shelters for "jungle" dwellers in Calais. This "bemusement park" located in the English county of Somerset was a dark and creepy artistic parody of Disneyland (which was bringing considerable profits)[17]. One of the attractions was a grim mockup made of water,

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[16] http://www.campagne-premiere.com/exhibitions/bouchra-khalili/mapping-journey-project/press-release (access: 15 I 2017).

[17] Banksy invited about 60 artists to work on this project, among them very important names in the word of art., e.g. Damien Hirst or Jenny Holzer, read more at: https://www.theguardian.com/

miniature cliffs of Dover, and miniature boats filled up with figurines of refugees. Small barracks were formed in the "jungle" from the material left after dismantling Dismaland, but they not at all resembled the original architecture of the amusement park. The only recognizable trace was a big logo of the park stretched between the shelters (its anagram said: Dismal Aid) and red sweatshirts (with a logo, probably leftovers from a gift shop) distributed among the residents. What is important is that the beneficiaries of this project had absolutely no idea about a semi-artistic and symbolic nature of this aid, they did not even know who Banksy was. The city of Calais benefited greatly from the project, and on this occasion the artist created several works there, e.g. stencil-graffiti inspired by Theodore Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa,* showing a group of refugees on a raft waving towards a luxury yacht[18] and a portrait of Steve Jobs as a poor immigrant (painted on a viaduct near the "jungle"). As the author justified: "We're often led to believe migration is a drain on the country's resources but Steve Jobs was the son of a Syrian migrant. Apple is the world's most profitable company, it pays over \$7bn (£4.6bn) a year in taxes – and it only exists because they allowed in a young man from Homs"[19].
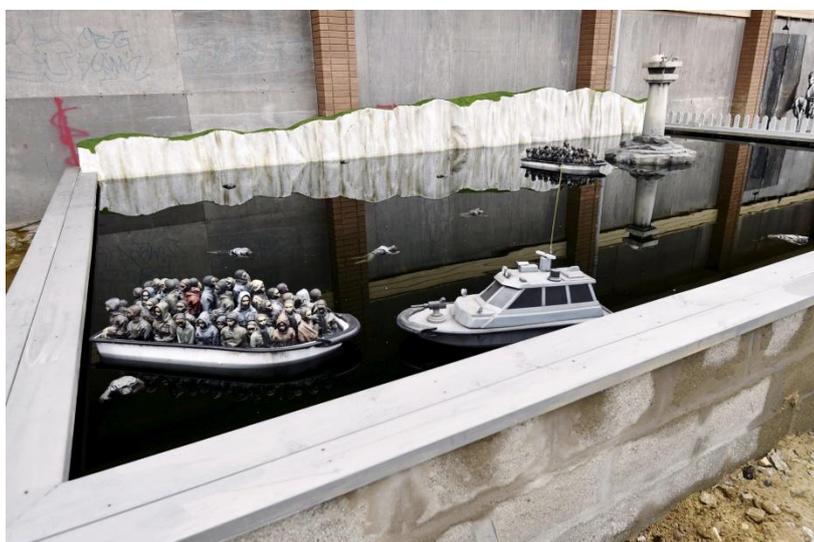
Banksy, *Dismaland*, 2015 (REUTERS/Toby Melville) source: http://blogs.timesofindia. indiatimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/75.jpg (access: 15 II 2017)

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artanddesign/2015/aug/20/banksy-dismaland-amusements-anarchism-weston-super-mare (access: 15 I 2017).

   [18] We learn the title of the work from Banksy's site: *"We're not all in the same boat"* http://banksy.co.uk/index3-2.asp (access: 15 I 2017).

   [19] Quoted after: Maria Sofou, *Banksy's New Pro-Refugee Artworks in Calais, France Are Just Staggering,* http://art-sheep.com/banksys-new-pro-refugee-artworks-in-calais-france-are-just-staggering/ (access: 15 I 2017).

The image of a landscape transformed by thousands of orange life jackets and vests abandoned off the coast of Italy and the Greek Islands was etched in our minds because of media reports of sunken boats with refugees. In December 2015 a British artist Arabella Dorman made a peculiar Christmas decoration for St. James's Church in London. Her installation "Flight" shows a capsized rubber boat, suspended from the ceiling of a nave. Three orange life jackets — two adults and a child's — suspended falling from the boat "unite the work with the story of the Holy Family at Christmas and their flight to Egypt" – said Dorman. "It's about a small family in flight, fleeing war and persecution"[20]. On her website she adds: "I know that art cannot change the world, but I hope that those who stood in the nave of St James's felt something of the cry of anguish that I felt standing on the coast of Lesbos. *Flight* is that cry. It is a plea that such suffering cannot go on. It is a call to resistance against the horrors of war and the greed of the traffickers. It is an act of empathy and solidarity as we reach out to our fellow humans. And it is a tribute to those hopeful, terrified souls who now lie in watery graves at the bottom of the Mediterranean"[21].

The vests picked up at Lesbos have become readymades for an installation by a famous Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei. He has arranged 1.005 life jackets into the shape of lotus flowers for a floating installation in the baroque pond near Belvedere museum in Vienna[22]. The „clothing" of the Konzerthaus Berlin colonnade at Gendarmenmarkt in 14.000 life-vests was a very telling gesture. The installation was part of the *Cinema for Peace* gala on February 15, 2016 (part of the Berlin Film Festival), where Ai Weiwei served as honorary president of the jury. During the gala the artist started a controversial happening. He talked hundreds of high-profile celebrities (e.g. Charlize Theron) into putting on emergency blankets and making a selfie and then posting it on their social media profiles. Even though this action caused quite a stir in the Art World and provoked many critical commentaries, it was well-thought strategically. Apart from obtaining funding for purchasing blankets for refugees, he received publicity on a far wider scale that he would have thought. All stars and celebs were literally glistening when covered with the golden thermal foil, so the glamour-effect was very photogenic indeed. Thus, the message was smoothly conveyed to artistic and cinema audiences and reached mainstream news stations, gossip sites and colorful magazines.

Ai Weiwei seems very consistent in his efforts to raise people's awareness about the fate of refugees and the migration crisis. The previous year he received media

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[20] Quoted after: http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/22/world/social-issues-world/st-james-churchs-christmas-art-capsized-refugee-dinghy-falling-life-jackets/#.WIz_aH1A6bt (access: 15 I 2017)

[21] http://www.arabelladorman.com/installations/#/flight/ (access: 15 I 2017)

[22] Installation *F-Lotus* was a part of the exhibition *Ai Weiwei. Translocation – Transformation*, Belvedere Museum, Vienna 2016.

attention after organizing "a walk of compassion" together with Anish Kapoor: both artists led a march through the streets of central London to press for "human rather than political" responses to the refugee crisis. "This problem has such a long history, a human history. We are all refugees somehow, somewhere and at some moment" – said Ai to *The Guardian.* Kapoor added: "We are demanding creativity of others, recognizing that those who leave their country and go on a journey across the water full of danger or who walk hundreds of miles across land are also making a creative act"[23]. Another equally expressive gesture by the Chinese artist was closing his own exhibition *Ruptures* in Copenhagen. He did it in protest of the new law that enables authorities to seize assets of asylum seekers as they enter Denmark[24].

Ai Weiwei, Konzerthaus Berlin, 2016 Source: https://www.visualnews.com/2016/02/19/ai-weiwei-wraps-berlins-konzerthaus-14000-refugee-life-vests/ (access: 13 I 2017).

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A new world order is emerging more and more clearly today – fundamentalists, populists and nationalists of all shapes and sizes are no longer the marginalized groups. They have come out of the shadows because the "content" they offer seems to be "finely tailored" these days. They make a diagnosis about the crisis and preach about ensuing danger, plus they offer the whole package of radical, yet simple solutions to the problems. In the year of the election campaign in the US the media around the world were showing Donald Trump as a political oddity, a peculiar exhibit in the

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[23] Mark Brown, *Ai Weiwei and Anish Kapoor lead London walk of compassion for refugees*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/17/ai-weiwei-anish-kapoor-london-walk-refugees (access: 13 I 2017).

[24] Dominique Bonessi, *5 times Ai Weiwei's art has called attention to the refugee crisis,* http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/5-times-ai-weiweis-art-has-called-attention-to-the-refugee-crisis/ (access: 13 I 2017).

cabinet of curiosities. All his flaws were being mercilessly and publicly exposed: rudeness, sexism, racism, xenophobia, fear of Islam, lies and contempt for others. The day after the election an American "Everyman" was stopped by a TV reporter and asked about his opinion on the results of the elections. Rather perplexed, he answered: "I don't know how to explain to my kids that America has chosen a man who embodies all the qualities I told them to beware of in life". It turns out that populist promises of future greatness, sovereignty and power in the name of patriotic values outshone all the "attitudinal imperfections" displayed previously by the presidential candidate. The mechanisms behind such social choices were aptly diagnosed by Erich Fromm in 1941. The author of the book *Escape from Freedom* discussed, in a very thorough manner, the psycho-social factors and cultural and political circumstances that influence people's choices and decide why in a conformist way we choose negative freedom ('freedom from') over positive freedom ('freedom to'). Sadly, many of Fromm's observations have found practical application in our times. The fact that the populists are not followed by all social groups is not always a consolation. The radicalization of worldviews among many leads to an increasing polarisation of societies: those indifferent or politically moderate are prone to radicalization. In past decades, the neoliberal idea of furnishing the world presupposed a strong belief that the market would be a sufficient mechanism for stabilizing the march of mankind towards modernization and prosperity. Both the conservative and leftist democratic value systems did not seem to have a problem with that – especially that they would often be the beneficiaries of such a model. So, does the new and highly ideological order of the world leave room for changing roles? Will the market hide behind ideologues and be a beneficiary of their profits? Surely, Trump is not going to change his identity, he will always feel a millionaire and be part of the establishment. Then there is ISIS on the other side of the fence – its followers preach jihadist emancipation theology which proclaims hatred towards the Western world. This fact, however, does not prevent the officers of the Caliphate from acting according to a strictly market-like logic – they trade in oil and antiques and take advantage of the achievements of the Western technology.

In a highly polarized and radicalized twenty-first century world multiculturality (as a "state of affairs") has become multiculturalism (an "ideology") and, thus, an area of conflict. As Žižek puts it: "it is not a conflict between cultures, but a conflict between different visions of how different cultures can and should co-exist; about the rules and practices these cultures have to share if they are to co-exist. One should therefore avoid getting caught up in the liberal game of 'how much tolerance can we afford': should we tolerate it if refugees settling in Europe prevent their children going to school; if they force their women to dress and behave in a certain way; if they arrange the marriages of their children, if they maltreat - and worse — gays among their ranks? At this level, of course, we are never tolerant enough; or we are always-already too tolerant, neglecting the rights of women, and so on. The only way to

break out of this deadlock is to move beyond mere tolerance of others. Don't just respect others: offer them a common struggle, since our problems today are common; propose and fight for a positive universal project shared by all participants"[25]. Many years before Žižek, Leszek Kołakowski had warned us against the illusions of cultural universalism and its related traps[26], so Žižek's own words today can be treated as a wishful thinking. In a situation when nobody introduces any alternatives to xenophobic ideologies, it is even worth coming back to utopias, as there will always be volunteers who will try turning them into the realized utopias (real-utopias). The contemporary artistic culture seems to be heading in exactly this direction. Artists and activists are trying their best to find the possibilities which would guarantee the co-existence of cultures, that is they zoom in on individual (hi)stories and on human drama. They help to show the hidden and the invisible, they help understand the incomprehensible and speak the unspeakable. All these narratives, when skilfully translated into the language of art, become powerful idioms with an intersubjective array of meanings. The best works circulate freely among international art centres, for example, from The Museum of Modern Art in New York they travel to the Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates. In this way, the meanings carried by art cross the local, political, geographical and cultural boundaries. So, the contemporary artists must not replicate the populist rhetoric on the crisis, but they should rather be looking for new policies of emotions in culture. Therefore, artists today find themselves in a far more difficult position than the fundamentalists who act according to old clichés which have proven effective.

Jacek Zydorowicz – RADICAL SHIFT AND THE CULTURAL POLICY OF EMOTIONS. CONTEMPORARY ICONOSPHERE OF REFUGEE CRISIS

While looking at Europe struggling with the migration crisis, various analysts are trying to describe this new state of affairs in more familiar categories. The radicalisation of religious beliefs and terrorism accompany such academic disputes, which in effect leads to crucial revaluations and to the polarization of social tensions caused by them. This creates opportunities for numerous political and populist instrumentalizations and leads to the growing number of conservative and xenophobic attitudes even among those Europeans who have been indifferent to the refugee crisis so far. But can we stop at the point when we make a diagnosis on the clash of civilizations or their diffusion? Paradoxically, the contemporary visual culture (and especially art) seems to be heading in an opposite direction to the one indicated by this polarization, and it offers us a wider spectrum of attitudes and points to the fact that the problem has a more complex nature.

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[25] S. Žižek, *Against the Double Blackmail*, op.cit., p. 100.

[26] See: L. Kołakowski, *Cywilizacja na ławie oskarżonych* [*Civilization in the Dock*], Warszawa 1989.