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Introduction.

Waste in Films – Waste after Films: Before the War

When we invited interested authors to contribute to the special issue titled “Waste in Films – Waste after Films,” we expected papers about waste shown in fictional films and in the real world, and in every potential “transitional” discursive form. In our call for papers, we suggested that waste is not only a metaphor, not only a sign and symbol in cinematic text, but also a material impact of film production. Waste is the visible consequence of film production, although its causes are often less visible. Waste is often treated as a political and economic challenge, but its role as the source of ecological disaster can be overlooked.

The authors of the four articles that comprise *Waste in Films – Waste after Films* – Piotr Zawojcki, Anna Mrozewicz, Adam Domalewski, Grażyna Gajewska – present important perspectives on waste in films: how waste is shown, treated and represented, as well as essays on waste produced by filmmakers as a result of the creation of films. The four articles are in English, so the perspective of these authors can be proliferated to diverse contexts. The second part of the special issue, titled *Eco-essays*, consists of a set of ecologically focused papers written by Marek Hendrykowski, Patrycja Chuszcz, Małgorzata Hendrykowska and Karol Zaborowski. These articles focus on the diverse meanings of things that have fallen in. This set of articles explores diverse forms of ecology-related film art and audiovisual culture (video games or amateur films). The last part of the volume, titled *Varia*, contains various perspectives on films and audiovisual culture by the authors Georgios Karakasis, Jonathan Lavilla, Kamil Kalbarczyk, Kamil Lipiński, Anna Miller-Klejsa, Małgorzata Nowińska and Mateusz Drewniak.

Piotr Zawojcki’s article *The Invisible World of Images. From “Nonhuman” to “Undigital” Photography in the Reflections of Joanna Zylinska* opens this part of the volume. The author describes the theoretical views and artistic practices of the researcher and theorist Joanna Zylinska and her idea of philosophy as photography, or photography as a form of philosophizing. Zawojcki outlines how posthumanism, post-anthropocentrism, technology and mediation are entangled in

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Waste after Films**

the relations between human and nonhuman, where the image exceeds expectations. In many ways, this article sets the scene for the articles that follow in its exploration of eco-philosophical theorizing and media culture.

Anna Estera Mrozewicz's article, titled *Rendering slow ecological crisis in a popular medium: Hyperobjects and Sámi resistance in the Swedish-French TV series "Midnight Sun"*, explores the slow evolution of the processes of representing the ecological crisis in contemporary serial television drama, focusing on the Swedish-French Arctic noir TV series *Midnight Sun*. Mrozewicz highlights the potential of long-form storytelling in instigating a possible cognitive pattern for understanding the scope of the ecological crisis and how media can confront the "paradigm" of waste in the era of the Anthropocene.

Adam Domalewski's paper 'You're ignoring the truth' – Fatih Akin's *Polluting Paradise* (2012) and *Eco-Trauma Cinema* is an analysis of the documentary *Polluting Paradise* (2012), directed by Fatih Akin. By exploring the film in the context of eco-trauma cinema, the author looks at the combination of documentary techniques and melodramatic structures in the film, which are used to provoke the audience's emotional involvement. Writing metaphorically, the article suggests that "paradise lost" means "paradise wasted." Similarly extending the concept of waste, Grażyna Gajewska's article *Wasted lives and expulsions. A study of "Beasts of the Southern Wild"* is an analysis of the interrelations between the ecological and social crises. By deploying the concept of wasted lives proposed by Zygmunt Bauman and the concept of expulsions created by Saskia Sassen, the article explores the film's representation of activities that destroy endangered natural areas and the communities inhabiting them.

Eco-essays

This part of the volume refers to ecological concerns but addresses them outside of the focus on waste and film. Marek Hendrykowski's article, titled *Cinematography in the dumpster*, gives us an overview of the fundamental differences between technology and diverse forms of communication in the context of film cultural and cinematographic history. Patrycja Chuszcz's article *The educational dynamics of activists and the film production system of the Open Cages Association (SOK)* is an analysis of the audio-visual activity of the *Open Cages Association's* fight for animal rights. By using SOK's motto – "equality of all animals" – as the interpretative frame of the article, it explores the non-formal and informal dimensions of education, supported by in-depth interviews with activist-filmmakers.

Expanding the scope of the issue outside of film, Małgorzata Hendrykowska's article *About the flea market, ecology and attitude to "old" things* discusses the popularity of the flea market in diverse contexts: rapid globalization, ecology, and modernity. By introducing cultural, literary and artistic reflections on the flea market and "abandoned objects" from Siegfried Kracauer, Susan Sontag and Tadeusz Kantor, the

author suggests that the popularity of old things, treated as historical waste, can function as an indicator of anxiety concerning traditional values and norms. Further expanding on this eco-materialist perspective, Karol Zaborowski evaluates the fate of trash and plants which grow on them. Focusing on mediations of the relations between trash and plants, the video game *Cloud Gardens* and installation art by Elżbieta Rajewska and Diana Lelonek are taken as examples of post-apocalyptic fiction, with responsibility and indifference as the cognitive and ethic azimuths of a virtually “predicted” future.

The final section of this volume contains reflections on diverse dimensions of audio-visual culture. Georgios Karakasis and Jonathan Lavilla’s article on *Fight Club* (1999) considers the film’s philosophical connotations as a reflection of the social and cultural changes in capitalist society. Kamil Kalbarczyk describes the concept of studio filmmaking in the context of early Hollywood and compares this with the age of digital visual effects. Kalbarczyk shows the “evolution” of images from shots captured in the physical space of the studio to virtual spaces where the filmmaking process is decentralized. The author refers to the following examples of this “evolution”: *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Everest* (2015) and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019).

Kamil Lipiński’s article focuses on animated works by Wojciech Bąkowski in the context of Jean-Luc Nancy’s philosophy of the division of voices and its hermeneutical implications. The author reinvestigates the meaning and autotelic recitation of Bąkowski’s *Speaking Movies* and his new productions for art galleries employing digital tools. The article provides a rare opportunity to read about experiments with verbal articulations, echo-like effects, and reverberations in the production of a differentiated audio-visual landscape in “Images.”

Anna Miller-Klejsa described the reception of *Miracle in Milan* (dir. Vittorio De Sica) in Polish movie magazines and books published up to 1956. By evaluating the historical aspects of the film’s reception in Poland during the communist period, when Italian films had a special status, Miller-Klejsa shows changes in the reception of films which are determined by the ideological influence of censorship bodies. Uncovering a complex history of banning or delaying (as was the case of Umberto D.) neorealist films, the article addresses confrontations between political power and art, a problem that is increasingly prevalent in contemporary society.

Małgorzata Nowińska’s article “*Look, here is a Polish film production*”. *Pre-war Polish musical comedy as a musical*, contextualises Polish musical comedies of the 1930s as local versions of the classic film musical. Focusing on two films, *Piętro wyżej* (L. Trystan, 1937) and *Zapomniana melodia* (J. Fethke, K. Tom, 1938), the author outlines how these films comply with the definition and determinants of the American genre.

Mateusz Drewniak’s article *Audio-visual archives of Polish Public Television and TV shows devoted to film and cinema production*

Varia

(1989–2020) is an analysis of the contents and availability of the Polish Public Television audio-visual archives for TV shows and cinema productions broadcast between 1989 and 2020. The article combines two cognitive perspectives: up-to-date studies on archives and contemporary TV film criticism.

Author Gallery

We present Weronika Andrzejewska's works, a young artist who transcends traditional perspectives on animation, in the Author Gallery.

Work on this special issue began before the Russian attack on Ukraine. Consequently, the situation is completely different at the time of writing to what it was before the war and it is hard to omit this perspective in a special ecology-related issue. Hence, we have decided to add a few remarks on this context.

We are convinced that the war has accelerated ecological disaster, but it has also intensified discussion about the urgent and vital need to cut back on fossil fuels. The Russian economy is dominated by the sale of fossil fuels and represents an old-fashioned economic paradigm deeply rooted in the understanding of the world typical for the ideologists of the 1970s and 1980s. The 21st century must signal for the end of fossil fuel exploitation. By severing their business relations with Russia, Western countries are slowly freeing themselves of this destructive paradigm and reorienting their economies toward a renewable, sustainable paradigm. Nowadays it is hard to imagine how we can slow down the acute impacts of the ecological disaster without using technology, but it is clear that any approach to this must be Green.

“Brothers in Arms,” a song written by Mark Knopfler and performed by Dire Straits, exclaims: “...Now the sun's gone to hell...” Sometimes facts can be treated as stones in the avalanche of change, of anxiety, and of disappointment. The song was recorded in 1984, the same year that the Macintosh computer was advertised with this intriguing sentence: “On January 24th Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like '1984.’” The year in the quotations marks refers to the title of the dystopian science fiction novel written by George Orwell in 1949 (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) and the message of this advertisement created during the Cold War is strong: buying the computer means choosing liberal values, being free means having the access to information. Being wise means being free from Big Brother.

But now it is 2022. Russia is responsible for the war, for genocide, for the sun that has gone to hell. Mass media in Russia propagated raw and blunt violence and the false narratives created by the Kremlin Big Brother addicted to the post-Stalin will of destruction. And even the best computers do not help in changing this situation. 2022 may very well be like “1984,” but in Russia! Thankfully, Ukraine is not part of the ‘Russian world’.

When planning this issue of “Images,” we did not think about war, although from 2014 almost all of us had pretended that the Russian violation of Ukraine should be treated as an invisible war. We live in a world full of invisible wars built on popular culture, on audio-visual images. Images. Images of the victims of Chechnya, Georgia, Syria and now Ukraine. By watching we learned how to not see, by looking we practised how to ignore, by seeing we mastered changing the facts into texts. That is why real wars became invisible wars. We became stuck in the textualization of reality.

Thousands of images from Ukraine are full of death, of destruction, of the sun in hell. People – murdered children with bound hands, women and men shot by Russian soldiers, destroyed cities and villages, burnt houses, universities, shops, trees, dead and injured animals, lost dogs, cats, burnt trees, trenches excavated by Russians in the Chernobyl radiation area. Disaster. Ruins. The wrecks of damaged tanks, planes, cars.

One might think that by seeing pictures of these wrecks or of wandering dogs, we know them in some sense, that they are, for example, the “afterimages” of the shots from Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Stalker* (1979). But they are not afterimages; they represent real disaster, real catastrophe, directed and made by Russia. Because of Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine, nature is also utterly wrecked, without any chance of rebirth, or with very little chance, smaller than the hope in the eyes of every murdered Ukrainian child. Through their senseless war, Russia speeds up the end of life on Earth.

Russia is a self-destructive subject, as reflected in Nietzsche’s philosophy. The will to self-destruction is embodied by the destruction of the planet’s entire biodiversity. This will has a long tradition of being built on our life of comfort of blindness and ignorance. The costs of the war will be tragic for everyone, as every loss of life in Ukraine speeds up the collapse of life on Earth. The longer the war goes on, the worse the future will be. The images of death in Ukraine tell their own stories before the shot/frame and after, like images in documentaries. Every image from this war breaks the limits of language, the limits of the poetics of motion pictures, and should break the limits of our cognitive comfort and ignorance.

The will of destruction, although shaped by political and economic discourses, results in ecological consequences. This is obvious for us, but it is worth reminding ourselves, especially in the view of the discussion about fossil fuels, how heavily the Western world is addicted to fossil fuels from Russia, especially in light of the slow military, political and economic reactions to Russian aggression.

When we decided on the title of the volume (*Waste in Films – Waste after Films*), we could not predict a war. While the impacts from film production pale in comparison to the destruction, ruins and disaster from this (and other) war(s), ecocritical research can emphasise the strong ties between knowledge and ethics. As academics we should

emphasise the responsibility of our research. Ecocritical discourses remind us that humanities may have strayed too far from ethics. In the context of every war, we are reminded that statements like Derrida's "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" present a false equivalence. These kinds of statements, even at the metaphorical level, are dangerous because they only sustain the illusion of understanding the whole complexity of the world. If Nietzsche was right about the death of God (the 1st death), we must add to this the death of Derrida (the 2nd death). The open-eye turn gives us a chance to rethink how life is treated as a subject, where we as the people must be responsible for the entire biodiversity without expectations of any miracle (the 1st death) and without overestimating the text in the confrontation with reality (the 2nd death). The ecocritical discourse and research can become an important context for this turn. Yet we must also be mindful of its limitations in the face of a human tendency for power and destruction.

A dialogue in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* sees Estragon and Vladimir seek to establish the place where they should wait for Godot. Estragon said: "Looks to me more like a bush." Vladimir: "A shrub." Estragon: "A bush." Vladimir: "A-. What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place?" We are not going to interpret this dialogue in the context of the history of culture or religion, or the whole tradition from the burning and talking bush to the problem with reality reduced to linguistic image. We still understand the differences between "bush" and "shrub" but, in our opinion, we are too strongly focused on words, and because of this, when we think about nature, very often words are not enough. Our responsibility for the ecological catastrophe is not primarily a semantic problem. Ultimately, the war in this context is a worst-case example of the Anthropocene. Russia, in many ways, is the metaphorical and literal nail pounded into the dying tree. Yet Ukraine provides hope.