

Piotr J. Przybysz
Akademia Marynarki Wojennej

**A FEW REMARKS BASED ON THE WORKS
OF STEFAN MORAWSKI AND *THE END OF ART*
BY DONALD KUSPIT**

ABSTRACT

The paper presents the origins of the category of end of art and two views taking into account this kind of processes in the area of arts. The first one represented by Stefan Morawski, like the view of C. Danto — an outstanding American philosopher and art critic, is derived from culture-history relationism. The other one represented by Donald Kuspit is a response to the art which actively participates in globalisation processes. The paper deals with successive stages leading both outstanding theoreticians of art to opposite conclusions. Both of them take neo-vanguard art (especially conceptual art) as empirical evidence justifying the diagnosis of death of art. Both of them also believe that the feature confirming the diagnosis is the lack of quality and aesthetic values in this kind of works. The paper ends with conclusions based on deepening globalization processes in the area of culture and arts.

Keywords:

the end of art, globalisation, Stefan Morawski, Donald Kuspit.

The problem of the end, death, dawn or the crisis of art is not a new issue. Historically four phases have been formed in relation to this issue — which is a simplification adopted for the needs of the herein article. The first of these is connected with Georg W. F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Aesthetics*, in which the diagnosis of the death of art results from the degradation of its meaning, for which the historiosophical conception is its basis. Since, according to Hegel, the spirit goes through specific stages of development with the aim of achieving integral unity, art is only one of the stages leading to this aim. Spengler's historiosophy is the background for the second phase. Proposals by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz are

placed here. He claimed that art would die completely because the metaphysical feeling at its base would disappear together with the development of civilisation. Martin Heidegger opposed these anti-ontological tendencies, and subjecting to the conventional stereotypes is, according to him, the explicit betrayal of art and human obligation. These phases should include Dadaists, for whom the death of art is related to the depreciation of the priestly role of art because the rules of collectivism are implemented, especially the ideas of equality and justice. Moreover, when art divested quality and aesthetic value, it became a vital argument confirming this diagnosis. Similar views were presented and formed by the constructivists. The third phase is aptly characterised by the watchword promoted by, amongst others, György Lukács, stating that the crisis of art is indeed the art of crisis. Its processual character can bring about a change towards *critical art*; however, what manifests in the mass art does not even deserve to be called art (amongst others *Dialectic of Enlightenment* together with Max Horkheimer). The fourth phase contains basic beliefs created within the framework of neo-avant-garde creativity. Here Andy Warhol, Allan Kaprow, Joseph Beuys and the Art Language group can be indicated. It was underlined here that art has a nonsensical status, and its uselessness came from there. Art was accused of narcotic actions, that it is a phenomenon cut off from human dilemma, and that it succumbs to the dictatorship of mass media and withers, either in traditionalism or in repeating old practice.

Stefan Morawski, as Arthur Danto¹, takes on, in understanding what art is, the conclusion resulting from historical-cultural relationism. It does not lead them to analogical conclusions. For the first one, neo-avant-garde is a real breakthrough in art; the latter claims that creativeness opposes what art is, so the term anti-art or after-art is relevant in this case.

The path that guided Stefan Morawski to pronouncing for the proponents of the crisis of culture, followed from the constation of the crisis of aesthetics, which in his opinion was caused by the crisis of art, and was the effect of a deepening crisis of culture. So on one hand, the crisis of culture in this instance was not a basic assumption, on the other hand though Morawski acknowledged that the processes and actions, which take place in this overriding structure, influence the under-structures

¹ Historical-cultural relationism is confirmed, amongst other places, in the book A. C. Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box. The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1992, where he says: 'I was more interested in what causes them [Brillo Box] to be art, than the problem of how it is possible that they can be seen as art rather than simple objects belonging to a commercial industry. It came to my mind that most of all they need to gain some sense in the structure of the history of art, making (...) these sorts of works of art possible, which could not be accepted, for example, in Amsterdam's world of art in the 17th century' (p. 5).

that create them. Therefore, if we adopt the stance that they indicate a deepening crisis, it means in turn that the crisis also embraces science, philosophy, art and religion.

Morawski carries out the criticism of modern culture through the diagnosis and findings relating to modern art and aesthetics. According to the guidelines of the accepted methodology, he searches for the justification for the metamorphosis of the subject of aesthetic cognition in diachronic- synchronic regularities and genetic-functional development changes of this discipline of knowledge. Moreover, these changes are grounded in the overriding empirical structure, i.e. in art, and there he leads the analogical explorations, which result in argumentation justifying the accuracy of the conclusions on the grounds of aesthetics. However, the source of changes taking place is the imperative structure, both for aesthetics and the art- cultural-civilizational structure. The processes believed by Morawski to be fundamental for changes and the shape of modern art and aesthetics take place here². Modern culture

² A few of the core publications dedicated to this topic are: S. Morawski, *Trojaka funkcja wychowawcza sztuki*, 'Estetyka', 1963, Vol. 4, pp. 19–71; idem, *Z aktualnych problemów estetyki amerykańskiej. U źródeł kryzysu sztuki*, part 2, 'Literatura na Świecie', 1973, No 1, pp. 238–269; idem, *Fotografia to wielofunkcyjny instrument*, 'Nurt', 1978, No 2, pp. 2–5; idem, *Kryzys neoawangardy?* [conversation hosted by Stanisław Urbański], 'Zdanie', 1983, No 3, pp. 11–14; idem, *O końcu ery nowożytnej*, 'Projekt', 1983, No 1, pp. 34–38; idem, *Uwagi o końcu ery nowożytnej i złym samopoczuciu neoawangardy europejskiej*, [in:], *Na zakręcie: od sztuki do postsztuki*, Kraków 1985, pp. 362–377; idem, *Warianty interpretacyjne formuły 'zmierech sztuki'*, [in:], *Na zakręcie...*, publ. quoted, pp. 279–307; idem, *Wstęp*, [in:], *Na zakręcie...*, publ. quoted, pp. 5–21; idem, *O współczesnym kryzysie kultury*, [in:], *Przemiany techniki dźwiękowej, stylu i estetyki w polskiej muzyce lat 70.*, Kraków 1986, pp. 11–33; idem, *O współczesnym kryzysie kultury* [stopped by the censor in the Ossolineum Publishing House, text would have been published in the volume *Edukacja kulturalna a egzystencja człowieka*, Wrocław 1986], pp. 37–54; idem, *W labiryncie aksjologicznym*, [in:], *O wartościowaniu w badaniach literackich*, ed. S. Sawicki, W. Panas, Lublin 1986, pp. 95–138; idem, *O filozofii sztuki i kryzysie racjonalizmu*, 'Twórczość', 1987, Vol. 5, pp. 53–57; idem, *Perfidna gra z przeszłością. (Awangarda, postmodernizm. Czy sztuka jest w stanie kryzysu?)* [conversation hosted by M. Karpiński], 'Polityka', 1988, No 49, p. 8; idem, *Kultura wzywa pomocy*, 'Po prostu', 1990, No 19, p. 1, 5; idem, *O wyróżnikach postmodernizmu w sensie kulturowym*, 'Universitas', 1992, No 2, pp. 62–70; idem, *W aurze kryzysu (sztuka i estetyka wobec kulturowego tła)*, [in:], *Humanistyka jako autorefleksja kultury*, ed. K. Zamiara, Poznań 1993/95, pp. 75–90; idem, *Ani wolności, ani równości, ani braterstwa — a co w zamian?*, 'Kwartalnik Filmowy', 1994, No 5, pp. 12–18; idem, *O kulturze w czasach marnych*, 'Odra', 1995, No 1, pp. 60–64; idem, *Mitologiczne aspekty postmodernizmu (jeden z papierków lakmusowych 'kryzysu kultury')*, 'Konteksty', 1996, No 1–2, pp. 9–13; idem, *O świecie smutnym, który wydaje się wesoły*, 'Kwartalnik Filmowy', 1996, No 14, pp. 183–194; idem, *Po co technika*, 'Przegląd Techniczny', 1996, No 40, pp. 6–7; idem, *Theses on the 20th Century Crisis of Art And Culture*, 'Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities', 1996, Vol. 47, pp. 451–467; idem, *Dwa różne końce dwóch stuleci*, 'Dekada Literacka', 1997, No 10–11, p. 12; idem, *O tak zwanym kryzysie kultury w relacji do postmoderny(izmu)*, [in:], *Niewdzięczne rysowanie mapy... O postmodernie(izmie) i kryzysie kultury*, Toruń 1999, pp. 273–331; idem, *W Janusowym widnokręgu*, [in:], *Humanistyka przełomu wieków*, ed. J. Kozielecki, Warszawa 1999, pp. 287–308; idem, *Obraz kultury na przełomie wieków*, 'Przegląd Artystyczno-Literacki', 2000, No 7–8, pp. 138–144.

is discerned by adverse values. Stefan Morawski believes that it results from the fact that civilizational progress outstrips the development of culture. Effects of this include: the blurring of the difference between value and non-value; the flooding of information, which functions either as a product or political-ideological transmission; staggering consumption, which forces the buyer to constantly exchange goods — due to this its prestige increases; hoisting marketing to the most privileged position by the self-propelling consumption; domination of mass culture above high culture, which results in a reduction in the value of the latter, pushing it to the margins of social life; conforming the ethos of work to the level of ethos of use, the size of which has no limits. It is also, as described by Baudrillard in *Amerique* (1986), blurring and drawing away due to realistic fiction from reality and the desertion of the cultural landscape, proportionally to the spiritual emptiness. The social matter itself, with its mad carousel of artefacts, object-symbols or symbol-objects, takes on a hyper-realistic shape, removing in this way the difference between the presentation and the presented. The sense of life is a greedy existence, in which the universe of discourse highlights ownership more and more and in increasingly sophisticated ways.

The distinctive feature of modern culture is consumerism and permissivism, as opposed to the departing modernity, in which the dominating values were labelled ‘gardening’ by Zygmunt Bauman. What is the reason for this change? Morawski claims that it results from the exhaustion of the Enlightenment’s recipe for happiness. Further experiences of the 20th century have questioned cultivated Enlightenment’s myths. The analysis of this process was carried out by, amongst others, M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), and a ‘happy’ human life was presented by H. Marcuse in *One-dimensional Man* (1964). We live, according to Morawski, in an ambivalent time. On one hand, it is a kind of closure, leading toward caricature and ‘monstrousizing’ the ideas of Enlightenment; on the other hand, it carries elements of up-and-coming new cultural-civilization, which is emerging before our eyes.

Morawski’s diagnosis is radically pessimistic. Moreover, he believes that in a predictable time prospect, phenomena such as the Americanisation of culture, the domination of mass culture, the spread of media art, the decreasing prestige of scientists and science itself and the domination of *mythos* above *logos* will be reinforcing³. Why this trend will grow stronger? The reason is obvious: ‘Post-modernity is

³ Morawski also points out the processes contrary to the post-modern trend: renaissance of religiousness (not institutional) and Muslim fundamentalism. It is about, amongst others, the New Age phenomenon. More information, see: P. J. Przybysz, *Źródła estetyki nowej duchowości*, ‘Przegląd Religioznawczy’, 1997, No 4, pp. 19–29; A. Zamojski, *New Age. Filozofia, religia, paranauka*, Kraków 2002.

supported by the fact that it promotes easy entertainment/social life and in the most complete way fulfils the dreams about Schlaraffenland”⁴.

Neo-avant-garde art almost completely opposes these cultural tendencies; he respects it but does not give it the name of art in its narrow meaning, as opposed to post-modern art, which he does not respect, but, in a more valuable trend, does not take away its name.

Why does Morawski not give neo-avant-garde creativity the status of art? Because he has decided that the aesthetical qualities and values decide whether we deal with the work of art; however, he took the qualities and aesthetic values of the work of art to the qualities and artistic values. Therefore getting rid of, in the vast majority, neo-avant-garde art, quality and aesthetical values, forced him to question this sort of creativeness as art. He has seen in neo-avant-garde six basic distinctive features, which in various ways challenges and questions, so far valid canons. First of all, the novelty in neo-avant-garde does not only come from the virtuosity or technical skills. This is a derivative of an idea or involvement in a certain artistic situation. In avant-garde the expression which normally plays a vital role, here has been marginalised; conceptualism has questioned the iconic dimension of art; actionistic art has underlined the relevance of the existence in art of the object⁵.

Secondly, crisis as a driving force of avant-garde has a much deeper character here. The reason for this, according to Morawski, is the enormous pressure of mass culture and youth sub-culture. As an effect, there is noticed by artists, an alienation of the modern world: its regulations, norms and codes; the feeling of a lack of domesticity in it and the consciousness of the artist's redundancy in modern reality. This creates the artists' stance characteristic for neo-avant-garde. The first is based on the anarchization of opinions and beliefs, and the second is its anti-thesis, based on conformism. The creators who take on the latter stance, while co-creating mass or technological culture, make it not for the sake of noble values of avant-garde, but in the name of profit, which is justified by the inevitability of the domination of this sort of art.

Thirdly, neo-avant-garde, as opposed to the avant-garde, is characterised by the unquestionably larger polarisation of stances taken by the creators. The first pair is that previously mentioned in the text: the anarchistic and conformist attitude. The

⁴ Compare, S. Morawski, *Niewdzięczne rysowanie mapy... O postmodernie(izmie) i kryzysie kultury*, Toruń 1999, p. 305.

⁵ Compare, S. Morawski, *O słabościach praxis neoawangardowej i niedostatkach teorii awangardy*, [in:] *Wybory i ryzyka awangardy. Studia z teorii awangardy*, ed. U. Czartoryska, R. W. Kluszczyński, Warszawa — Łódź 1985, p. 13.

second is the pragmatic and utopian stance. As far as the creators are concerned, according to Morawski, this polarisation relates to the authors connected with the work for the mass recipient and using electronic devices, and those aiming towards happening, performance, action painting, fluxion and radically conceptualising their creativity. Moreover, neo-avant-garde consciously breaks off with the past and feeds itself with the present. This is why it writes off the aesthetical dimension of art, and this is where the dissimilar character of contra alienational aspirations of neo-avant-garde results from. Avant-garde uses artistic values in order to achieve this, by using the language of art, reaching the barrier beyond which engineering activity is spreading, or even the transcendence of the absolute. Neo-avant-garde is using the same matter as the philosopher, scientist or prophet. The aim however, is extent: stripping reality from the mask which mystifies it, and contact with an authentic human and his or her problems. The difference, and at the same time a unique feature of avant-garde, is based on mistrust towards scientific-rationalistic concepts.

Fourthly, the renunciation of values for the sake of art has caused the necessity of an even wider supplementation of art by explanations, justifications and explication; conceptualism is the borderline example of such. There are of course creators, as stated by Morawski, who do not take up any explanations; these are though, only the individuals who do not confirm the rule.

Fifthly, there is anti-narcism and anti-talent. It is an intensive, radical and consequent desire to discover ones own identity by tearing down the mystifying masks. Starting from the resignation from mediation in an aesthetic dimension of art and finishing beyond the played social roles.

Sixthly, auto-expression of the existential rebellion of neo-avant-garde. Morawski places here the anarchistic actions in avant-garde, nudist performances, Viennese activists and body art⁶.

⁶ This diagnosis had a deep justification in Morawski's research about anarchism, whose exemplification in neo-avant-garde came in the form of selected trends of actional creativeness. Morawski had planned to publish a book which would deal with this matter *Art, aesthetics, anarchism* about the anarchistic attitudes in art and thought from the second half of the eighties. The first chapter would have been about the anarchistic outlook, the second chapter would have presented the anarchistic aesthetical thought from P. J. Proudhon to P. Kropotkin and artistic attempts to relate towards these conclusions (from C. Pissarro to Dadaists and A. Artaud), the third chapter would have been dedicated to current anarchistic stances in neo-avant-garde art. These issues were brought out in S. Morawski publications, *Sztuka i anarchizm*, 'Teksty', 1975, No 2, pp. 59–83; idem, *U podstaw anarchizmu albo Proudhon, czyli anarchizm zeszłowieczny*, 'Miesięcznik Literacki', 1975, No 2, pp. 136–139; idem, *Anarchizm, dada, Artaud*, 'Dialog', 1976, No 7, pp. 89–97; idem, *U filozoficznych podstaw światopoglądu Herberta Reada*, 'Res Facta', 1977, No 8, pp. 70–88; idem, *Posłowie*, [in:], H. Read, *Sens sztuki*, trans. K. Tarnowska-Konarek, ed. III, Warszawa 1994, pp. 202–233.

Although he did not regard the avant-garde movement as art, he definitely appreciated its deeply humanistic aspects, where the human aims towards self-accomplishment of what constitutes him or her in humanity. This deep belief, as Morawski calls it, in European values, which were looked after by avant-garde from the seventies, this part which was made the subject of its interest and a task for itself, was the self-accomplishment of humans, not through a symbiosis with machines, computers, etc., but beyond them. Morawski, while closing his interests in neo-avant-garde, believed that this very dimension of neo-avant-garde creativity, would be a grain which, after the purgatory of the post-modernism, would form a new art: 'Possibility it will be stretched between two poles [the art of the future P.J.P.], i.e. ostentatious commercialism and a noble ethos of struggling on its own, with accumulating dramas of reality (...) grounds for another, fuller humanistic need to be created'⁷.

A radically different settlement was suggested by Donald Kuspit in his latest book *The End of Art* (2004), which was published in Poland, in relation to the exhibition 'New Old Masters' (November 2006 — February 2007 The Abbots Palace in Oliwa), previously promoted in California.

Donald Kuspit is a much respected figure in the artistic establishment circles of New York and America. Apart from the sheer volume and quality of his critical publications, numerous awards are also a sign of recognition for his work in the field of art critique and widely grasped humanities. Amongst these, it is worth mentioning the most prestigious awards, such as: The Ford Foundation Award, The Guggenheim Foundation Award and The Fulbright Commission Award. Kuspit is the author of more than twenty books and countless articles and texts for exhibition catalogues. The main framework of his interest was geared towards the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde art, while the last book questions the value of this art and outlines the new stance by the author, who supports art adhering to the aesthetic paradigm.

During the exhibition in Abbots Palace, works by the following artists were presented: Chester Arnold, Steven Assael, Miguel Quilez Bach, William Beckman, David Bierk, Vincent Desiderio, Don Eddy, Richard Estes, Judy Fox, Zoy Frolovy, Cristóbal Gabarrón, Gregory Gillespie, April Gornik, Robert Graham, Karen Gunderson, Julia Heffernan, F. Scott Hess, Krzysztof Izdebski, Julio Larraz, David Ligare, Jacquelyn McBain, Igor Mitoraj, Odd Nerdrum, Enjong Nohi, Don Perlis, Joseph Rafael, Richard Ryan, Roberta Schwarz, Rosalyn Schwarz, Maciej Świeszewski, Ruth Weisberg, Jerome Witkin and Brenda Zlamany.

⁷ S. Morawski, *Perfidna gra z przeszłością. (Awangarda, postmodernizm. Czy sztuka jest w stanie kryzysu?)* [interview by M. Karpiński], 'Polityka', 1988, No 49, p. 8.

The exhibition (the book definitely had a smaller impact) has caused an interesting discussion in the press. The debate was participated by, amongst others, Karolina Grabowicz, Agata Rogoś, Aneta Szyłak, Piotr Krajewski, Jacek Friedrich, Jacek Kamrowski, Małgorzata Zerwe and Anna Waligórska, whose comments were placed in 'Gazeta Wyborcza'. More full and extensive debate swept across the 'Dziennik' newspaper, where the stances were presented by: Ida Łotocka-Huelle, Maria Poprzęcka, Teresa Grzybowska, Maciej Mazurek, Bogusław Deptuła, Piotr Kosiewski and Donald Kuspit⁸.

Critiques were aiming the accusations towards the gathered works; others saw many virtues in the choice that has been made. The first ones were underlining that we are dealing here with commonly known subjects and motives (landscapes in the taste of German *landschafts*, as well as 'live' still life, literal references to the American so-called regionalism of the thirties and to the socialist realism), the cult of traditional artistic techniques, art 'for the sofa and to the bedroom' (easy, light and pleasant which was always trades), product 'in itself is smooth as Vaseline. Instead of thought, pretentious poses', due to this exhibition 'national artistic conserve receives official support and foreign reinforcement'. However, Polish avant-garde is doing well — ascertained one of the participants of the discussion.

To one of the advantages of the exhibition by D. Kuspit, critiques added the attempt of building the importance of a technique, respect for tradition and respect for the viewer. This is simply splendid painting technique, which brings back the 'proper order of things'. This 'proper order of things' relies upon the fact, according to the critic 'that yet again you need to gain success with your talent and work, not by social or media manipulation'. Kuspit's about-face departing from the admirer of avant-garde arts and regarding only art of aesthetic values is proof that the critique is of the first-rank.

Kuspit underlines that 'avant-garde art in all its permutations — has become decadent, obsolete, tired, and humanly irrelevant'⁹. In relation to this, neither novelty, originality nor perpetual experimenting is art's aim, but 'The purpose of art is to dialectically transcend ugliness by revealing its immanence through beauty. It is

⁸ Compare, I. Łotocka-Huelle, *Nie plujmy na mistrzów*, „Dziennik”, 6.12.06; M. Poprzęcka, *Nudni nowi mistrzowie*, „Dziennik”, 7.12.06; T. Grzybowska, *Śmietnik sztuki współczesnej*, 'Dziennik', 8.12.06; M. Maciej Mazurek, *Dość zachwytów nad pseudosztuką*, 'Dziennik', 9–10.12.06; B. Deptuła, *Siła wolnej sztuki*, „Dziennik”, 13.12.06; P. Kosiewicz, *Modne krytykowanie*, 'Dziennik', 14.12.06; D. Kuspit, *Nie neguję sztuki współczesnej*, 'Dziennik', 16–17.12.06.

⁹ D. Kuspit, *New Old Masters: Why Now?*, [in:], *Great Exhibition of Contemporary Art. New Old Masters*, National Museum in Gdańsk, Gdańsk 2006, p. 19.

deepest sense that art can make'¹⁰. Why are the aesthetic values of art so vital? Kuspit explains that 'Aesthetic experience allows one to recover the sense of individuality and authenticity lost »obligatory behaviour« [...] because it allows one to live in society with the measure of what can only be describe as sublime if unrealistic happiness (...)'¹¹. Alongside many weaknesses of Kuspit's book *The End of Art*, the author clearly opts for the aesthetical qualities and values that are a distinctive feature after the end of art. It is definitely on a global scale, communicative, does not create a distance between the work or art and the recipient and relates to a long tradition. Moreover, in the world of consumption, industrial design, advertising and fashion commonly use quotes, borrowings and references to art, being a homage to the aesthetic paradigm.

What Kuspit calls worthless (avant-garde art) and abandons for art, which in return gives a homage to aesthetic qualities and values, is for S. Morawski a new incarnation of art adhering to beauty (post-modern art) and is to a great extent worthless. Morawski, in his conclusions regarding the subject, takes on the fundamental premise that avant-garde art was a reaction to avant-garde movements from 1950–1970. The phrase 'reaction' relates here also to such connotations as negation-anti-avant-garde, including the negation of the axiological dimension of neo-avant-garde and breaking off from its ethos of art and artist. The source of this reaction was the exhaustion and weariness of both creators and recipients as well as the managers of this art. And secondly, a deepening symbiosis with mass culture¹². Moreover, a decisive role was played here by the constitutive features of post-modern art, which should include the works which belong to this class. According to Morawski, the following properties are vital here: 'the feeling of exhaustion, accent put on pastiche and parody, the set of quotes, travesties, the intended absence of confrontation-rebellious stances, pervasive mix up of values which makes the absolute freedom turn to (...) captivity from the current state of affairs and management strategies (...) disregarding the humanities (precisely Enlightenment and Romantic) heritage, open anti-elitist attitude, taking from the main stimulations from advertisements and comic books (...) reaching for examples from artistic traditions, only

¹⁰ D. Kuspit, *The End of Art*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 191.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 13.

¹² Morawski does not agree to the inclusion of anti-art or after-art in the classification of post-modern art, as supported by, amongst others, F. Jameson, A. Huyssen, H. Forster and V. Burgin. He also does not agree with Lyotard and Welsch, who believe that post-modern art continues the neo-avant-garde rebellion against commercialised production. He considers discerning the formation, which is the negation of the essence of post-modernism, 'constatation post-modernism' to be 'wooden iron' (H. Forster and V. Burgin).

enough to be able to establish strained contact with populist tastes'¹³. The collection itself, of this sort of work of art, Morawski limits in a definite way. It results from an established aim. This criticism of post-modern art is not about presenting it as a full and multi-dimensional picture but presenting its essence which would forcibly enhance the cultural breakthrough. In its diversity, Morawski does not perceive value: 'One cannot be more mistaken than to claim that the glaring amount of artistic events is proof of authentic triumph. This self-illusion is analogical to accepting the fiery cheek of a woman with tuberculosis as testimony of the most unusual, natural beauty'¹⁴. Pessimism in these characteristics results from the choices made previously and a deep belief of defending them, not in the name of scientific-cognitive rights, but existentially — human: 'defending against this wave, which cannot be taken as something fatal, in an inevitable way will drown these values — how precious, which were characterised as belonging to the avant-garde formation'¹⁵.

Morawski executes what seems extremely valuable: the typology of post-modern creativity. It is worth paying attention to the fact that these models do not exhaust the complicity of the phenomenon of post-modern art, but only describe what is most characteristic to it. Secondly, representative creativity for these models is brought by the artists from beyond the ocean. Morawski, not only discerns and classifies these, but also values them.

The first model is created by art that enters an open flirtation with consumptionism, which can be called kitsch. At the beginning this art seems to be a reproduction of objects from everyday trade. It is not, in essence, about the objects themselves, but about 'the atmosphere of everything being for sale'. As aptly characterised by Baudrillard, the artist as much moulds tastes as they are moulded by mass taste, through a countless variety of products and things, which in the end stops causing live reactions but leads, however, towards apathy. This implosion, blocking the receptors after yet another massed attack on the senses, deepens the fascination of mass majority by addictive manipulation. The artist in this model 'performs the role of coelenterata and travelling salesman in one, plays the mechanism of the managers' inclinations of implosion, playing with replaced objects, games of fast-selling simulacrum. Between the people buyers and purchased things and between them and their creator, there is no distance to this scenery, i.e. it does

¹³ S. Morawski, *Komentarz do kwestii postmodernizmu*, 'Studia Filozoficzne', 1990, No 4, p. 43.

¹⁴ S. Morawski, *W aurze kryzysu (sztuka i estetyka wobec kulturowego tła)*, [in:], *Humanistyka jako autorefleksja*, ed. K. Zamiara, Poznań 1993–1995, p. 75.

¹⁵ S. Morawski, *Artyści awangardy w okresie postmodernizmu*, 'Exit', 1993, No 4, p. 654.

not allow for any irony towards them, the borders are getting blurred'¹⁶. The art herein does not encourage, does not prompt one to ask questions and does not cause critical reflection. It amounts to the emblems from the mercantile iconosphere. The artist creates pseudo-artistic products; a blend of high aspirations with formal and contextually unsuitable means takes place - lacking authenticity, an artistic botch.

A second model discerned by Morawski grounds on the artistic personality degradation and creation of plagiarism. It includes ostentatious appropriation and 'pastiche' the output of the grand masters. The centre of gravity, as noted by Morawski, moves from the market of *sensu largo* to the artistic market *sensu stricto*. Countless replicas, quotes and repetitions circulate within. As an effect, the artistic work becomes merely an icon, the genius becomes an anachronism, while originality drowns in the flood of what used to be. The priestly status of the artist becomes finally invalid. This creativity proves that there is no intact spiritual property. A unique expression resulting from the individual dialogue of the artist with the world, which throughout the ages has been the distinctive feature of any creative act, and has been found on the rubbish pile of useless etiquette. Why does the artist decide to do this? What sort of arguments are behind these types of decisions? Morawski is aware of this — the conviction that the time of repetition and simulacrum has come, that the creator is under an overwhelming pressure from the heritage and legacy gathered in museums, and a mass culture, which floods everyone and everything, that there is no possibility of becoming equal with the grand masters of past eras, that one has nothing much to say. Indeed 'one way or another, the guiding principle in this case — passing over the issue of whether the artist is very skilful nearly reaching virtuosity prestidigitator (...) or ordinary labourer — is the market value. However, the value which is totally degraded is the given personal identity — of which the most precious extract is genius'¹⁷.

The third model is the creativity which grounds itself on the eclecticism. Creators representing this stance use the following arguments: if it is not possible to mark out the unambiguous line of development between the old and the brand new phenomenon, then what already exists is an old and common phenomenon; identity is a delusion and everything is the repetition of the difference and the difference in repetition; the past persistently meddles with the present, what seemed to have gone, comes back in a new surrounding — a new context. As a consequence, according to Morawski, it boils down to an obvious conclusion: eclecticism is a natural property of art and culture, because from this perspective it is impossible to discern works of

¹⁶ S. Morawski, *O sytuacji artysty w świecie efemeryd*, 'Twórczość', 1998, Vol. 3, p. 92.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 94.

art that are without borrowing from elsewhere as well as crystal clear artistic trends; analogically it is impossible to capture the course of culture from the stated past to the seeds of the future. Why do artists explain things in such a twisted way, things that are obvious? Morawski firstly wonders about the possible influence: ‘Whether at least indirectly inspired by the lecture by Derrida about straggling and a delay of sense, about indecisives or Deleuze’s rhizomes and nomadic existence? It is obvious that it is not the way things are, that the eclecticism is born mainly from observation, obtrusively repeating the cacophony of events, from the kaleidoscopically given dispersion of experiences, from the crosswords of everything with everything, from the allergy to integrity and unity’¹⁸.

The fourth model is a strategy moving towards the post-avant-garde context (J. Schnabel, U. Eco, I. Calvino, J. Barth, W. Allen, P. Greenaway). This, according to Morawski, is the most valuable strategy of the post-modern creator. It is built on ‘the boundaries of folk-hedonistic mythology, which the mass conscious lives on and which gives to the artistic consciousness of kinship with others’¹⁹.

Morawski can accept only the boundaries of this sort of art, whereas D. Kuspit can accept only its main shell (the first three models). Morawski the admirer of high art does not want to and does not consider proper accepting the changes brought about by post-modern art (understood this way). Kuspit understands the inevitability and the scale of the changes happening due to the fact that art is involved in globalisation processes and, for many reasons, wants to take up the game on the global market. As I believe, ignoring this process is not the correct research attitude, because ignoring facts does not cause their disappearance.

As rightly pointed out by G. Dziamski, discussion about art in the era of globalisation concerns ‘*art after the end of art*’ and progresses according to rules different from those valid in the neo-avant-garde world²⁰. The end is a fulfilment of what is closing and opening at the same time, which happens in a chronological order afterwards. This does not exclusively concern art and, as many point out, today’s cultural-social formation. Immanuel Wallerstein claims that the developmental mechanisms, which have been functioning for more than 500 years, are wearing out; the ‘worldsystem’ is departing — this is its end. Antonio Negri sees the changes in the Empire, which is flexible, non-definable and, in a global scale, is widening its knowledge. Slavoj Žižek points towards the revolution which is waiting to happen, because the liberal utopia is falling down. Diagnoses of the variably

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 94–95.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Compare, G. Dziamski, *Sztuka w czasach globalizacji*, ‘Pogranicza’, 2002, No 6, p. 26.

understood end appear in the texts of, amongst others, Ulrich Beck, Guy Sorman, David Osborne, Niell Ferguson, Jeremy Rifkin and Tadeusz Gadacz²¹.

Richard Shusterman in *Pragmatic Aesthetics* points out that the need of sensations of an aesthetic nature is natural and exists in every human. If it is not fulfilled in the form of contact with high art; it will seek fulfilment elsewhere²². In relation to this, we are currently witnessing the de-aesthetization of high art on one hand, and the consumers of quality and aesthetic values vital to everyday life on the other.

It should be considered correct that the need for sensation and aesthetical experience in humans did not fade with the departure of art from this paradigm. Thus, we are dealing here with, amongst others, the deaesthetization of art and the aesthetization of everyday life due to globalisation processes and the popularisation of consumption society, which is also pointed out by Bohdan Dziemidok²³.

The reason for this situation is the fact that the arousal and, at a certain level, fulfilment of aesthetic needs is a stimulus that increases consumption, like fulfilling purely utilitarian needs. The increase of consumption causes economic development, while its decrease causes stagnation and crisis. Thus, an increasingly vital role is played by advertising, fashion, industrial design, etc. Utilitarian objects, cars, furniture and the packaging of various products have to be not only functional, practical and useful but also beautiful. Beautifully designed, beautifully exposed or even beautifully advertised. It is more about arousing (irritating) than fulfilling these needs. On the other hand, the phenomenon of anti-aesthetization is underlined, meaning the recipient becomes indifferent towards the aesthetic qualities. The reason for this is, amongst others, the saturation of qualities which are talked about in the reality of everyday life²⁴.

Globalisation processes, which are strictly connected with the spread of consumption society use, in order to intensify these transitions, popular art, quasi-art and product art alike. Moreover, the hedonistic-entertaining function and compensational role of popular art, due to its communicativeness, is used on a global scale.

²¹ Compare, J. Żakowski, *Koniec*, Warszawa 2006, in a particular for himself way Umberto Eco in his last book *Rakiem. Gorąca wojna i populizm mediów*, Warszawa 2007, arguments the thesis that the characteristic feature of modern era is going backwards, as it is in the matter of replacing the theory of evolution with the theory of creation.

²² Compare, R. Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Rowman and Littlefield, New York 2000, pp. 176–212.

²³ Compare, B. Dziemidok, *Deestetyzacja sztuki i estetyzacja życia codziennego. Kwestia zaspakajania podstawowych potrzeb estetycznych w kulturze postmodernistycznej*, [in therein:], *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 301–311. In the further part I use the conclusions included in this work.

²⁴ This phenomenon is pointed out by, amongst others, Wolfgang Welsch in the work: *Estetyka poza estetyką. O nową postać estetyki*, Kraków 2005.

The exhibition of D. Kuspit 'New Old Masters' (November 2006 — February 2007 the Abbots Palace in Oliwa) perfectly places itself in, or in some way goes towards, such changes. Morawski's stance cognitively closes this stage in the history of art. Taking into consideration the fact that Morawski, similarly to Arthur Danto, opts for historical-cultural relationism, this inconsequence is, on the grounds of this stance, ignoring the changes which happen in the historical development of art.

The necessity of taking into consideration the facts which result from, amongst others, aesthetization of modern culture and aesthetization of electronic media, make the areas of research of aesthetics and philosophy of culture overlap. This cooperation and mutual relationship is unavoidable or even necessary — something that is pointed out by, amongst others, Heine Paetzold and Bohdan Dziemidok. As opposed to, for instance, Aleš Erjavec and Lars-Olof Ahlberg, Dziemidok is not concerned that aesthetics will be swallowed by the philosophy of culture; just the opposite. 'I believe that aesthetics can be cultivated in many ways; however, its core will still be art and aesthetical phenomena (objects, the state of things, qualities, values, needs and experiences)'²⁵.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] *Aesthetics and/as Globalization*, 'International Yearbook of Aesthetics', 2004, Vol. 8.
- [2] Bydler Ch., *The Global Art World, Inc. On the Globalization of Contemporary Art*, Uppsala University, Uppsala 2004.
- [3] Danto A. C., *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1997.
- [4] Dziemidok B., *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, PWN, Warszawa 2002.
- [5] *Globalization and Art*, 'Art Inquiry', 2002, Vol. IV.
- [6] Kuspit D., *New Old Masters: Why Now?* [in:] *Great Exhibition of Contemporary Art: New Old Masters*, Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2006.
- [7] Kuspit D., *The End of Art*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2004.
- [8] Morawski S., *Czy zmierzch estetyki*, [in:] *Zmierzch estetyki — rzekomy czy autentyczny*, Vol. 1, Wydawnictwo Czytelnik, Warszawa 1987, pp. 5–173.

²⁵ B. Dziemidok, *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 318.

- [9] Morawski S., *Na zakręcie od sztuki do po-sztuki*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1985.
- [10] Morawski S., *Niewdzięczne rysowanie mapy... O postmodernie(izmie) i kryzysie kultury*, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 1999.
- [11] Przybysz P. J., *Kultura współczesna jako przestrzeń niespełniająca oczekiwań? Kilka uwaga na marginesie propozycji Stefana Morawskiego*, [in:], *Aksjotyczne przestrzenie kultury. Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, No 2745. Prace kulturoznawcze, t. IX, ed. R. Tańczuk, D. Wolska, Wrocław 2005, pp. 419–436.
- [12] Przybysz P. J., *Stefan Morawski's Critique of the Postmodern Art*, [in:], *The Great book of Aesthetics. The 15th international Congress of Aesthetics*, ed. Ken-ichi Sasaki, Tanehisa Otabe, Japan 2001 CD.
- [13] Пшибыш П. Ё., *С. Моравский о генезисе мифологемах постмодернизма*, [in:], *Гендер и проблемы коммуникативного поведения*, Новополюцк 2002, pp. 88–91.
- [14] Przybysz P. J., *Art Towards Globalisation Processes*, 'Zeszyty Naukowe' AMW, 2007, No 1, pp. 55–64.
- [15] Przybysz P. J., Zeidler-Janiszewska A., *Stefan Morawski — wstępny szkic do portretu*, [in:] S. Morawski, *Wybór pism estetycznych*, Universitas, Kraków 2007, pp. VII–LXIV.
- [16] Shusterman R., *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Rowman and Littlefield, New York 2000.
- [17] Szkołut T., *Awangarda, neoawangarda, postawangarda*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 1999.
- [18] Welsch W., *Estetyka poza estetyką. O nową postać estetyki*, Universitas, Kraków 2005.

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł przedstawia genezę kategorii końca sztuki i dwa wybrane stanowiska uwzględniające tego typu procesy w obszarze sztuki. Pierwsze Stefana Morawskiego, podobnie jak Arthura C. Danto, wybitnego amerykańskiego filozofa i krytyka sztuki, wynika z relacjonizmu kulturowo-historycznego. Drugie Donalda Kuspita stanowi reakcję na sztukę, która aktywnie bierze udział w procesach globalizacyjnych. Artykuł przedstawia kolejne etapy prowadzące obu wybitnych teoretyków sztuki do diametralnie odmiennych rozstrzygnięć. Obaj uznają sztukę neoawangardową (a w niej szczególnie sztukę konceptualną) za dowód empiryczny na zasadność diagnozy śmierci sztuki. Obaj również uznają, że właściwością potwierdzającą tę diagnozę jest brak jakości i wartości estetycznych w tego typu dziełach.

Dla pierwszego powrót twórców do takiej jakości w sztuce postmodernistycznej to w większości przypadków kicz, pastisz lub zabieg eklektyczny. Dla drugiego to powrót do konstytutywnej właściwości sztuki — dostarczanie odbiorcy przeżyć natury estetycznej. Artykuł kończą wnioski, których podstawą są pogłębiające się procesy globalizacyjne w obszarze kultury, także sztuki.

Recenzent prof. dr hab. Bohdan Dziemidok