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Homo corporalis as the communicated muse and centrepiece of commercialized culture

Abstract

The study deals with the issue of human corporeality in a retrospective outline of the European cultural tradition and in terms of significant features of post-modern culture, post-modernism and pop culture. The authors form the premise that *Homo corporalis* has represented the muse of artistic imagination and the centrepiece of everything from ancient culture to the present. At the same time, they argue that *Homo corporalis* was at the centre of culture throughout individual periods of cultural history, and this position has changed in contemporary social, economic and cultural conditions. While remaining the centrepiece, it has now become the subject and object of commercialised culture. Based on a logical and hermeneutic analysis of relevant source materials and based on empiricism, the traits of the individual cultural epochs are defined and conceptualised within the context of broader cultural associations and artistic visual culture. The assertion is that late capitalism, the post-modern, post-modernism, and pop culture

have brought about different kinds of extremes, experiments, peculiarities, provocations, attractions, etc., including paradoxicality. Creators abandoned more noble aesthetics in favour of provocation and experimentation and pop art permeated into all cultural levels, including pop culture and the media. *Homo corporalis* has been transformed into an individual fixated on his own image and focused on his own goals and pleasures. He is in the position of being the object of commercial interests and their products. His personal goals, attitudes and value scale are formed against the backdrop of the ethos of egoism, individualism, hedonism and narcissism.

Keywords

Homo corporalis, artistic imagination, commercialisation, circular economy, antiquity, Medieval period, Renaissance, Baroque, Avant-garde, Modernity, Post-modernity, Post-modernism, pop art, pop culture, media

Instead of an introduction:

Homo corporalis as the centrepiece of culture

There is no doubt that the history of the visual arts¹ gives us a clear idea of the important inspirational role and mission of Man and his corporeality in the process of artistic imagination. Various perspectives exist in scientific disciplines with regards to the inspiration of human corporeality within this creative field. They are primarily determined by various fields of research and frameworks of interest between individual social and human sciences and the methods of their investigation. For example, within the scope of art disciplines, including art history and aesthetics, there is great interest in the aesthetics of expression or the function of art in a contemporary context. For cultural anthropology, sociology and art psychology, or for media studies,² interest is typically directed at broader cultural and social contexts as well as at cognitive, emotional or receptive processes and contexts.³In our

¹ The term visual arts is used to define those works of art that are perceived by sight. Given the focus of the study, art has a relatively narrow definition, as it does not adequately reflect the specifics of media arts, etc. In this regard, the visual arts are specific because their creation employs a variety of methods, techniques and technologies in the areas of painting, graphics, sculpture, photography, film and various multimedia formats.

² In media studies, art goes beyond mere reflection of the aesthetic and art categories and cultural contexts, up to the application of specific methods of creation within the framework of media-artistic creation.

³ Compare for example ARISTOTELES: *Poetika*. Martin :Thetis, s.r.o., 2009; CUMMING, R.: *Umění*. Prague : Slovart, 2007; LE GOFF, J.: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. Prague : Odeon, 1991; PIJOAN, J.: *Dejiny umenia. (1-12)*. Bratislava : Ikar, 1999; REGEL, G.: *Medium bildende Kunst. Bildnerischer Prozess und Sprache der Formen und Farben*. Berlin : Henschelvertrag, 1986; ARNOLD, M.: *Culture and*

minds, the depiction of the human body in visual art oscillates between the effort to aesthetically arrange shapes and the search for an ideal model based on a reflection of reality or pure fantasy. We also concur with the opinion expressed by Kukulka, who claims that artistic depiction is primarily the result of the self-expression of the creators themselves.⁴ However, there is no doubt that the creation of an ideal model is closely related to the cultural environment itself as it influences the understanding and reflection of artists and theorists, including the recipients of works of art.

Moreover, it is clear that the self-expression of artists is a very subjective process, just as is the case of postulating an ideal of human beauty. Therefore, finding an ideal model of the human body and its acceptance by a given society, remains a sufficiently unanswered puzzle. To put it simply, this mystery stretches back to the cradle of European culture in Ancient Greece and remains to the present day. The puzzle of creating an ideal of human corporeality has also represented a creative challenge for artists from the very dawn of European civilisation. It continues to engage the minds of theoreticians in revealing canons as binding

Anarchy. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1993; HAUSER, A.: *Filozofia dějin umění*. Prague : Odeon, 1975; ČIGÁNEK, J.: *Úvod do sociologie umění*. Prague : Obelisk, 1972; TATARKIEWICZ, W.: *Dejiny estetiky. Novoveká estetika*. Bratislava :Tatran, 1991; KUKELKA, J.: *Psychologie umění*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2008; ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005; ŠABÍK, V.: *H.O.M.O. AESTHETICUS. Človek estetický. Portréty estetikov*. Bratislava : Procom s. r. o. 2011 and others.

⁴ KUKELKA, J.: *Psychologie umění*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2008, p. 18.

aesthetic standards and their interpretations. The human body serves as an inspiration, or muse, to artists and its depiction poses a whole range of complex questions to the thinkers. For example, the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle found beauty in the symmetry of human limbs and saw the highest expression of beauty in the human body. Admiration for the harmony of shapes and proportions in classical Greek sculpture led him to believe in the necessity of transforming and perfecting reality, but not to the extent of its slavish reflection.⁵ Likewise, post-modern thinker De Michele points at the testimony of the various criteria of beauty left to us by visual artists. He does, however, raise questions related to the multiple planes of understanding of their eternal muse, the human body: “To show the beauty of the body means that a painter must meet natural or theoretical requirements (What is beauty? How do we know what beauty is?) or practical requirements (What canons and social practices, what different tastes allow us to call the body beautiful?)”.⁶

Within the communicated chain of puzzles, the human body is not only found in relation to artists and thinkers, but we find it in relation to the recipients of works of art as well. These works offer them self-fulfilment, excitement, captivation, and an inexplicable fascination with the imaginary world. Freud interprets this situation as seeking

⁵ ARISTOTELES: *Poetika*. Martin : Thetis, s.r.o., 2009, p. 50-55.

⁶ De MICHELE, D.: *Dámy a hrdinové*. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 193.

the purpose and meaning of people's lives by experiencing strong feelings of pleasure. They are, in his opinion, people who desire to be happy their entire lives.⁷ Hauser sees that the visual art culture offers people a better alternative to their day-to-day, real world existence and art functions as a meaningful correction to an individual's life. It represents the most valuable form of compensating for the shortcomings in our being.⁸ To be fascinated by a work of art depicting the human body, the recipient must be largely identified with and sufficiently grasp the valid canons of beauty expressed by human characters, their lines, movements, clothing, colour play, and so on. Šabík references the experience of the Ancient Greeks within this context, to whom the very existence of Man was an impulse for astonishment, wonder, excitement, captivation and amazement. "They also noticed that the fellowship of beauty particularly affects human consciousness, deprives a person of the bondage of ordinariness, the limits of empirical consciousness, and paralyzes his reflexes in terms of the bonds of time and space, causality."⁹ The artist's fascination with the human being and the recipient's fascination with a work of art are very closely related to the formation of the cult¹⁰ of human corporeality. It is

the product of artistic imagination that ultimately forms the mental outlook of the recipients, especially of those concerned with their own corporeality. It is usually evaluated in terms of a reflection of the ideal of the aesthetically arranged shapes of the ideal model. The cult of beauty in the context of the depiction and fetishization of the human body is, in our opinion, merely an expression and confirmation of the human nature of culture. We point out the phenomena of worship, or even deification, of the ideal model of human corporeality through this concept. It is hardly possible not to see the connection between the cult and its commercialisation, as pointed out by Radošinská.¹¹ We draw attention to this aspect of the modern cult of corporeality especially in connection with the phenomenon of contemporary consumer society and the commercialisation process in post-

hand, it cannot be denied that Durkheim's dichotomy of the profane and sacred worlds (see DURKHEIM, E.: *Elementární formy náboženského života: system totemismu v Austrálii*. Prague : Oikoymenh, 2002.) or Eliade's concept of religious structures, cults and mechanisms of thought in indigenous and ancient nations (see ELIADE, M.: *Dejiny náboženských predstáv a ideí/I*. Bratislava : AGORA, 1995.) significantly influenced the considerations of other authors in the second half of the 20th Century and at the beginning of the 21st Century (see below). As opposed to religious cults, however, they deal exclusively with the creation of a particular cult: profane deification in the context of human corporeality.

¹¹ RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Kultový televízny seriál v súčasnej mediálnej produkcii. In PETRANOVÁ, D., RYBANSKÝ, R., VICENOVÁ, E. (eds.): *Diskurzy v masmediálnych štúdiách: Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie Nové trendy v marketingu 2012*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2012, p. 158-169. See also: SHUNEYKO, A., CHIBISOVA, O.: THE MECHANISM OF CONTEXTUAL CONFIRMATION OF THE SYMBOL IN THE CINEMA LANGUAGE. *MEDIA EDUCATION (MEDIAOBRAZOVANIE)*, 2019, VOL. 59, NO. 1, P. 123-134. E-ISSN 1994-4195, ISSN 1994-4160.

modern culture.

Within the study, we analyse the phenomenon of human corporeality as a materially communicated muse, especially within broader cultural and narrower artistic contexts. Turner's opinion concurs with the specified definition of the issue at hand. He claims that the human body was primarily conditioned by culture and civilisation in its development. That is, it was shaped by culture and realized in the "course of human interactions".¹² The primary focus within the study is not on the ontological-gnoseological nature and genesis of beauty canons studied from aesthetic or artistic points of view. However, we remain cognisant of the fact that these aspects cannot be simply overlooked. We reflect on and analyse them against the background of our interest in anthropological constants: human corporeality, its role and ideal models of the human body in visual art. We are of the opinion that they are very closely related to the mental outlook of societies existing within Western civilisation.¹³ In fact, we believe that the phenomenon of Homo corporalis, bodily man, is a central theme in Europe's cultural tradition, an object of priority interest, the centrepiece of everything. Šabík agrees that man is the centrepiece of culture

¹² TURNER, S. B.: *Regulating Bodies: Essays in Medical Sociology*. London : Routledge, 1992, p. 16.

¹³ In this definition, we agree with Huntington, who introduces the term Western civilisation into scientific discourse. It includes cultures existing in Europe, North America and other European-populated countries (See HUNTINGTON, P. H.: *Střet civilizací. Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu*. Prague : RYBKA PUBLISHER, 2001, p. 37-41).

because it is the subject, originator and target of individual and societal activities, including the aesthetic".¹⁴ Based on logical analysis and hermeneutic analysis of relevant sources, we formulate the premise whereby Homo corporalis as the tangible muse of artistic imagination was, is and will remain at the centre of the action. However, while bodily man was at the centre of culture in antiquity, even to some extent in the medieval period, this position has changed in contemporary conditions. Bodily man has become the subject and object of commercialised culture.

Homo corporalis within the European cultural tradition

The human body, as an object of artistic imagination and a rendition of the ideal, but anatomically proportional, began to be portrayed by the Ancient Greeks. Greek sculpture is an expression of anthropological centrism that transcends a rational understanding of sympathy to the pantheon of the gods. The desire of the Greeks to bring order to reason, to deepen knowledge of the truth about the world and to search for beauty testifies to their creative approach. It also testifies to a sense of harmony between Man and Nature, as well as among people in the *polis*, or *the body of citizens*, according to an order based on strict rationality. Knowledge based on rationality is not precluded by their sense of joy from existence or by seeking a harmony of shapes.

¹⁴ ŠABÍK, V.: *H.O.M.O. AESTHETICUS. Človek estetický. Portréty estetikov*. Bratislava : Procom s. r. o., 2011, p. 17.

The term logos expresses both the order of the universe and the power of reasonable speech based on argument. According to Černý, the Greek logos corresponds to Herakleit's order of the universe, the general law, and its neoplatonic nature. It is "the central concept of the whole Greek culture".¹⁵ The notion of kalokagathia¹⁶ represents a combination of Socrates' recognition of nobility as the greatest of virtues and Plato's deliberate choice of the best. Tatarkiewicz provides Socrates' dialogue with Anistipp. Within this dialogue, Socrates explains the emergence of a relationship between beauty and good, as well as evil and ugliness, as a purely deliberate act of choice: "In all things, beauty and good are tied to their destiny, they are beautiful and good, if they are well adapted, but if they are poorly adapted, then they are bad and ugly."¹⁷ It should be pointed out that beauty, as the highest degree of goodness, was not as valuable in the Greek order of the world as the notion of kalokagathia: that looked appealing, what seemed cute, lively, respectable, helpful and arousing was considered beautiful.¹⁸ Beran

¹⁵ ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 16-17.

¹⁶ From the Greek kalos – beautiful, and agathos – good, meaning a combination of beautiful and good that expresses the uniform aesthetic and ethical thinking of the Ancient Greeks. According to Pospíšil, this ideal of ethical and aesthetic at the same time obliged artists to observe certain canons (POSPÍŠIL, Z.: *O vkusu*. Olomouc : Mladé Umění K Lidem, 1992.).

¹⁷ TATARKIEWICZ, W.: *Dejiny estetiky. Staroveká estetika*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1985, p.58.

¹⁸ Sculpture in particular supported the perception, cultivation and rendering of the human body to the Ancient Greeks. Achieving the perfection of human corporeality was a recognized

underlines that everything that was supernatural and only accessible to reason and therefore intelligibility, was beautiful.¹⁹ Although the beauty of the human body was both an ideal and a measure of individual action, the concept of kalokagathia included a synthesis of virtues. Nevertheless, the creation of harmony, symmetry, the canon of the human body's proportions in classical sculpture, and its legacy throughout ancient and even modern traditions were the result of the Hellenic understanding of logos and kalokagathia.²⁰ They created beauty on the basis of imitating nature and understood it as "uncovering the harmonic measure and rational order in matters; they understood good as obedience to the laws of the community."²¹ The Greek notions of logos and kalokagathia have another informative value. They offer us the opportunity to identify different social and gender contexts. They were reflected in the division of power and the social organisation of society, its value scale, ideas and religion. Mistrík and Sejčová mention the duplicity that exists in the Greek ideal of kalokagathia. It does direct a person to strive to be both

value. Man's self-reflection through the impressive harmony and grandeur of sculptures crafted by Polykleit, Feidias, Myron, Ageladas and Kalamis led them to deify the ideal model of the human body (see PIJOAN, J.: *Dejiny umenia. II*. Bratislava : Ikar, 1999., ALPATOV, V. M.: *Dejiny umenia 1*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1976.).

¹⁹ BERAN, L.: *Estetika jako otevřený systém*. Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie Univerzity sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2002, p. 18.

²⁰ See ECO, U.: *Krása jako úměrnost a harmonie*. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 72-75.

²¹ ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 18.

beautiful and good. However, social selectivity may also be observed because only the noble, the rich, can be good. Beauty is bound to a perfection of being and it cannot exist where someone suffers from poverty or is otherwise socially ostracised. The authors also point to obvious social and gender facts in the example of Laocoön and his sons and the Capitoline Venus. For Ancient Greeks, the male body was a symbol of strength, and the female body of motherhood.²² The ideal of *kalokagathia* is, in our opinion, an expression of the attitude that the Ancient Greeks took with respect to the questions of power and entertainment in its playful essence. The example of Athens and Sparta confirms the thesis of the formation of individuals in the socialisation process based on the influence of the cult of corporeality. While discipline, obedience and physical prowess were objectives and highly-appreciated virtues among the inhabitants of ancient Sparta, among ancient Athenians, the priority was education leading to harmony of spirit and body, towards greater knowledge. However, it is undisputed that the Hellenic world enjoyed the activities that shaped the body and spirit – running, boxing, matches, singing, as well as spas, relaxation and exuberant festivities to glorify the gods. They attributed great importance to the Olympic Games, because the reasons for their actions were different – both religious, social, entertaining,

and prestigious and diplomatic. Although the games were closely related to religion, their profane character based on the sphere of corporeality and entertainment cannot be denied. Huizing claims that the struggle and spirit of uninterrupted rivalry completely dominated the Greek culture. There were competitions in everything you could compete with. For example, the struggle for the victory of men in beauty, drinking, eating, singing, puzzles, etc.

The profane character of the cult of corporeality in Ancient Rome took on much greater dimensions when compared to that of the Greeks. They perceived beauty as a reflection and imitation of the surrounding natural world, including the human body. The harmonic scale, the order of reason in matters and events, the understanding of the good, all were taken from the Ancient Greeks, though they were consistently subject to the rules of the community. The relationship between reason and the rules of the community was based on aligning morality with intellectual knowledge. The values of citizenship, law and equality before the law conditioned their understanding of corporeality. The power of human muscles, as the ideal of masculinity, matched their ideas concerning control and governance. These facts formed the basis of the essential attitude of the Romans to both compassion and the gods. According to V. Černý, this results from their desire to manage the world. The essential desire of the Greeks was to know

the world.”²³

It is common knowledge that the ambitions for power, territorial expansion and their own interests’ protection were a significant feature of the Roman genius. Its expression was the majestic celebrations of war heroes, the deification of rulers and their administrative efficiency. Homo corporalis dominated with impressive statues of hefty, life-size heroes in richly decorated ceremonial garments testifying to power, wealth and glory. Roman portraits also bear witness to the Romans’ worship and deification of heroes. For the first time in the history of visual art, sculptors sought realistic, and not idealised features in human faces. At the same time, they tried to uncover and capture the character, inner strength or emotional attitude of those they portrayed. If the Ancient Greeks created an ideal model of reality, the Ancient Romans reflected it in an almost naturalistic way. Alpatov sees in Roman sculptural portraiture their sense of historicity, truthfulness and “the ability to express the results of mature reflections and long observations in a clear, frozen form.”²⁴

The cult of corporeality and its eternal muse, Homo corporalis, appeared in Roman culture in all kinds of art, and not just through statues. It can be found in murals, decorations, decorative mosaics of palaces and in ceramics. These artefacts are a testament to

23 ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 18-21.

24 ALPATOV, V. M.: *Dejiny umenia 1*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1976, p. 196-197.

the relationship of the Romans to wealth and power, to their celebration of the grandeur of the beauty of the human body. The male brimmed with strength, while the female embodied the sexual attractiveness of the seductress and the giver of life. The visual arts also provide testament to the great popularity of exuberant and rich banquets, performances, revelry, various kinds of sexual melodies, debauched entertainment and various games. The portrayal of the sacred in these glorious and enjoyable activities merged with the portrayal of the profane.²⁵ Lively and artistic manifestations of prosperity, indulgence, relaxed sexuality, conviction of cultural superiority over the barbarians, and the ideal of powerful masculinity, have become typical attributes of the whole of Ancient Roman history. A characteristic ghost remained behind for Christian Europe in the form of their parade of brutality and the violent bloodletting in wanton forms of entertainment, for example in gladiatorial combat.²⁶ LeGoff writes, that such a way of thinking and its manifestations necessarily led to the suicide of Roman civilisation.²⁷ If the highest values for the Ancient Greeks were *logos and human rights for the Ancient Romans – the needs of the community, the greatest value for medieval Christians was love to God and other people.*

*“The Christian God is Love, the essence of all Christian mysticism is in this statement, and man came from this love, therefore, Love, and the whole universe is merely the materiality of love and their need to love.”*²⁸ However, the value of intangible love contrasts sharply with human corporeality. LeGoff presents the views of Pope Gregory I as expressed with regards to the human body, which he called the abominable clothes of the soul. It is Homo corporalis that can get rid of the poor leprosy of the body after death. This is the cause of resistance to the body. It was so powerful that it led the monks to humiliate their own corporeality and asceticism, even to reduce their levels of personal hygiene and grooming. For the hermits, “dirt was a virtue.”²⁹ The notion that “everything that is bodily carried away from God and leads to disobedience, sin, low, dirty and cursed flesh”³⁰ was predominant. Original sin, the suffering of Jesus Christ and the miracle of the creation of the world became the central motif and narrative in medieval Christian culture and art. “All earthly beauty has been tainted by sin. Even when art and piety were able to incorporate a sense of beauty into the service of religion and refine it, “an artist or art lover had to be careful not to succumb to temptations of colours or lines.”³¹ While the human body was God’s

work, it was a vessel riddled with sin. That is why the schematic of human characters clad in long robes, or allegories and symbols, became typical means of expression and depiction. Despite rigorous asceticism, medieval culture was, according to Gálik, highly varied. It left behind an impressive cultural heritage. This heritage developed in universities, monasteries, courtly culture, knighthood, crusades, pilgrimages, orders, as well as in love and esoteric literature.³² Visual art, through sculptures, reliefs, panel paintings, and stained glass or book illumination, has taken on a fascinating dimension. The decorative stylisation of natural motifs and the harmonic lines of the Madonna’s drapery in contrasting poses were only a fraction of the portrayal and depiction of God’s work. Different attitudes to the human body were cultivated in the two worlds, religious and secular. In contrast to the ascetic life of the spreaders of God’s Word, the higher feudal and lower folk strata created distinct celebrations of corporeality. These were set against the backdrop of crafted morals and virtues, but also nonsense and vulgarity. The life of a knight belonged to the higher strata; he presented himself as a “celebration of corporeality: hunting and tournaments were his passions.”³³ The moral sources of the courts residing within castle walls were

28 ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 25-26.

29 LE GOFF, J.: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. Prague : Odeon, 1991, p. 331.

30 MISTRÍK, E., SEJČOVÁ, L.: *Dobry život a kult tela*. Bratislava : Album, 2008, p. 11.

31 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 26.

32 GÁLIK, S.: *Dejiny európskej filozofie v kultúrno-mediálnom kontexte I*. Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie Univerzity sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2012, p. 75.

33 LE GOFF, J.: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. Prague : Odeon, 1991, p. 332.

22 MISTRÍK, E., SEJČOVÁ, L.: *Dobry život a kult tela*. Bratislava : Album, 2008, p. 10.

military, Christian, and aesthetic ideals. The ethos of the knightly culture represented the knightly state, selected morals, bravery, piety, loyalty to the lord, the duty and honour to serve a noblewoman. Combat in tournaments, crusades, and the protection of noblewomen became the life's mission of his state. The lifestyle of the courts was flashy, with prescribed social behaviour and pompous clothing. Courtyard festivals were used to cultivate muses and show off the delight of the noble entertainment provided by poets and singers. The behaviour of the court³⁴ gradually returned to the simplicity, purity, ceremony and expressiveness of ancient culture and an interest in human life on earth and enjoyment from it. The knight's hefty figure and the gentle appearance of the lady-in-waiting gradually revealed the attractiveness of masculinity and femininity within the intentions of the ancient tradition. "A Europe living in the shadows of antiquity once again found itself in the limelight."³⁵ While castles hosted grand tournaments, with performances by troubadours, dancers and bear tamers, stages were built in town squares for open-air performances and executions. Villagers organized huge family festivities, dice games, skittles, cards, stories and ballads, drank

in pubs and dormitories, people enjoyed cock-fighting and dancing dogs. The Christmas holiday and carnival celebrations enjoyed tremendous popularity. It was in the period of carnivals when the jester was anointed king. The masquerade carried him in a parade singing obscene and grotesque songs. At the end of the accompanying ceremony, the jester was thrown from the throne, mocked, humiliated, insulted, beaten and killed.³⁶ Although medieval Christianity approached the depiction of the human body with respect, the cult of corporeality and the eternal muse – Homo corporalis – faded in decorative stylisation, and completely burned away in courtly culture and the wild culture of the popular strata. The coming Renaissance era became a transition point between medieval and modern thinking. "On the one hand, it critically deals with scholastic philosophy, which it criticizes for its logical and philosophical-theological narrowness, but, on the other hand, it creatively develops new impulses

36 Medieval culture was not only ascetic, but also specifically entertaining. A special phenomenon was the so-called carnival culture named and impressively described by Bakhtin. Through the Jester he points out the boldness, spontaneity, corporeality, vulgarity, obscenity and brutality of medieval folk culture. (See BACHTIN, M. M.: *François Rabelais a lidová kultura středoveku a renesance*. Prague : Argo, 2007.). Based on historical sources, Prokop lists various types of medieval folk entertainment. The existence of carnival pastimes is documentarily evidenced by an unknown theologian. He accurately captures the cheerful Hell of exuberant carnival culture: "We don't take everything seriously, it's only for fun and amusement according to old customs, so that the folly that is natural to us and with which we were probably born, can pop out and dissipate at least once a year." (PROKOP, D.: *Boj o media. Dějiny nového kritického myšlení o médiích*. Prague : Karolinum, 2005, p. 58-59).

34 In his theses on the civilisation process in the cultivation of medieval society, Elias describes a scheme of the behavioural strategy of courtly society. It was built on the suppression of affectation and instinct, the norms of good manners, the cultivation of good taste, cultivation and rules of dining, rituals in the field of courting or dressing according to social status, etc. (see ELIAS, N.: *O procesu civilizace. I*. Prague : ARGO, 2007).

35 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň středoveku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 204-205.

of thought."³⁷ Enlightenment shone in the Renaissance, and Homo corporalis once again became an important muse for artists and the object of attention of humanitarian scholars. Černý sees a rebirth of mankind in the spread of liberal ideas. It was a precondition that "one could creatively realise oneself personally and socially, so that one could fully impersonate oneself."³⁸ The change in the understanding of Man and his representation by artists was related to a new religious and secular relationship. God, Jesus Christ, and the biblical figures move to an equal footing with ordinary people. Alpatov underlines that this change is also a consequence of the approach to human portrayal. It combines a long-term study of the human figure, faith in mankind and scientific research discovery.³⁹ Human corporeality is once again the centre of culture thanks to the return to the ancient vision and understanding of the world. According to Ovsianikov, Renaissance artists were inspired by antiquity mainly because of its sense of proportionality, perspective and the anatomical structure of Man as the object of representation.⁴⁰ However, the Renaissance was not merely a resurrection of ancient art. It was a revolution in all areas of human activity. It is this fact that

37 GÁLIK, S., GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: *Dejiny európskej filozofie v kultúrno-mediálnom kontexte II*. Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie Univerzity sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2015, p. 20.

38 ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 27.

39 ALPATOV, V. M.: *Dejiny umenia 11*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1976, p. 65.

40 OVSIANNIKOV, F. M.: *Dejiny estetického myslenia*. Bratislava : Pravda, 1980, p. 91.

Roeck draws attention to when portraying the atmosphere of the times along with grand discoveries, the conquest of foreign continents, the birth of globalisation processes, historical shocks, religious wars, humanistic ideas and the desire to seek the beauty of this world. The Renaissance laid the foundation stone for the construction of modern history and the modern world. In its midst, again there was Man with his undisguised but dignified corporeality.⁴¹ In the tradition of Baroque Europe, the dichotomy of mundane and sacral access to the human body blurred more intensively despite the deepening of religious conflicts between the reformers and Rome. While knowledge, faith and art were realised against the backdrop of contradictory phenomena, they were directed towards a holistic system. Renaissance anarchy and revolutionary ideas were too deeply seated for their strong re-Catholization to be uprooted. In the Baroque, new scientific and philosophical problems were formulated, research, started in the Renaissance, continued, the bourgeois state strengthened, and state administration was strengthened.⁴² Despite the

41 See ROECK, B.: *Der Morgen der Welt Geshichte der Renaissance*. Munich : C.H. Beck Verlag, 2017.

42 As a result of the ideological fragmentation of the Baroque era, for example, the founder of the Jesuit Order Ignatius of Loyola and St. Theresa, as the founder of a new Christian mysticism, would enter the annals of the history of modern Europe. On the other hand, the Baroque period, more or less, favoured figures such as Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton and René Descartes. Statesmen, soldiers, financiers, officials and, of course, artists also played an important stratifying role in society (compare VILLARI, R.: *Barokní člověk a jeho svět*. Prague :

ideological and power ambivalence and the rich stratification of Baroque society, the growing anthropocentrism in sculpture and painting can be clearly observed. However, it is undeniable that, although secular and hedonistic motives began to appear more and more, the motives of repentance and ascetic doctrine still prevailed. At first glance, however, both the sacral and the profane approaches were expressed with the same sense of aesthetics of expression. De Michele does not see the deep ethics of Baroque beauty in the dictation of canons by political and religious powers. He states that beauty stood only in the background and was the impulse for its blossoming. It mainly consisted of the pursuit of completeness and sincerity of artistic creation and sincerity of artistic creation and stormy feelings. Both men and women were portrayed as both gentle and cruel, "instead of the motionless, lifeless beauty of the classic pattern, a dramatically strenuous beauty emerged".⁴³ This blurring of the dichotomy in the visual arts was reflected in a new, synthetic understanding of the context. In contrast to the Renaissance sense of the individual parts, the visual Baroque brought about a new understanding of the whole. It was based on a synthesis of interconnections of individual parts. Baroque monumental architecture was organically linked

Vyšehrad, 2004.).

43 DE MICHELE, D.: Od půvabu k nepokojné kráse. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 234.

with the natural surroundings, the square, the park, the fountains and the robust statues. Architecture, sculptures and paintings seemed to grow into a single, dynamic but harmonious whole. A statue of a human being is autonomous in its overexposed emotion and movement, but at the same time ingrown with architecture and naturally incorporated into space.⁴⁴ Frescoes were dominated by chubby, illuminated and colourful human corporeality, a perfect illusion of perspective effects evoking a feeling of airiness and close proximity to Heaven. From the point of view of using the means of expression, Kitson emphasizes the illusory fullness of shapes and decorative character of the whole of Baroque visual art and its muse, Man.⁴⁵ Alpatov also describes another quality of Baroque art: distinctively poetic in depicting reality. "Baroque art did not want to substitute the reality; it always tried to realise in its individual parts an understanding of world order, its poetic image of the world."⁴⁶ Behind the poetism of Baroque there was Homo corporalis with his needs and social status. It committed him to a certain lifestyle, games, entertainment, clothing, morality, and preference for

44 Tatarkiewicz publishes the opinion of one of the greatest Baroque sculptors, Lorenzo Bernini. The sculptor speaks about the relationship between nature and art. When depicting reality, the artist must not lack a sense of allegory, because art is not only about beautiful forms, it is also about the beauty of thought (TATARKIEWICZ, W.: *Dejiny estetiky. Novoveká estetika*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1991, p. 280).

45 See KITSON, M.: *Barok a rokoko*. Bratislava : Pallas, 1972.

46 ALPATOV, V. M.: *Umenie a civilizácia*. Prague : Odeon, 1975, p. 176.

certain values. Mistrík and Sejčová describe in detail his experiential pleasures, the pleasures of fulfilled corporeality. From plump bodies clad in richly decorated male and female garments, both genders showing off complicated and rich hairstyles, ladies showing a large amount of cleavage. Overflowing with full, fleshy and sensual shapes, they enjoyed rich festivities, good food and drink, seduction, and demonstrative displays of passion in front of a backdrop of decorative furniture.⁴⁷ The visual depiction of the Baroque man and his corporeality as the focal point of culture was an expression of his spontaneity, awe, ecstasy and mysticism, but also the freedom that increasingly permeated into artistic imagination.

Enlightenment liberalism based on logical analysis and experience of the senses gradually liberated man and his perception of corporeality.⁴⁸ At the end of the 18th and in the early 19th century, i.e. when Enlightenment liberalism culminated and at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, feudal orders began to change and the first parliamentary democracies were constituted. Anthropocentric reflections began to deepen, which was reflected in the depiction and presentation of human corporeality in visual art. Man,

with his flesh and free spirit, once again became the dominant muse, the imaginary centre of culture in the spirit of the Greek sense of *logos and kalokagathia*, and the Roman preference for the values of citizenship, law and equality above the law. The visual art of this period sought and found its expressive elements, harmony of shapes and specific approaches to the depicted reality. This is evidenced by a pompous classical style, emotionally strained romanticism, inexorably sincere realism, along with eclecticism in architecture and the emergence of the first raging avant-garde with their aura of uniqueness and unrepeatability. This spilled over into the entire 19th Century to provoke the emergence of Art Nouveau as the last, universal style in human history at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and to prepare the mental environment for the last parade of the artistic avant-garde. Thanks to them, the European visual arts culture favoured the concept of pluralism for more than 100 years. However, it was not until post-modernism in the second half of the last century that it was promoted to a program principle. Exalted aesthetics were definitively abandoned in favour of the provocative and experimental Homo corporalis, as an eternally communicated muse in this interplay of circumstances and influences, transitioned from the centrepiece of culture to the centrepiece of the commercial universe in the post-modern, artistic post-modernism and pop culture.

47 MISTRÍK, E., SEJČOVÁ, L.: *Dobrý život a kult tela*. Bratislava : Album, 2008, p. 13.

48 Černý sees the benefits of Enlightenment liberalism in particular in the practical immortalisation of freedoms: national, socio-economic, personal and civic. They are subsumed in civil freedom: the freedoms of thought and expression, religious thought and artistic creation (ČERNÝ, V.: *O povaze naší kultury*. Brno : Atlantis, 1991, p. 33.).

Instead of a conclusion: Homo corporalis as the centrepiece of commercialised culture

The reason for the change in the position of Homo corporalis can be found in the wider cultural context, especially in secularisation, the mental outlook of individuals in affluent Western society, in the formation and emergence of modernism, and later in post-modernism. They represent separate and yet unknown cultural epochs within human history characterised by the acceleration of various pop cultural forms. Their rapid development can be attributed to significant changes in dominant ideas and in the way individuals act. In traditional societies and their great artistic periods, adherence to morals, norms and aesthetic canons depended on the power and influence of religious systems. Over the last two centuries, this principle of consistency in cultural elements based on a general social consensus has broken down.

Bell reveals the causes of cultural turning points and the shifts in breaking down the boundaries set by religious systems. If the Bible clearly determined control over uncontrollable human nature, then modern society clearly rejects this authority. It legitimises bodily sensuality, sexuality, aggressiveness, and the like. Religion in Christian Europe represented a barrier to physical perversion. The gradual secularisation of societies facilitated the arrival of natural phenomena, the so-called lower level instincts and needs. Such a situation also changed aesthetic parameters, because the highest value became experience and absolute freedom in all the previously controlled and

*taboo topics and deeds.*⁴⁹ Artistic modernism and its avant-garde programmatically transcended the boundaries of academic art, demolished the barriers of aesthetic canons, and declassified themes. Revolt, defiance, provocation, and the fight against tradition have become typical attributes of these processes.⁵⁰ Artists' attitudes towards human corporeality have also changed. The representation of sensual beauty in the spirit of ancient and Renaissance harmony, canons insisting on the iron laws of proportionality of the human being, has become a relic of traditionalism. Interest in experimentation, stylising, and revealing what is not visible at first glance came to the fore. De Michele is delighted with the peculiarity of the beauty of avant-garde provocation in artistic modernity. He argues that the object of this art is not contemplation and satisfaction in harmonic forms. It creates other values by purposefully subjecting the human body to conceptualisation, including the surrounding world. Through exotic patterns, the dreams and fantasies

49 Bell also highlighted the transfer of new ideas and values into modern visual arts. In his opinion, man has become, apart from the classical approach, the object of the camera, film camera and the centre of the creator's attention. Its complexity: animal, intellectual, emotional, became the centre of attention. Unbridled artists have freed themselves from convention and tradition, and in a revolting way they have been looking for new practices, forms, lines, colour, action and new heroes (BELL, D.: *Kulturní rozpory kapitalizmu*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1999, p. 17-21.).

50 Baudelaire called the modernist man in the 1860s a person who loved the Bohemian lifestyle, with its energy and variety of life, and fleeting charm. (Compare BAUDELAIRE, CH.: *The Painter of Modern Life. Selected Writings on Art and Literature*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 399-400.).

of the mentally ill and with drug-induced imagination, "it brings us back to discovering raw material, surprising us with the bizarre involvement of consumables in unlikely contexts or revealing impulses coming from the deep unconscious."⁵¹ From the 1970s to the present, discussions on the crisis of modernity have intensified between theorists as a result of various social, political, economic, scientific and technical factors, including changes in the cultural situation as a result of its intensive commercialisation. Attempts to grasp these changes, their reflective conceptualisation, including the determination of an exact time period in the last Century, differ slightly, but they agree in unison on the causes, consequences and manifestations of the new cultural and artistic situation within it. For example, there are claims that this is merely a continuation or a new era of second modernity, devoid of illusions. The consequences of processes appear therein, notably in the second half of the last Century, such as privatisation, deregulation and fragmentation.⁵²

51 De Michele sees the goal of avant-garde art in returning to archaic features, discovering exotic paradigms, the world of the insane, the effects of drugs, and finding impulses from the unconscious. The expression of the beauty in avant-garde movements is expressionism, cubism, futurism or surrealism, etc., which combine the programmatic search for the beauty of provocation (De MICHELE, D.: *Krásá medií*. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 415-417.).

52 BAUMAN, Z.: *Úvahy o postmoderní době*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1995, p. 13. Bauman defines and analyses the basic processes and traits of the new social and cultural reality in "The Liquid Modernity" study (2000) (See BAUMAN, Z.: *Tekutá modernita*. Prague : Mladá fronta, 2002.). The transition from one phase of capitalism to another, towards so-called

At the end of the 1970s, Lyotard defined the term "post-modern". It refers to the transformation of the character of the cultural situation, leading to the formation of a new cultural epoch. The term has established itself very quickly in scientific and artistic discourse. Lyotard's reflections on post-modernism manifest themselves in questioning the idea of scientific progress, a change in the aesthetic paradigm and social changes. These are conditioned by the advent of post-industrialism, neoliberal politics and consumerism.⁵³ Recently, authors have come up with various variants of names, by which they want to show innovative changes and tendencies, especially in the artistic field. In analysing the cultural situation dating from around the middle of the last Century, we remain at Lyotard's term post-modern.⁵⁴ However,

"liquid modernity", is significant. Its characteristics are variability, consumerism, individualism and globalisation.

53 Lyotard differentiates between post-modernity and modernity, *inter alia*, based on analysis of scientific knowledge. In modern times, it has been legitimized through large meta-narrations, meta-discourses or meta-narrative schemes. However, these were historically exhausted and, for this reason, their authority ceased to exist. "This process began in Europe at the end of the 1950s, marking the end of its reconstruction period" (LYOTARD, F. J.: *O postmodernismu. Postmoderno vysvětlováno dětem. Postmoderní situace*. Prague : Filosofia, 1993, p. 100.).

54 Taranenková summarizes various names for changing the cultural situation, such as post-post-modernism, hyper-modernism, trans-post-modernism, pseudo-modernism, digi-modernism and the like. (See TARANENKOVÁ, I.: *Lekcie Fredericka Jamesona z postmodernizmu. Platforma pre literatúru a výskum*. [online]. [2018-05-01]. Available at: <https://plav.sk/node/103>.). Based on a comparison of the author's starting points, definition of the main attributes, as well as our observation of the post-modern cultural situation and artistic production, we believe that the term post-modernism continues to accurately and holistically characterise fundamental changes and

it is necessary to point out the meanings behind post-modern and post-modernism. The term 'post-modern' represents the most recently identified cultural epoch, while the term 'post-modernism' is associated with the artistic creation of this epoch. Welsch explains that post-modernism is "wherever the fundamental pluralism of languages, models, processes is practised, not only in different works in a row, but also in one and the same work, that is to say in a mix".⁵⁵ Post-modernism represents the concepts of plurality, questioning universal values, chaos, historical meta narrations, as well as offering a sceptical view of elite culture. Pavelka draws attention to the perceived marginal principles of post-modernism, such as discontinuity, chaos, paradox, asymmetry and nonsense.⁵⁶ If modern art sought the beauty of provocation, post-modern art is resigned to it. They reject all aesthetic canons, including modern tastes. Sturken and Cartwright argue that this is one of the reasons for the post-modernist nostalgia-driven "eternal returns" to a retro style, the cultivation of a crisis of cultural authority, the preference for irony, nostalgia, pastiche, parody, and remakes, to question traditional

meta narrations.⁵⁷ In the second half of the last century and in the first two decades of the new millennium, it is evident that the post-modern cultural sphere has been dominated by a commercial order based on a market system. The motive of profit and the associated expansion of the cultural industry and popular cultural forms have become a hallmark of the new cultural situation. Lipovetsky considers the causes of this situation to be the globalisation of liberalism, the commercialisation of lifestyles, the utilisation of instrumental reason and a sharp increase in the individualisation of individuals.⁵⁸ Jameson speaks of a total change to the cultural logic of late capitalism as a result of the strong influence of pop culture. Post-modernism is a component of the latest development stage of capitalism, creating a new cultural logic, and it has become a cultural landmark. This peculiar cultural logic, together with pop culture, goes far beyond the world of art and has become, according to him, the vital force of the economy, a means of gaining power and profit.⁵⁹

57 STURKEN, M., CARTWRIGHT, L.: *Studia vizuální kultury*. Prague : Portál, s. r. o., 2009, p. 313-341.

58 LIPOVETSKY, J.: Časem proti času čili hypermoderní společnost. In LIPOVETSKI, J., TRAVOILLOT, H. P.: *Hypermoderní doba. Od počátku k úzkosti*. Prague : Prostor, 2013, p. 56.

59 Jameson's analysis of post-modern art culture points to its superficiality, its ahistorical and self-centred nature, the lack of perception of wider circumstances, and its enchantment with new technologies, irony and artifice. As an example of a shift from modernism to post-modernism in the visual arts, he compares the visual impression and perception of the well-known peasant shoes by post-Impressionist Vincent van Gogh with those of pop-artist Andy Warhol. While it is possible to find a simple human world in the context of Gogh's image of worn-out shoes, and the enormous drudgery of a peasant, Warhol's "Diamond dust shoes" are dead

Similar to Adorno and Horkheimer⁶⁰ he also claims that both media art and all media production have been integrated into the production process system. This resulted in overproduction and the commercial system absorbed the autonomy of the whole cultural sphere.⁶¹ Jameson tries, like Adorno and Horkheimer, to identify and understand the background of the creation of this contemporary cultural paradigm. The commercial system significantly influences the mental outlook of contemporaries. This system gets into the dizzying world of playful and fictional culture in the spirit of Caillois's principle of mimicry within pop culture and in the artistic chaos of diversity and social, economic and cultural circumstances. People under the pressure of everyday life need an escape, to play the roles of others, to forget their own personality, and to hide under the guise of another identity.⁶² The

objects accumulated on canvas. According to F. Jameson, Warhol's work is an excellent example of commodification, fetishism, flatness and the absence of deeper meaning (JAMESON, F.: *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham : Duke University Press, 1991, p. 6-10.).

60 Both leading representatives of the Neo-Marxist Frankfurt School were the first to criticize the production system in the cultural sphere, which they called the cultural industry. Critical analyses of Jameson are also included in this ideological stream of critical thinking within the framework of political economy, social processes and cultural production (Compare HORKHEIMER, M., ADORNO, W.T.: *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Frankfurt am Main : S. Fischer Verlag, 1969.).

61 JAMESON, F.: *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham : Duke University Press, 1991, p. 206.

62 Caillois draws attention to a basic characteristic of Man, which is the acceptance of illusion. According to him, "a game does not consist of simply engaging in an activity or being subjected to destiny under imaginary circumstances; a game may also involve becoming an illusory character and acting accordingly" (CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrat*. Prague : Studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 40).

media pop culture world, together with its attractive images, offers them many opportunities to do just that. Šabík sees in them, *inter alia, space for the creation of a cult of negative effects, violence and escapism. Homo corporalis, nursing the post-modern polarity of ideas and values, runs away "into the mundane, banalisation, trivialisation and dethroning of the serious, sacred values of life and culture itself."*⁶³ Radošinská and Višňovský in connection with the development trends of media production and culture point to the use of elements of the spectacular in individual communications. Creators consciously seek out attractiveness, with emphasis placed on shows, performances, scenes and theatre.⁶⁴ The new cultural situation is entangled in a network of attractions that both combine human nature and the commercial focus of the cultural industry. The rapid development of digital audio-visual culture and multimedia options available on the Internet, especially during the first two decades of the new millennium, have significantly strengthened these phenomena. Visual superiority and images on the Internet are becoming dominant, which entails different risks,⁶⁵ and challenges.

63 ŠABÍK, V.: *Diskurzy o kultúre*. Bratislava : Spolok slovenských spisovateľov, spol. s. r. o., 2001, p. 125.

64 RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne trendy v mediálnej kultúre*. Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie UCM, 2013, p. 51.

65 According to Gálik, Gáliková and Tolnaiová, image dominance weakens the abstract thinking ability in individuals, the power of visual information diminishes the ability to remember, and the ability to think chronologically in context is lost. New thinking strategies arise that are fixed in the brain and create significant changes in human

They facilitate the development of various individualised concepts, including new forms of artistic expression and new types of art.⁶⁶ Numerous experiments, genre overlaps and hybrid techniques that take on various forms in digital images can all be observed. The ideal of beauty is created against the backdrop of a plethora of bodies whose embodiments are presented by pop media and deified by celebrities in pop culture. In this context, De Michele points to the inconsistency of patterns, fairy-tale realism and the return to objectivity and tradition, as well as the fact that even mass media no longer offer a uniform pattern and ideal of beauty. He supposes that media do not offer uniform patterns as they did in the modern or early post-modern period and, instead, they use a whole range of procedures, forms, motives and ideals of beauty. They are inspired by 19th-Century iconography, fairy-tale realism, the bawdy plumpness of Mae West and the beauty of music video models. They celebrate the black beauty of Naomi Campbell and the Anglo-Saxon beauty of Kate Moss. The charm of traditional tap dancing is exploited in the film Chorus Line. In TV productions and commercials, one encounters femme fatales and spontaneous heroes, metal-neo-cyborgs with metal faces and celebrity actors: Julia Roberts, Cameron Diaz, George Clooney,

thinking (GÁLIK, S., GÁLIKOVÁ, TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: Influence of the internet on the cognitive abilities of man. Phenomenological and hermeneutical approach. In *Communication Today*, 2015, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 5-15.).

66 PAVELKA, J.: *Kultura, médiá, literatura*. Brno : Středoevropské centrum slovanských studií v Brně, 2004, p. 236.

and so on. It is therefore very difficult to determine the aesthetic ideal. In this situation, scientists have no other choice but to "surrender to the flood of tolerance, perfect syncretism, and an absolute, boundless polytheism of beauty."⁶⁷ Welsch also points out the characteristic means of expression and creative procedures that permeate thinking in artistic post-modernism and post-modernism. He reveals them in fragmentation, editing, a combination of different, irritating hobbies. They have reached a level of general applicability: "starting with advertising stretching into private life."⁶⁸ Homo corporalis found itself in a cultural situation of chaos and syncretism. He offers the whole range of role models and ideals via which pop culture celebrities manage life and thoughts, which his body and face follow, and which builds an image. In contrast to modern or previous systemic periods, the position of Homo corporalis as an eternal muse and the imaginary centrepiece of culture is changing. It remains the centre of culture but is an object of commercial interest. This position has strengthened since the revolutionary period at the onset of the digital revolution. It has significantly influenced science, production, distribution and, naturally, also the paradigms in art and pop culture. Hayles' observations accurately reflect the position of the physical body in the

67 DE MICHELE, D.: *Krása médií*. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 426-427.

68 WELSCH, W.: *Naše postmoderní moderna*. Prague : Zvon, České katolické nakladatelství, 1994, p. 106.

phenomena in culture and art from the second half of the last Century to the present. It should also be noted that the search for an adequate term to name the current situation in culture and art is not the aim of this study. However, we consider the term post-modernism to be sufficiently explicit, because it contains significant features of the latest cultural and artistic epoch.

55 WELSCH, W.: *Naše postmoderní moderna*. Prague : Zvon, České katolické nakladatelství, 1994, p. 26.

56 PAVELKA, J.: *Kultura, médiá, literatura*. Brno : Středoevropské centrum slovanských studií v Brně, 2004, p. 231-232.

post-modern digital era and late capitalism. The face and body have become a fetish, they are attributes of power and social relations. They have become an effective tool of political manipulation, political-economic capital, and offer erotica with the aim of high profits with rapid turnover.⁶⁹ The production of celebrities through the media culture industry, including advertising, is based on the deification of their corporeality. Healthy, beautiful human bodies become both an object and an effective means of achieving goals, evoking desirable situations, because they evoke desire in others, become role models and offer the tempting ideal of youth and strength. Mistrík emphasizes that such an understanding of the cult of the body was brought about exclusively by the post-modern period and the media made a major contribution towards it. The human body is the centre of attention, the recipients deal with it, admire it, for example through various beauty contests, take care of it, for example by working out, and improve it via plastic surgery.⁷⁰ Again, the human body has itself become a commodity. In a commercially functioning social system, the individual is not only the focus of the pop culture industry, but also a wide range of related industries – from plastic surgeons to nutritionists, fitness trainers, fashion

consultants, visual image designers, psychologists, sexologists, therapists of various kinds, etc., to coaches focused on social etiquette, dining, wine drinking and successful courting. Sturken and Cartwright attribute the revolutionary transformation in the understanding of the body and its targeted improvements to popular music of the 1980s. Examples include the surgical enhancements undergone by pop stars Madonna and Michael Jackson. Artists began using videos to flexibly change their identities, giving their art a performance character. The body began to be treated as an easily convertible object. Operations and clothing can change gender, while various products and medical interventions can alter race and colour. Eyes can be improved with coloured lenses, as well as the shape of the body by its “abuse” in the gym or surgery, or with prosthetic devices or hormonal preparations.⁷¹ The commercial appreciation of Homo corporalis is a reflection and consequence of the functioning of the socio-economic system, while simultaneously expressing its mental outlook and processes. This premise is also indirectly confirmed by Maffesoli, according to whom an individual in contemporary society emphasizes aesthetics and presence in his life while indulging in hedonism. Related to this emphasis is “the importance of the body, the values of the imaginary and the playful aspect of existence, i.e. the values associated with playfulness,

collective dreams, etc.”⁷² Demonstrating the human body for admiration has the character of a theatrical show. Mistrík speaks of such exposition of the body that it is “the deity of a post-modern narcissist.” However, such exposure also suggests another fact: “fetish is no longer restricted to just the body itself. The fetish of contemporary man is the show, performance, pomposity.”⁷³ Fixed on their image, focused on their own goals and pleasures, Homo corporalis is no longer merely an object of commercial interest. It is also their product. Their personal goals, attitudes and value scale are formed against the backdrop of the ethos of egoism, individualism, hedonism and narcissism. The moral basis of hedonism and its implications are accurately captured by Heath and Potter, who state that “hedonism is currently elevated to a revolutionary doctrine.”⁷⁴ Lipovetsky’s brilliant observations point to the mental and ideological outlook of contemporaries. His preference for hedonistic values, the cult of personal liberation, his willingness to respect differences, his desire for looseness, humour, his constant search for personal identity, autonomy, and the release of morals and sexuality.⁷⁵ If, in

72 MAFFESOLI, M.: Éra digitálních obrazů. In FIŠEROVÁ, M.: *Obraz a moc. Rozhovory s francouzskými mysliteli*. Prague : Karolinum, 2015, p. 145-146.

73 MISTRÍK, E.: Zbožštenie tela v narcizme a koniec postmodernej kultúry. In *Filozofia*, 2008, Vol. 63, No. 4, p. 344-351.

74 HEATH, J., POTTER, A.: *Kup si svou revoltu!* Prague : Rybka Publishers, 2012, p. 13.

75 LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Éra prázdnoty. Úvahy o současném individualismu*. Prague : Prostor, 2003, p. 11-12.

69 HAYLES, K. N.: The Life Cycle of Cyborgs. In *Cybersexualities*. In WOLMARK, J. (ed.): *A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborg and Cyberspace*. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p. 247.

70 MISTRÍK, E.: Zbožštenie tela v narcizme a koniec postmodernej kultúry. In *Filozofia*, 2008, Vol. 63, No. 4, p. 344-351.

71 STURKEN, M., CARTWRIGHT, L.: *Studia vizuální kultury*. Prague : Portál, s. r. o., 2009, p. 331.

modern times, the human body was understood in the intentions of Renaissance harmony and in accordance with proportionality, moderation, restraint, peace and balance, post-modernism radically changes this understanding of corporeality. Bauman attributes this turnaround to the imperatives of the time, which mean that the body must be in good shape, because it must handle certain duties, physical performance and especially enjoyment. The human body must be prepared “to absorb the pleasures of all kinds – sexual, gastronomic, visual, auditory, and so on, delights that only a body trained in the art of feeling pleasure can experience.”⁷⁶ Late capitalism, post-modernism and pop culture introduced different kinds of extremes, peculiarities, provocations, attractions, etc., including paradoxicity. Paradoxes can also be observed in post-modernists themselves, in their attitudes and creative practices. On the one hand, they abandoned the aesthetics of the noble in favour of provocation and experimentation. Pop art, for example, transcends cultural levels, permeates into pop culture, uses and completes images of the commercial world, the cultural industry, including the mass media. On the other hand, as De Michele also points out, high-art post-modernists „embark on experimentation beyond the field of imaging while calling for a return to subject and tradition.”⁷⁷

76 BAUMAN, Z.: *Úvahy o postmoderní době*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1995, p. 78-79.

77 DE MICHELE, D.: Krása médií. In ECO, U. (ed.): *Dějiny krásy*. Prague : Argo, 2005, p. 426.

Regardless of their paradoxical and volatile attitudes or manifestations of nostalgia for tradition, it is clear that neither they nor anyone else is able to cross the shadow of their own culture. As an individual of the Homo corporalis family, there is nothing else left for us but to continue to exist as a museum of artistic imagination and a centrepiece, the imaginary centre of everything. As members of the social and economic system, we have no other choice but to accept our position as subjects and objects of commercialised culture.

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