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CHAOS AND CHANCE – TOOLS OF CREATIVE FREEDOM

CHAOS I PRZYPADEK – NARZĘDZIA TWÓRCZEJ WOLNOŚCI

Abstract:

The text presents the “role of chaos and chance” in contemporary art as ideological tools in the fight against European culture and civilization. Contemporary art, rejecting reason, tradition, canons of harmony, and technical mastery, directly negates the past in the name of a “bright future”, offering us utopian “wishful thinking”, which ultimately leads astray into the civilizational reductionism “dreamed of” by ideologists (primitive communism). Chaos and chance in contemporary art have become synonymous with “creative freedom”, and the “artist” – a liberator from the European civilizational heritage in the name of progress.

Keywords: art, chance, chaos

Streszczenie:

Tekst przedstawia „rolę chaosu i przypadku” we współczesnej sztuce, jako jedno z narzędzi ideologicznych w walce z kulturą i cywilizacją europejską. Współczesna sztuka, odrzucająca rozum, tradycję, kanony harmonii i mistrzostwo warsztatowe, wprost neguje przeszłość, w imię „światlanej przyszłości” oferując nam utopijne „myślenie życzeniowe”, które musi w konsekwencji prowadzić na manowce „wyśnionego” przez ideologów redukcjonizmu cywilizacyjnego (pierwotny komunizm). Chaos i przypadek w sztuce współczesnej stały się synonimem „wolności twórczej”, a „artysta” – wyzwolicielem od europejskiego dziedzictwa cywilizacyjnego w imię idei postępu.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuka, przypadek, chaos

1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient Greeks recognized that harmony is a necessary condition for beauty and that aesthetics, or sensory cognition, is based on this. Unfortunately, this knowledge has long been forgotten. Professor Tomasz Kozłowski states bluntly that the classical canon or Vitruvian principles, in modern times, do not attract much attention – “fashions are more important than ideas, and the pursuit of a just world is of no interest to anyone.”¹ Contemporary art relies on conveying the basest emotions – it is meant to shock and, at the same time, to be

¹ Thesis in English 2025 [in:] International Conference – Defining the Architectural Space, <https://dpa.arch.pk.edu.pl/thesis-in-english-2025/> (access: 25.04.2025).

the spearhead of a new ideology, rejecting the three pillars of European culture (Greek beauty and truth, Roman law, and the Christian religion/Catholicism). Beginning with the Great French Encyclopedia (1751), the ideological disputes of the 19th century (imperialism, socialism, Marxism, the Catholic social movement, occultism), 20th-century *Critical Theory* (post-Marxism, modernization theory, the countercultural revolution of the 1960s), and ending with the history of contemporary art, where art for the first time overtook the social sciences (performatism, situationism).

Chaos is one of the key concepts of every culture; it is a primordial state of reality, completely disordered. In modern culture, Greek cacophony presents chaos as a (primordial) void from which the first beings arise². It should be emphasized that chaos does not exist in the ordered Christian/Catholic cosmology – it is grounded in creationist anthropogenesis and elementary moral teachings.

The declared goal of contemporary art is the unfettered expression of creative individuality. It is clear that each artist has the right to understand their own creative freedom and each viewer of that art also has the right to evaluate the results of that artistic freedom.

2. AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF ART. CHAOS AND HARMONY

The concept of harmony has played a fundamental role in aesthetics since the time of the ancient Greeks³. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle viewed harmony as a key condition of beauty, recognizing that aesthetic experience is only possible through the ordering of work's elements. Harmony combined proportion, balance, symmetry, and composition – “maintaining measure and proportion is always beautiful and virtuous... If we cannot capture goodness with a single idea, let us capture it with three: beauty, proportion, and truth.”⁴ The origins of the ancient concept of beauty, conceptualized within aesthetics as a manifestation of metron (measure), number, and proportion, can be traced primarily to Pythagorean doctrine, which had a fundamental influence on the development of the entire subsequent philosophical and aesthetic tradition. “Order and proportion are beautiful and useful, while disorder and lack of proportion are ugly and useless.”⁵ It was no accident that they used the term *kosmos* (Greek: *κόσμος*) to designate this ordered, rationally structured whole. In their view, this was not merely a synonym for the world but an ontological category signifying order as the organizing principle of reality. Thus, according to the Pythagorean paradigm, beauty is not a subjective phenomenon, dependent on the act of perception, but an objective feature of the world, stemming from an immanent mathematical order that underlies all harmony and aesthetic experience. “No art is created without proportion, and proportion lies in number.”⁶ Plato further developed this concept, linking beauty to the idea of ideal forms and proportions. According to Plato, beauty is synonymous with harmony

² See K. Karoń, *Mitologia grecka – teogonia* [in:] Historia sztuki tylko dla orłów, https://www.historiasztuki.com.pl/strony/014-00-00-MITOLOGIA_TEOGONIA.html (access: 16.04.2025).

³ There are examples of works built by human hands from the Neolithic period, including “Göbekli Tepe”, around 10,000 BC.

⁴ Plato, *Piękno i miara*, Philebus [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki. Estetyka starożytna*, Arkady, Warszawa 1985, p. 131.

⁵ Pitagorejczycy, *Symmetria i harmonia*, Stobajos IV 1, 40 H.; frg. D 4, Diels [in:] *ibidem.*, p. 93.

⁶ Pitagorejczycy, *Symmetria i harmonia*, Sekstus Emp., Adv. mathem. VII 106 [in:] *ibidem*, p. 94.

and symmetry, and mathematics and geometry are the key to understanding the perfection of forms. Aristotle further developed the concept of aesthetics, emphasizing the concept of measure (metron) as a key element of beauty. For beauty consists in order, proportion, and clarity. He wrote:

The so-called Pythagoreans [...] found properties and relations of harmony in numbers, and everything else seemed to them a reflection of numbers, and numbers were the first thing in nature. Therefore, they considered the elements of numbers to be the elements of all being, and they saw harmony and number in the entire heaven⁷.

According to Aristotle, beauty is related to the function and purpose of things and the relationship of parts to the whole, introducing a pragmatic dimension that influenced the later understanding of art and architecture, expressed, among others, by St. Thomas Aquinas – art is the principle of the correct production of what is intended (*ars est recta ratio ractibilium*⁸). Henryk Kiereś, who acknowledges that recognizing the connection between art and beauty requires knowledge of its *raison d'être*, echoes these definitions. He writes:

Creating something requires knowledge of the principles of production and the ability to use these principles in the production process. A logician is guided by this judgment and therefore draws conclusions, a shoemaker – footwear, a medic – health, and a poet – poetry. Art is therefore everywhere where intentional and conscious production takes place, and this is independent of what is produced and how⁹.

According to St. Thomas, art imitates nature and fills in the gaps found in it (*ars imitatur naturam et supplet defectum naturae in illis in quibus natura deficit*¹⁰). And here the problem arises: if contemporary art grows out of a cognitive error, it can only reproduce the deficiencies in the world, not improve it. Krzysztof Karoń aptly states that:

thanks to the enormous material achievements – technology, architecture, art – that fill the social space, culture has the ability to ‘format’ the human psyche, not only by perpetuating habits formed during the upbringing process, but also by correcting the ‘critical attitude.’ Culture impresses with its achievements and is therefore treated as an indisputable value even by those who deny its foundations.¹¹

In turn, Krystyna Janicka writes in her book *Surrealism*:

The first manifestation in the artistic community [...] was anarchic rebellion and nihilism. This was the Dadaists’ reaction. Their manifestations, employing scandalous gestures and grotesque grimaces, subjected all the sacred values of bourgeois society to sneering mockery

⁷ Pitagorejczycy, *Symmetria i harmonia*, Arystoteles, *Metaph. A 5, 985b 23* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 93.

⁸ Thomas d’Aquin, *Summa theologiae*, vol. 1, Torino 1963, I-II, q. 57, a. 4, resp.

⁹ H. Kiereś, *Człowiek i cywilizacja*, Fundacja Servire Veritati Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, Lublin 2007, p. 217.

¹⁰ Thomas d’Aquin, *Commentum in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, Typis Petri Fiaccadori, Parmae 1858, lib. IV, d. 42, q. 2, a. 1, resp.

¹¹ K. Karoń, *Stygmatyzacja 1941–1950*, [in:] *Historia sztuki tylko dla orłów*, <https://www.historiasztuki.com.pl/strony/021-06-00-ANTYKULTURA-PODSTAWY-STYGMATYZACJA.html> (access: 15.05.2025).

and corrosive irony, and sought to prove that nothing was worth the commitment and effort, that the only correct attitude was the negation of everything. Art was also encompassed by this negation.¹²

In opposition to the classical paradigm stands contemporary art (especially in the trends of expressionism, abstractionism and conceptual art), which rejects traditional notions of harmony in favor of free, unfettered expression, spontaneity and randomness.

3. ART THAT HAPPENED ITSELF. CHANCE AS CREATOR

A breakthrough in art occurred when a completely new, unprecedented in human history, neo-Marxist philosophy entered the scene – *Critical Theory*, based on the idea of the programmatic destruction of European culture, in response to the question of how to overthrow the capitalist system in Western Europe after the failure of the proletarian revolution there. Rationality becomes the enemy of freedom and progress, and every purposeful action, as *Critical Theory* argues, leads to new forms of oppression. Thus, the only true tool of progress is the constant disruption and destabilization of the existing order – the status quo. According to this theory, the weapon of progress is, among other things, a redefined art. The most important tenets of *Critical Theory* found expression in Max Horkheimer's works: *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937), *The Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (1944, with Theodor W. Adorno), and *The Critique of Instrumental Reason* (1947).

The first manifestations of this new art appeared in the second half of the 20th century and took various forms. Lettrism (Isidore Isou), inspired by *Dadaism*¹³, focused on the construction of a new language that rejected traditional semantics in favor of purely phonetic expression. At the same time, *Situationism* focused on “subversion” and disrupting established systems of social communication. In painting, the emergence of “action painting” can be seen, among others, in Jackson Pollock's 1948 work *Number 1*, which emphasized gesture and spontaneity. Karoń writes:

Pollock's painting, although an interesting experiment in aesthetic terms, was promoted to the rank of an American national style, shaping a new idiom of art in which the patient chiseling of form was replaced by an instinctive, biological reflex, requiring no traditional artistic qualifications¹⁴.

Experiments in music are illustrated by John Cage's 1952 piece *4'33"*, a happening based on silence and the absence of traditional sounds, also alluding to Robert Rauschenberg's minimalist painting *White Painting* from 1951. Cage is a precursor of *conceptualism*, chance in composition, *happening*, and *Actionism*, whose artistic activity relied on spontaneous

¹² K. Janicka, *Surrealizm*, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warszawa 1985, p. 6.

¹³ *The Dada movement*, born during World War I as a rebellion against rationality and the “order” of the world, is a prime example of an artistic breakthrough. Marcel Duchamp, through his “ready-mades” like the famous *Fountain* (1917) – an ordinary urinal exhibited as a work of art – exposed the absurdity of traditional criteria of beauty and artistic value. *Dadaism* did not recognize harmony, and its essence was chaos, chance, and provocation. Art then became a tool for disorganization, questioning rationality and cultural norms.

¹⁴ K. Karoń, *Historia antykultury 1.0*, Krzysztof Karoń, Warszawa 2021, p. 400.

action as an end in itself and completely eliminated the work of art. “The only feature of creativity has become a transformation taking place over time, not subject to any rules, which in no way distinguishes it from the simplest form of vegetation.”¹⁵ In Austria, a group of Viennese Actionists¹⁶ was active from 1962. They violated social norms and taboos through shocking performances such as *Art and Revolution*, also known as “university dirty talk”. Hermann Nitsch, creating the *Theater of Orgy and Mystery* in 1962, presented a parody of the Christian crucifixion with elements of the cult of Dionysus. From the early 1960s, Joseph Beuys promoted the idea of social reform through art, developing the concept of *social plasticity*¹⁷ in the 1970s, proclaiming that *every person is an artist* and ultimately abandoning the idea of a work of art as the culmination of the creative process. According to him, a contemporary, progressive artist should not waste time perfecting traditional techniques but focus on full engagement in the transformation of society, for which artistic craftsmanship is unnecessary.

A similar mechanism, consciously initiated by the originators of *Critical theory*, encompassed not only the arts but almost all aspects of cultural life: the humanities, social sciences, and the media – spheres in which a new ideology becomes the determinant of imposed, new criteria of value and quality. By the late 1970s, a self-contained, destructive mechanism of a new critical elite had developed in these areas, which began to reproduce itself through negative selection and incompetence as the new norm and value in itself.

4. TOOLS OF “CREATIVE FREEDOM”?

The mechanism of culture is very simple – every person has a certain potential to achieve higher performance, provided they engage in regular effort. However, such effort contradicts the *New Left*’s acceptance of the pleasure principle, as described by Freud, developed by Wilhelm Reich to meet the needs of the sexual revolution, and later by Erich Fromm, adapting Reich’s theory to the needs of social revolution. Critical Theory aims for unlimited freedom from any constraints imposed by the system (the status quo) and for the subordination of humans to natural biological instincts. “Critical theory arose from the need to justify irrationality as a higher form of rationality. It is about a way of thinking that leads people to engage in irrational actions, which is possible when people are guided not by reason but by emotions and instincts.”¹⁸

The Internationale Lettriste (Guy Debord) was an avant-garde group founded in Brussels in 1952. It conducted public actions of a happening-like nature. The group aimed to organize public provocations in public spaces. The result was subversive actions and *subversive* antics, as well as the disorganization of all areas of life, including the effort of human labor, replacing it with an illusory world of machines and robots. The *Situationist International*¹⁹

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Actionism* is a movement inspired by Dadaism. In painting, it was pioneered by Jackson Pollock. *Performance art* originated from this movement.

¹⁷ J. Beuys, *Obrzeża Europy*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, 5.09 – 5.10.1997 Galeria Bielska BWA.

¹⁸ K. Karoń, *Historia antropologii* [in:] *Historia sztuki tylko dla orłów*, <https://historiasztuki.com.pl/022-00-00-ANTROPOLOGIA.php> (access: 16.04.2025).

¹⁹ The *Lettrist International* was founded as a result of the merger of the COBRA group (Asger Jorn) with the *lettrists* (Guy Debord) in 1957. Deboard recalls meetings in the cafés of the Parisian district of Saint-Germain-des-Près in 1952–1953, where the creation of a social space, a situation, for

resulted in Constant's concept and the *New Babylon* project. In an atmosphere of complete freedom and liberty, the group, walking the streets of Paris guided solely by their feelings (the drift technique, fr. *dérive*), sought "radical changes that would transform the city into a space of unfettered creation, play, and freedom."²⁰ In 1959, they expanded creative walks into their world of freedom, allowing people "to walk fast, slow, socialize, drink alcohol, and talk. [...] All this while having an experience that should be 'good fun'."²¹ The consequence of Situationism was to destroy the ability to recognize the differences between what is culture and what is not. In the 1950s, the Dutchman Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys created a futuristic city of the future, where everyone becomes a citizen of the earth, and administrative borders and political divisions do not exist²². In the catalog of the exhibition in The Hague, *New Babylon*, he wrote that "the City of Nomads inhabits a ludic society in which man is liberated through the automation of work, [...] thanks to this man is able to develop his creativity."²³ In this context, the traditional city is giving way to a new urbanization. Social mobility and the lack of a permanent residence lead "Homo Ludens" to a nomadic lifestyle. The culture of this society develops thanks to the global activity of the population, based on the spontaneous decisions of each individual.

Merce Cunningham, an American dancer and choreographer, viewed randomness and the imposing, new, progressive arbitrariness as positive features of a *new* and *free* culture and a *new* and *free* human being. His choreographies aimed to transcend the boundaries of traditional performance by removing the central stage and shifting the viewer's focus to a random location of their own choosing. This is a resultant manifestation of anarchism, the cult of chance, the rejection of purposefulness and certain principles that organize reality. His "creativity" was part of the historical (anti-cultural) turning point between modernism and contemporaneity. Another tool of "creative freedom" was *Informel*, introduced by Michel Tapié in 1951 – a group that attacked the work of art, rejecting classical painting and geometric abstraction – everything that defined the form of the work of art, replacing it (a fact they did not hide) with an infantile form reminiscent of childish daubs. The cult of mediocrity is complemented by Jean Dubuffet's words addressed to critics of his penchant for dirt. "He was not particularly talented when creating his works, and he painted 'here with his finger, there with a spoon'. [...] He dreamed, for example, of paintings made of 'monochromatic mud'."²⁴

Leaving the world of lofty new ideas, we must return to the forgotten words of beauty, goodness, and truth. Henryk Kiereś aptly states that: "beauty is an inalienable factor

the creative work of the new man was discussed: "It was here that the systematic undermining of all socially recognized entertainments and activities and the global critique of official models of happiness were put into action." G. Debord, *O pospiesznym przejściu kilku osób przez stosunkowo krótki odcinek czasu*, [in:] idem, *Dzieła filmowe*, Korporacja Ha!art, Kraków 2007, p. 27.

²⁰ A. Winkler, *Jak znaleźć przestrzeń dla sytuacji? Utopie urbanistyczne Międzynarodówki Sytuacjonistycznej*, "Autoportret" 2017, no. 4, p. 88.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² "New Babylon" was founded on the ideas of Dutch historian and cultural anthropologist Johan Huizinga, who wrote that contemporary fashion prompted the definition of a new species of human being living in a utilitarian society. This species was "Homo Faber" – the creative man – and "Homo Ludens" – the playful man. [in:] J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens. Zabawa jako źródło kultury*, M. Kurecka (tr.), Czytelnik, Warszawa 1985.

²³ Constant, *New Babylon* [in:] *New Babylon*, exhibition catalogue, Gemeentemuseum, Hague 1974, p. 2, https://stichtingconstant.nl/system/files/1974_new_babylon.pdf (access: 20.12.2024).

²⁴ H. Foster et al., *Sztuka po 1900 roku*, Arkady, Warszawa 2023, p. 393.

of culture, and that beauty cannot be replaced by originality and ugliness, nor art by anti-art. Culture is built on the affirmation of truth, goodness, and beauty, not on their negation – that is, falsehood, evil, and ugliness.”²⁵

Another example of a work presenting the “creative chaos” of the new, progressive idea is *Leda and the Swan* from 1962, by Cy Twombly. His painting is “an orgiastic fusion and confusion of energy in madly thrashing layers of crayons, pencils, and red paint.”²⁶ Twombly abandons clear composition and symmetry, creating works that resemble a record of emotions or disordered thoughts. An example of this “creative idea” is so-called “transgressive art”, which, in addition to the ubiquitous brutal violence and degenerate sex, directly focuses on the desecration of Christian religious symbols. An example of such art is Chris Ofili’s *The Holy Virgin Mary*, which depicts the Virgin Mary with breasts molded from elephant dung and dressed in a robe with a *photoporn* collage. This issue is also evident in Andreas Serrano’s 1987 work *Piss Christ*, which depicts a photograph of a plastic crucifix submerged in a small glass tank filled with the artist’s urine.

These are just a sampling of the outstanding works that grace the walls of the world’s most renowned contemporary art museums. Each of these works functions not as the result of masterful craftsmanship, but as an ideological manifesto or conceptual experiment, replicating patterns that, in many cases, can be observed hundreds of times. In this way, these examples serve as a warning sign – they demonstrate that chaos and chance are not isolated phenomena, but rather dominant trends that permeate contemporary museums.

Chaos, as a creative element, is sometimes understood not only as a subject of a work but also as a working method. However, this approach leads to a paradox: when an artist relies solely on randomness, their work can become homogeneous and monotonous, devoid of distinct individual characteristics that would allow for its recognition. This phenomenon calls into question the very meaning of aesthetics based solely on emotion and shock. Put simply, contemporary art, as an ideological tool, has a different purpose: it aims, in a nearly deterministic manner, to transform the viewer into a passive participant whose role is to experience chaos without critical reflection or the search for deeper meaning.

To sum up, contemporary art is a continuation of the “old” revolutionary “class consciousness”. Georg Lukács already stated bluntly: “I saw the only solution in the revolutionary destruction of society. A worldwide change of values cannot take place without revolutionaries destroying old values and creating new ones.”²⁷

Movements such as *Lettrism*, *Situationism*, the works of Pollock, Cage, and Dubuffet, among others, do not turn the creative process into a kind of farce, but rather fully contribute to the new revolutionary “class consciousness.” For balance, the words of Professor Henryk Kiereś should be recalled: “The artist is free to choose creative canons, but his freedom is not arbitrary, because it is limited by knowledge: knowledge about the world, about the ultimate goal of man and about art and its role in culture.”²⁸

How long will these words remain relevant? This question should remain open. The glorification of randomness and incompetence leads to the decline of craftsmanship, the atrophy of critical thinking, and the devaluation of the artist as a creator with knowledge and

²⁵ H. Kiereś, *op. cit.*, pp. 261–262.

²⁶ Cy Twombly, *Leda and the Swan* [in:] MoMA, www.moma.org/collection/works/80083 (access: 10.05.2025).

²⁷ M. Löwy, *Georg Lukács: From romanticism to bolshevism*, NLB, London 1979, p. 112.

²⁸ H. Kiereś, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

technique. In this way, contemporary art becomes a field of meaningless activities that, instead of enriching culture, disintegrate and ridicule it.

5. SUMMARY

Chaos, as a concept present in world cultures, reflects the primal, disordered state of reality. In Greek mythology and Christian culture, it serves various functions – from the void that creates the world to the nothingness from which God brings order. In contemporary art, chaos is sometimes understood and presented as a tool for expressing “creative freedom”, but paradoxically, it leads to a loss of individuality and intellectual and spiritual reflection on the world, culminating in the artist’s work.

For centuries, the material work of art represented not only the result of creative work but also a symbol of the human pursuit of perfection. As a carrier of meanings of a moral, religious, and social nature, it had to be distinguished by uniqueness – both in terms of the materials used and the highest level of craftsmanship. In this way, the work of art corresponded to the prestige of both the sacred and secular patrons. The radical rejection of harmony and order becomes a kind of new cultural dogmatics, in which every artist, wishing to remain relevant in the market, in the reality already being formed, is forced to navigate a new cultural and ideological field of randomness, gesture, and disharmony. As a result, “individualism” in its new cultural and artistic form leads to aesthetic disorganization and destruction of the work.

Thus, a critical perspective reveals that the apparent, liberating novelty becomes a form of “new normal” that impoverishes creative diversity and reduces art to a biological level – eliminating sophistication, spirituality, and individual genius. Consequently, instead of opening up a space for authentic freedom, it leads directly to cultural unification and the mass production of art devoid of meaning in the fundamental sense of its existence.

Masaru Yoneyama believes that chaos “moves” form, causing new things to arise. He writes: “chaos is not disorder, but another kind of order.”²⁹ These absurd words evoke the philosophical, or rather ideological, premise of *Critical Theory* – irrationality as a higher form of rationality. As a result, the material work, which in traditional art symbolized the artist’s mastery and represented the culmination of a purposeful creative process, was replaced by intellectual gibberish, culminating in a tribal ritual that reduced European culture to a cesspool, thus fully realizing the *Critical Theory* of the *New Left* and the construction of a “new” society.

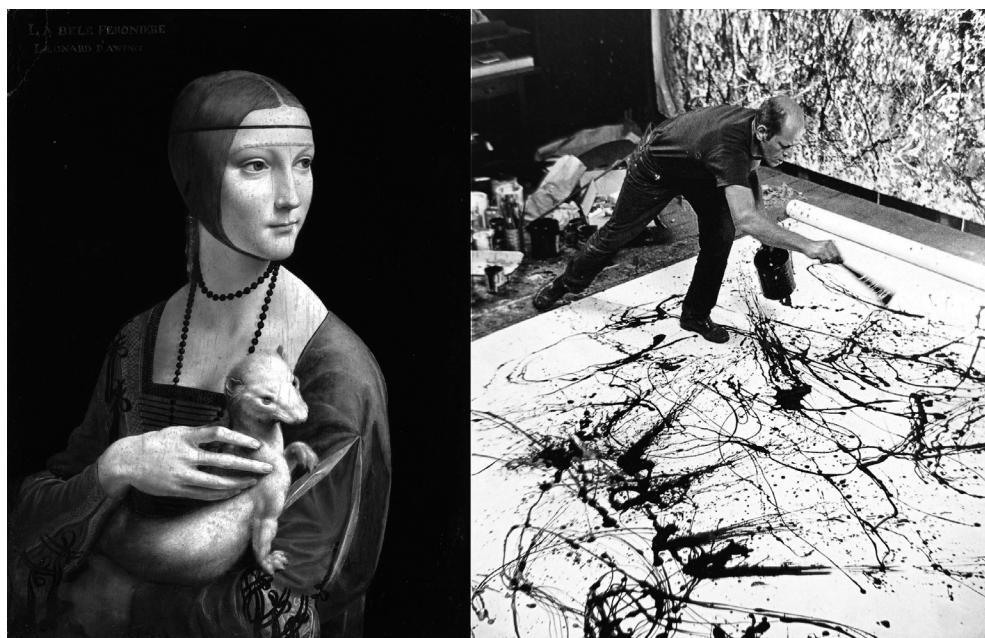
Art, once an expression of the pursuit of beauty and harmony, has become a domain of deconstruction, provocation, and ideological agitation. Knowledge – a tool for seeking truth – is increasingly taking the form of a new orthodoxy, where deviation from the dominant discourse signifies exclusion, becoming a mechanism for controlling social life. Science, instead of serving objective knowledge, is virtually entwined with ideological doctrine. And finally, contemporary liberal-left politics – a denial of political realism – the methods of social life in their fundamental sense.

The words of Susan Sontag may serve as a conclusion to the discussion on chance as the “creator” of a work of art:

²⁹ M. Yoneyama, *Leibniz and Chaos* [in:] G. Marchianö (ed.), *Aesthetics and Chaos*, Trauben Edizioni, Torino 2002, p. 180.

We will never regain the innocence of the times before all theories were formulated, when art didn't have to explain itself and when no one asked what a work of art said because everyone knew (or thought they knew) what it did. [...] So it is today with the very concept of content: no matter what it was in the past, today it is only a hindrance, an obstacle, a more or less subtle relic of philistinism³⁰.

Contemporary art, detached from the foundations of tradition and culture, instead of leading humanity toward development, has become a tool of ideological manipulation, provocation, and destruction. Instead of bringing the light of truth and beauty, it plunges humanity into a realm of chaos, uniformity, and spiritual decline, which is no longer merely a sign of crisis, but a harbinger of the end of our civilization.



Ill. 1 – 2. *Two worlds*: Leonardo da Vinci, *Lady with an Ermine*, ca. 1489–1490, source: *Dama z gronos-tajem – portret Cecylii Gallerani (ok. 1473–1536)* [in:] Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, <https://zbiory.mnk.pl/pl/katalog/157417> (access: 2.04.2025) and Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock painting The Rhythm of Autumn*, 1950 [in:] H. Foster et al., *Sztuka po 1900 roku*, Arkady, Warszawa 2023, p. 435.

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³⁰ S. Sontag, *Przeciw interpretacji i inne eseje*, Karakter, Kraków 2023, p. 13.

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