

Jerzy Kmita

"Wartość - dzieło - sens. Szkice z filozofii kultury artystycznej", pod red. Jerzego Kmity, Warszawa 1975 : [recenzja]

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Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Wartość — dzieło — sens. Szkice z filozofii kultury artystycznej (Value — Work — Sense. Essays on Philosophy of Artistic Culture), ed. by J. Kmita, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1975, pp. 319.

Instead of a review, we reprint the Introduction to the book, written by its editor, Jerzy Kmita.

Artistic culture, which is the main subject of the essays included in this collection, is the notion characterized in so many, often incompatible ways that it is impossible to define it in the way which would equally respect all the terminological decisions made.

At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize that the ambiguity of the term “artistic culture” has its main source in the great semantic chaos in which the actual word “culture” is also immersed; it has been counted that more than thirty different definitions function, at present, in a distinct way. In such a situation it often happens that somebody less patient and, at the same time, less prone to logical reflections asks the question: Well, but after all, what really is culture, what really is artistic culture? This question—originating from the vague feeling that, since there exists only one word “culture,” only one term “artistic culture,” there exists only one “true” notion, one “true” idea of culture or artistic culture—is not so very naïve as the conscientious reader of textbooks on logics would be liable to believe. After all, numerous philosophers of not unimportant standard, to mention only phenomenologists, have asked themselves these types of questions. Of course, it is not the fact that questions similar to the one quoted were formulated by such famous thinkers as Husserl or Ingarden that makes me here to stand in its defence. The main thing is that these questions can undergo such interpretations by which it is more or less known in what way looking for the answers would be possible.

Thus, in one of these interpretations the question: What is (artistic) culture? formulates the problem which can be expressed in the following way: Which features, being in accordance with each other, should one ascribe to the group of phenomena which is called “artistic” culture in a given circle, so that from this characterization all the more essential, and at the same time, by that circle felt as unquestionable, statements concerning those phenomena were to result? As we see, our apparently innocent question

“embraces,” so to say, quite complicated (and sometimes differing greatly) problems; the more accurately we wish to verbalize them, the more complex will their verbal formulations be. The above given formulation is by no means especially exact, but it is already provided with certain instructions concerning the way of looking for the answers. It is known, for example, that the features we would ascribe to (artistic) culture must be consistent with each other. This means, for instance, that we cannot take into account the fact of using such terms as “The Palace of Culture and Science”* or “The Ministry of Culture and Art” and, at the same time, statements like: “In the second half of the 19th century we observe a considerable development of Polish culture and especially of science and art,” since the first two terms undoubtedly assume that science and art do not belong to culture while the quoted statement is based on the opposite assumption. This example shows also that a different set of features would be ascribed to culture if we took into consideration the clerical and administrative circles (which give names to representative buildings and ministries), whereas a different one if we took into consideration the circle of the humanistic intelligentsia engaged in learning. And since our formulation of the problem instructs that in solving it we can take into account the system of notions used in a definite circle, we will at once reveal the choice of the second possibility.

Now the programme which we wish to realize within this collection can be introduced more clearly. And so, we are going to present, as systematically as possible, the set of assumptions accepted, more or less consciously, in relation to the phenomena included (1) in the field of culture, and especially (2) in the field of artistic culture—in the circle of the humanistic intelligentsia. We will then try, in the further items of our collection, to show certain more detailed consequences of those assumptions, concerning definite products of artistic culture.

Although we will usually ascribe to cultural phenomena those features which are tacitly assumed, one should not think that they are (even in the circle limited) apparent and obvious. After all,

* Pałac Kultury i Nauki—the name of the building in Warsaw in which the seat of many scientific and cultural institutes is to be found.

Mr. Jourdain only with great difficulty was persuaded that he spoke in prose. With this, however, is connected the whole sense of extracting the dimly felt assumptions, of coordinating them among one another, of eliminating assumptions which cannot be coordinated with the basic ones, of drawing from the latter further consequences. The result of such manipulations is the systematic reconstruction of a definite set of notions, inconsistently and half-consciously applied in practice, the reconstruction rationalizing this practice also in the everyday sense of the word, that is, improving it and making it more effective.

As we are going to present here a system of notions primarily relating to artistic culture phenomena, it is obvious that the first of the practices in question would be the practice of artistic criticism in the wider sense of this term, that is at least of criticism concerning literature, the fine arts, or music. The currently understood rationalization of this practice is one of the main ambitions of this book.

The point here is not only to achieve a certain practical effect: if a given theory makes a specified practice more effective, more consistent in its objective results with the proposed aims, then the fact—according to the basic assumptions of Marxist philosophy—is the evidence of the cognitive value of this theory. These Marxist assumptions will play an integrational role in relation to the reconstructed system of notions, especially where the dialectic connection between what is subjective and what is objective, and functional and genetic conditioning of the first factor by the second are involved.

One more remark—the orderly reconstruction of a definite system of notions is one of the typical interests of a logician. On the whole, the authors of the essays included in this collection also represent this branch of study. However, in these essays we wish to replace, on quite a large scale, the metalinguistic stylization (characteristic of statements about statements) of logical analysis by essential stylization: the reconstructed, re-created assumptions will be given, in many cases, in the authors' own names; each statement will then re-create not only somebody's standpoint but will also express the author's own attitude.

The arrangement of individual essays, of which the whole volume is composed, is as follows: the first two (apart from this Introduc-

tion) sketch the outline of the notion of culture which will be used here; it is the notion constructed in opposition to positivistic formulations which identified culture with particular sets of its noticeable manifestations. As I have already mentioned, it is not an arbitrary manipulation but rather an attempt at re-creating a suitable system of assumptions, tacitly used in the research-work practice of humanistic studies. It is essential to emphasize this "tacit using" of those assumptions as they are formulated far too seldom in an explicit way; on the contrary: during the last few decades there has been quite a clear influence of various conceptions of the so-called depth psychology on the subject-matter of theoretical declarations made by individual scholars. Psychologism, which is being opposed by the conception of culture presented by us here, is still one of the main factors defining the course of humanistic theoretical thinking. It is either a traditional, positivistic psychologism or a psychologism of a newer provenance, making use of the ideas put forward by Freud, Adler, Jung or, especially lately, by Fromm. Being aware of the fact that our thesis of the rationalizing character of humanistic studies of culture must produce the strongest opposition among the followers of these ideas, we devoted quite a lot of space to polemic with them.

The next essay: *O dwóch pojęciach kultury (On Two Ideas of Culture)* brings not only further notional specification, distinguishing culture in a wider meaning which includes symbolic culture as a special case, but also and above all, creates a starting point for reflections on the subject of the technical and usable genesis of symbolic culture. It is the question of special theoretical significance, since the view on essence of this sphere of social consciousness which is culture, including symbolic and especially artistic culture, depends on the way of its solution. The outline of the solution of this problem, based on the assumptions of the historical materialism, especially on the thesis about the determination of social consciousness by objective social and economic conditions in which the development of the material human practice takes place, we have tried to present in the next four essays.

With the essay *Współczynnik humanistyczny dzieła sztuki (The Humanistic Factor of a Work of Art)* new problems, those concerning artistic culture only, come to the fore. Here artistic culture is viewed as the most essential component of this complex of ideas and

beliefs which could be described after Znaniecki as a humanistic factor of a work of art, though after making in this notion some appropriate, sometimes quite radical, corrections from the methodological point of view and especially from the point of view of the Marxist conception of the connection of the consciousness of the creators and recipients of art with social practice.

Formation of a work of art within a definite context of artistic culture, deciding also about the way of its social functioning, is the subject of reflections included in the next three essays. And the problem to what degree the work, however formed, i.e. interpreted, can be the subject of intersubjective agreements and critical opinions is discussed in two more essays: *O interpretacji adaptacyjnej* (*On the Adapting Interpretation*) and *O obiektywności krytyki artystycznej* (*On the Objectivity of Artistic Criticism*).

The remaining items of our collection include interpretations of actual works of fine art or literary works, or they are devoted to the analysis of this type of interpretation. They are to show that our arrangement of the theoretical assumptions and problems they involve may not only play the role of a device which arranges, explains and improves the artistic criticism practice, but may even directly be used in practice of this kind.

Jerzy Kmita

Transl. by A. Korzeniowska

Badania nad krytyką literacką (Studies on Literary Criticism), ed. by J. Sławiński, Ossolineum, Wrocław 1974, pp. 219. The series: *Z Dziejów Form Artystycznych w Literaturze Polskiej* (*From the History of Artistic Forms in Polish Literature*), vol. XXXVII.

Among many of the problems undertaken by the authors of these studies there are undoubtedly two that are most important: the specific nature and non-autonomy of the subject. As far as the first is concerned, the question of assessment and the description of the structure of the critical statement are brought to the fore. The second problem, above all, required taking into consideration the relations into which criticism enters with other types of statements