

Summary

The monograph *Human and Art* bears on the realistic so-called “privative” theory of art, and emphasizes anthropological threats of this theory. Why? The only goal of art is human being; yet art is also a picture of human knowledge about the world, for art inherits the truth as well as falsity of knowledge. If art rises on falsity it becomes anti-art and instead of making the world more perfect it multiplies its privations, and deforms human beings. Nowadays one openly promotes anti-art (post-art, meta-art) and post-aesthetics. It is claimed that art is to “liberate freedom” and to be a tool of free creation and expression; that it should be indifferent to the real world and reject traditional canons of culture. The monograph recalls a little known – or even almost forgotten – classical theory of art developed in the context of realistic philosophy. At the same time it discloses kinds of cognitive reductionism which presently dominate in art theory due to the tradition of aesthetics (post-Baumgartenian) and of post-aesthetic (post-modernistic). Those kinds of reductionism dehumanize art and deprive any discourse on art rational justifications, thereby putting art under the rule of subjectivism and relativism.

In this study first one explains who the human being is and what is the final goal of human life, and then what is culture and what kinds of human action co-create culture. The knowledge of human being and culture allows to situate art in the whole context of human dynamism, to determine its place and role in culture and to decide the problem of classifying arts. Moreover, this allows also to discuss the issue – seldom undertaken

– of the relation between art and work. Secondly one answers the question of causes of crisis in contemporary art theory as represented by the tradition of aesthetics, as well as the question of causes of the transformation of aesthetics into anti-aesthetics. The study – against a today fashionable opinion – resolves the question of the essence of art (i.e. it offers the essential definition of art) and the follow-up problem of the essence of beauty, and it indicates cultural – often apriorical – conditions of comprehending beauty. Thirdly, the study considers the issue concerning the essence and criteria of religious art. This issue in turn requires some explanation of religion and religiousness of human being, as well as some polemical discussion with the tradition of aesthetics which excludes the possibility of determination of any essence of religion and of any criteria of religious art. On the basis of the formulated explanations the study develops critical comments on the so-called phenomenon of irreligion which is ideologically related to anti-art and which treats the doctrinal content of existing religions – usually Christian religion – as material for its own “creative” actions. Those actions lead to social conflicts as well as groundless and idle disputes carried on within the context of openly false presuppositions. It is also shown that the voluntarism of ideology of “anti” leads to the degeneration of human natural religiousness. Fourthly, the study considers the notions of „mimesis” and „katharsis”, the notions respectable – yet still contentious – inherited from ancient Greeks. These considerations serve to prove that any art imitates nature and that any theory of art – even if it officially distances itself from the notion of imitation – presupposes this thesis, for each presupposes a certain conception of nature. It is then investigated which of competing philosophical grasps of nature fits reality and how the thesis “art imitates nature” should ultimately be understood. The issue of “katharsis” – purification by art – is usually considered in relation with tragedy. This issue is usually accompanied by a number of understandings which do not exclude each other but aspectually complement each other. Yet, one needs to add that the “purification” mentioned above does not happen only in the psychological field of “disinterested” aesthetic experience, but reaches the foundation of human personal life. On the basis of the latter thesis one attempts to explain the problem of the relation between „katharsis” and comedy;

and finally to explain the anthropological consequences of katharsis experience. Fifthly, and finally, the study introduces the outline of a realistic theory of art, in relation with the theory of the humanities and with the issue of cognitive competences of philosophy of art and humanistic sciences of art. Against this background the issue of philosophical conditionings of the humanities is discussed. The debate on the humanities is still going on and the humanities themselves are very confused; and equally "traditionally" as uncritically they succumb to a next "ism", which this time is postmodernism. This is why at the end of the book the question concerning causes of the polarization of philosophy, of the variety of its tradition, trends and schools is undertaken. The reflection on philosophy is justified by the need to find the demarcation line between philosophy and pseudo-philosophy, and therefore to recognize sources of deviation in civilization and culture. From the point of view of the relation between human being and art those sources are "anthropological errors" and various apriorisms in art theory with their inevitable consequence – anti-art.

Already ancient poets and thinkers noticed that "art is a difficult thing". This is true. Yet, art is human creation; and it is difficult because the human being is still a question for itself. One should emphasize this question while reflecting on art, and in its light look at the issue of art, for one cannot separate art from human being, and art theory from the philosophy of human being.