4. A FEW REMARKS ON COGNITIVE VALUES

Kilka uwag w sprawie wartości poznawczych
(Dąmska 1965b)

Both in his work entitled *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft* (Rickert 1898) and in *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* (Rickert 1896–1902), Rickert attempted to characterize the specificity of the tasks posed by the humanities for themselves and stressed the fact that they discuss the world of phenomena in the aspect of values. After all, the subject of interest for a researcher-humanist is culture, which is composed of spiritual processes and their products, such as art, religion, social institutions, *etc.*, which are subject to evaluation and which are shaped for the sake of realization of certain values. If this is true, then, as some claim, judgments on value and evaluations must also be included in the humanities along with descriptive sentences. The second part of this conclusion, which is the one pertaining to evaluations, does not result from the premises. After all, we might assume that the task of the humanities is merely to describe and explain phenomena of culture, and thus, values accepted or created throughout history, rather than to formulate judgments on what is *de facto* valuable, or to issue judgments on the legitimacy, or the lack thereof, of axiological findings which appear in the process of forming products of culture. Yet, it is hard not to agree with the idea that if referring phenomena to the world of values is characteristic of what we call culture, then humanities must make use of the results of axiological research. Therefore, some of them, for instance the science of art, clearly contain or assume an axiological element, if only in the form of the philosophy of art.

What is more, all sciences, not only specifically humanities, are the result of complex research processes, one of the most important being the choice of the questions which the researcher will pursue. This choice presupposes a kind of evaluation, that is, the evaluation of their cognitive...
value. What is more, all sciences, both humanities and natural sciences, both *a priori* and *a posteriori*, can also be examined as components of human culture, and thus as phenomena where an realization of certain values is made, or as a reference of processes and products of cognition to the world of values. Thus, the theory of scientific cognition, or even more broadly, the theory of cognition in general, must pose certain questions of an axiological nature.

Henri Poincaré entitled one of his books *La valeur de la science* (Poincaré 1905) – the value of science, where he opposed utilitarianists’ and pragmatists’ tendencies and claimed that we should not seek the value of science only in that fact that its results are practically applicable and contribute to the development of technology and economical life. The value of science is not merely instrumental but is also autonomous, like in the case of the value of a work of art. Scientific cognition has value regardless of its practical applications. But what does that mean? Here we arrive at the core theme which, it seems to me, calls for a more detailed study: What are the axiological assumptions of the theory of science? For instance, if the postulate of uniformity of science, interpreted as the postulate of unity of scientific language, is so often put forward nowadays, then what lies behind this postulate is a certain assumption of an axiological nature which states that this uniformity of language, interpreted in various ways (for instance, Leibniz interprets it differently from neo-positivists), is a certain value, or rather, that it has certain value. Here we may ask again what sort of value is meant. When apparent problems or badly formulated questions, or illegitimate reasoning is mentioned in the methodology of science, what is meant again is a certain lack of something. We are prone to recognize it as a lack of values or as negative value. These and similar axiological elements of the theory of science seem to assume theories of certain values, which may sometimes be called cognitive values. They are mentioned at times in general axiology, but sometimes they hardly fit within the assumed classifications. Yet, there does not seem to exist a satisfactory theory of them. Even in reference to the most basic notions connected to cognition there is great dissent as to their axiological qualifications. It is customary to speak of truth and falsity as logical values in logic. In his *Formale Ethik* (Scheler 1913–1916), Scheler greatly stresses the view that truth is not a value. Yet, many people think that it is an autonomous and, in fact, the greatest cognitive value. It seems to me that none of the questions of whether truth is a value and what kind, or similar questions of probability, solvability of a question, clarity, distinctness and adequacy of notions, etc., may be reasonably answered before we establish, at least provisionally, the notion of values on the one hand and before we inspect the whole class of expressions which would be described as denoting certain cognitive values on