



The Relevance of Roman Ingarden for Analytic and Continental Philosophy

Book review: *Roman Ingarden and Our Times: Recent Trends in Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. D. Czakon, N.A. Michna, L. Sosnowski, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2021, 201 pp.

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Only recently have two collections, *Roman Ingarden and His Times* (2019) and *Roman Ingarden and Our Times* (2021), been published to mark the significance of his works – primarily *The Literary Work of Art* (originally published in 1931) and *Controversy Over the Existence of the World* (originally published in 1947). Dominika Czakon, Natalia Anna Michna, and Leszek Sosnowski's collection (2021) offers a thorough and wide-ranging account of Ingarden's philosophy in an endeavour which vividly represents his contributions to the field. In doing so, their work demonstrates the applicability of Ingarden's ideas to several domains, the trajectory of Ingardenian inspirations to subsequent works, as well as an alternate historiography to the phenomenological tradition, as initiated by Edmund Husserl at the start of the 20th century.

The book is comprised of two parts, the first titled *Recent Trends in Phenomenology*, the second – *Recent Trends in Contemporary Philosophy*. The separation of trends in phenomenology from trends of contemporary philosophy may imply that the phenomenological tradition is either obsolete or at least does not belong to matters of contemporary philosophy. However, precisely the opposite is argued in the collection at the level of individual articles – phenomenology is a flourishing part of contemporary philosophy. In fact, the trends in phenomenology of the

first part, which ranges from ethics, through aesthetics, to reception theory, in terms of research subject, may often coincide with the nature versus culture debate and the idea of fragments in art, as contained in the contemporary philosophy trends of the second part of the book. As a whole, the collection revitalizes the phenomenological approach to contemporary issues of philosophy.

The clearest way in which the work suggests phenomenology's applicability to contemporary issues of philosophy is through showing how Roman Ingarden's ideas cross several domains. Theories of language and literature, for example, are presented in *The Enduring Importance of Roman Ingarden for Reception Theory* by Michael Raubach and *Izydora Dąmbska's Study on Ingarden's and Frege's Philosophy of Language in View of the Contemporary Discussion about the Relationship between Phenomenology and Analytic Philosophy* by Aleksandra Gomulczak. Ingarden's contributions to theories of language and literature were made evident in the book by Raubach through his account of Ingarden's idea of the author's indeterminacy and the reader's concretization. These two notions describe how an ontology of literary works (as aesthetic objects) is properly formulated. Raubach further seems to suggest how this helped shape Wolfgang Iser's idea of the implied and ideal reader, thus demonstrating Ingarden's influence on contemporary literary theory as well.

Gomulczak's review of how Izydora Dąmbska compares Ingarden and Gottlob Frege's semantics draws fascinating insight that may entice one to consider their overarching similarities. This is firstly demonstrated in how Ingarden's theory of meaning in terms of product, action, and the directional index clarifies the role of language. It is here that she shows how Ingarden draws forms similar to Frege's concepts of sense and reference. And, secondly, the similarities are shown in their apparent consensus for positing that such items as names and concepts retain their meaning by a contextualist holism – dependence in relation with sentences or composites. Such findings closely tie Ingarden's conceptualization of literary works and authorship with the formal logic of Frege's theory of language. Hence, these comparisons shed light on how linguistic composites contain in themselves an internal structure of signification, as well as potential referents to which they designate, for both Ingarden's theory of meaning and Frege's theory of language.

In addition to Ingarden's ideas reaching the areas of the philosophy of language and logic – as espoused by the Lwów-Warsaw School – Gomulczak sug-

gests that the analytic/continental divide in philosophy, as represented by the two currents' proponents, Frege and Husserl respectively, are not so distinct as evidenced by Dąmbska's comparative study on both schools.¹ In my view, Ingarden's philosophy, while known as a sort of ontological phenomenology, does in fact cover theory of language and formal logic as well. This serves as a challenge for the sharpness with which people tend to view the analytic versus continental divide. It is further interesting how the works of Ingarden are appreciated more in the analytic and pragmatic circles of philosophy than in the popularized tradition of continental phenomenology, although, evidently, he is a proponent of the latter at least as much as the former. Because of this, Gomulczak's account suggests the many discourses of philosophy.

The next domain treated concerns norms and values. This is illustrated, along the normative dimension, in Piotr Janik's account of Ingarden's view of legal and moral responsibility. Janik notes how Ingarden differentiates between assuming, acting, bearing responsibility, and being held responsible – which, in turn, align with the issues of freedom, personal identity, and agency. Thus, these distinctions are to be recognized as anthropological and ethical categories put forward by Ingarden. Moreover, this other side of Ingarden's philosophy, particularly in the dimension of axiology, is shown by Dalius Jonkus in his account of the aesthetic theory of Vasily Sesemann, which carries much resemblance to Ingardenian thought. He claims that Sesemann's theory is built through observing aesthetic structures both formally and phenomenologically, considering that aesthetic value is only meaningful through participation and contemplation.² Although it is not claimed explicitly, such conclusion seems quite comparable to Ingarden's theories of concretization and the constitutive elements of purely intentional objects.

In light of this, phenomenology crosses several domains not only in mereology and ontology but also in the realm of human experience when considering its contributions to theories of artistic creations. In particular, Rafał Solewski uncovers these links in *The Concept of the Stratification of the Work of Art in*

¹ A. Gomulczak, *Izydora Dąmbska's Study on Ingarden's and Frege's Philosophy of Language in View of the Contemporary Discussion about the Relationship between Phenomenology and Analytic Philosophy*, in: *Roman Ingarden and Our Times: Recent Trends in Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. D. Czakon, N.A. Michna, L. Sosnowski, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2021, p. 15.

² D. Jonkus, *Formalism and Phenomenology in Vasily Sesemann's Aesthetics*, in: *Roman Ingarden and Our Times: Recent Trends in Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. D. Czakon, N.A. Michna, L. Sosnowski, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2021, p. 60.

the Aesthetic Thought of Roman Ingarden and Władysław Stróżewski in Relation to Contemporary Art. Here he presents Ingarden's insights on works of art as intentional objects belonging to an ontological category of their own. Each with unique "heterogenous strata," and from which aesthetic values are derived. Correspondingly, Solewski credits these crucial concepts to Stróżewski's inspirations for artistic theory, and notes how Stróżewski himself further developed them.

Thus, it becomes apparent to the reader that Ingarden's contributions are widely appreciated throughout the collection by the cumulative result of linking aesthetics and literary theory to aspects of logical formalism, mereology, and ontology. This is due to such concepts as the heterogenous strata, and the idea of the purely intentional object originally put forward by Ingarden himself.

In my view, the common denominator of the book's second part concerns the problem of classification. It appears that Ingarden's notion of heterogenous strata, and the cogent analyses connected with it, demonstrate his skillful means of resolving problems of classification. On the one hand, a classification concerning hylemorphism along with sets and their members indicates a subject matter focused essentially on the issue of classifying objects in Dirk Franken's *On Good and Bad Reasons for Endorsing Mereological Hylemorphism*. On the other hand, the problem of classifying phenomena into matters of nature/culture, health/disease, social/natural sciences posed by Aleksandra Derra in *Beyond the Nature/Culture Division: Building Complementary Knowledge on Disease and Externalist and Internalist Interpretations of Aristotle's De anima 3.5: The Psychology of Alexander of Aphrodisias as a Possible Remedy to the Thomistic Monopoly. Introductory Considerations* by Sonia Kamińska, as well as the relation of fragments to wholes by Kamil Lipiński in *The Fragmentary Condition of Aesthetics at the Turn of 21st Century*, are all included in the book's second part. These problems fall within matters of classifying and coming to terms with seemingly *a priori* divisions, something by no means unfamiliar to Ingarden's philosophy.

One issue of classification in the book concerns the historiographical lineage of the phenomenological tradition itself. While Ingarden was taught by the discipline's founder, Edmund Husserl, and so may be linked with members of German continental philosophy, with comparisons to "Adorno, Benjamin, Heidegger, and Gadamer,"³ his relations to the Lwów-Warsaw School, and more generally, with

³ M. Raubach, *The Enduring Importance of Roman Ingarden for Reception Theory*, in: *Roman Ingarden and Our Times: Recent Trends in Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. D. Czakon, N.A. Michna, L. Sosnowski, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2021, p. 64.

the analytic approach towards philosophizing – in line with Fregeian logic and philosophy of language⁴ – may also be considered in this context. Through these pathways to writing the history of phenomenology, *Roman Ingarden and Our Times* guides the reader in understanding the interdiscursivity of the history of ideas. A tendency that especially holds true for Ingarden's wide-ranging yet thorough philosophy. As the collection on his philosophy reaches several domains, it is further proof that phenomenology is not merely about subjective experiences – which would offer a narrow scope. Moreover, given the underappreciation of Ingarden's ontological works (written in Polish), the collection introduces and broadens perspectives of his philosophy to the English-speaking world.

Roman Ingarden and Our Times is a comprehensive collection on Roman Ingarden's philosophy. The book shows how Ingarden's thought applies to a wide array of domains, serves as inspiration for researchers in phenomenology – especially those curious of where the tradition treats matters of experience as well as existence (ontology) – and may even offer a revisionary view on the tradition's history. It also entices the reader to consider how a philosophical tradition, though first formulated in the early 20th century, permeates ideas and questions on relevant topics to this day. For these reasons, the work is highly recommendable for readers of phenomenology and those interested in the history of ideas.

Bibliography

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⁴ A. Gomułczak, *Izydora Dąmbska's Study*, op. cit., p. 23.

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