

Roman Ingarden: Forty Years Later

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When asking about the vitality of a philosophical movement, we primarily refer to its significance and influences on the current intellectual debates. Both these criteria seem to be met by phenomenology. As a major branch of contemporary philosophy, phenomenology still remains a widespread methodological approach to many descriptive, analytic, and highly theoretical problems rooted in human cognition and investigated by philosophy of mind, epistemology, and the developing discipline of cognitive science.

Roman Ingarden (1893-1970) proudly recognized himself as a phenomenologist. Being a student of Edmund Husserl, as well as remaining very close to other members of the phenomenological movement, Ingarden appreciated phenomenology at least as a useful and fruitful methodology that provides a unique opportunity to get into the nature of things no matter what their metaphysical status is. Most of his works, beginning with *On the Essential Questions* (1925), through *The Literary Work of Art* (1931) and ending with *The Controversy over the Existence of the World* (three volumes published from 1947 to 1974), represent a very clear phenomenological attitude that may be analyzed in two aspects.

First of all, in opposition to Husserl, Ingarden construes phenomenology as a descriptive domain. He undermines the transcendental engagement of Husserl's thought and stresses that a descriptive phenomenology deals with objects as they are given to a subject, but it does not decide whether these objects have this or that ontological status. In Ingarden's view, transcendental phenomenology crosses the border between description and metaphysical statements, and in doing so it postpones doing a much more fundamental job.

There is also the second dimension. Phenomenological methodology helps to reveal a very rich world of possibilities. Numerous times Ingarden underlines this fact and argues for the exploration of these phenomenologically accessible entities. At the same time, he admits that they are not metaphysical entities of which we may assert that they do or do

not exist. This kind of attitude leads to a phenomenological ontology that strictly differs from metaphysics.

It is really surprising that Roman Ingarden, whose *The Literary Work of Art* is widely recognized among theoreticians of literature and aestheticians, does not make it into Western (mainly English language) companions to metaphysics, even though most of the analyses comprising *The Controversy over the Existence of the World* look very familiar to analytical philosophers. It is true that Ingarden is less focused on explicit argumentation and more on building up a range of models which are then described in many ways. On the other hand, he is one of the very first contemporary philosophers to take on the realism/idealism controversy, analyse it in detail and show as many solutions as it is possible to conceive. In many cases he is a step ahead of the current debates, contributing to them with interesting and well established ideas.

All the papers published in this volume are evidence to the richness of Roman Ingarden's thought. All of them show that his ideas are still worth being taken into account in present day discussions. Władysław Stróżewski, who—along with Jan Woleński—belongs to the circle of Ingarden's students, sketches an overview of his master's philosophy. He focuses on phenomenological methodology and the ontology/metaphysics distinction, as well as on axiological and anthropological issues. The next paper by Jan Woleński recalls Ingarden's forgotten contribution to the contemporary debate over the validity of verification as the main principle of meaning. In addition, Woleński shows that Ingarden was the very first philosopher who systematically and conclusively argued against the neopositivist theory of language.

Another interesting contribution is made by Nancy Billias. She convincingly argues for the claim that Ingarden's existential ontology prefigures what is done by Alain Badiou in his seminal works. However, she does not try to defend a thesis claiming direct influences of Ingarden on Badiou. Then, Arkadiusz Chrudzimski takes on the theory of the object, basing his discussion mainly on Roman Ingarden's *Controversy over the Existence of the World*. Referring to the current debate on the ontology of states of affairs, he presents a clear view of the structure of composed objects, the relations that hold, and the role of negativity. Next, Ingvar Johansson brings us back to the realism/idealism problem. His paper leads us to the question of the relationship between the realist's claims and the possibility of identifying and re-identifying fictitious objects. Johansson examines some of Ingarden's theses and tries to find a link between intentionality, universals and existential statements.

The next paper, contributed by Victor Kocay, draws our attention to the problem of values. In his very extensive essay Kocay defends the claim that in Ingarden's philosophy two intrinsic but fundamental values should be

taken into consideration: the notion of communication and the aesthetic dimension of thought. Both of them, according to Kocay, play a crucial role in understanding Ingarden's ontology, philosophy of language, and axiology. The paper by Reiner Matzker presents a slightly different approach, more connected with phenomenology as it was seen by two major figures of Husserl's school: Roman Ingarden and Edith Stein. In his essay Matzker explores the ideas of reality, mediality, and ideality as the three mile-stones of phenomenology. Confronting Ingarden with Stein gives him an opportunity to underline the plurality of phenomenological discourse. Then we have a very interesting comparative paper by Jeff Mitscherling. In analyzing the Ingarden/Husserl discussion Mitscherling puts it in the context of Aristotelian philosophy. Thanks to this juxtaposition the distinction between the real world on the one hand and consciousness on the other can be better described and explained. Moreover, his analyses and interpretations reveal very deep Aristotelian influences on both Ingarden's ontology and his understanding of metaphysics.

The next three papers (by Marek Piwowarczyk, Roberto Poli, and Daniel von Wachter) are devoted to the hard core of ontological problems. Piwowarczyk compares two theories of existence in time: Peter Simons' and Roman Ingarden's. He underlines the question of priority of the way of existence (pendurance vs. endurance as a way of being in time) that is closely related to another question, namely that of the nature of things in general. In his paper Roberto Poli appeals to the concept of dependence as the crucial concept of Ingarden's ontology. According to Poli, there is a kind of interdependency between different kinds of being on the one hand and plurality of categories on the other. Ingarden grasps this constitutive principle, a fact which Poli explores in many ways. Finally, Daniel von Wachter examines the theory of causality as it is formulated in the third volume of *The Controversy over the Existence of the World*. Von Wachter aims at defending his own claim, which opposes Ingarden's view of the matter—especially Ingarden's idea that cause and effect are simultaneous and that cause necessitates its effect.

I am deeply convinced that all the Authors contributing to this volume, while participating in the current discussions in many different areas of philosophy, bear witness to the timelessness of Roman Ingarden's philosophy, despite the fact that forty years have already passed since his death.