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TABLE OF CONTENTS | KAZALO

Mindaugas Briedis	
Kant's Transcendentalism and Tillich's Ontological Theology	5
<i>Kantov transcendentalizem in Tillichova ontološka teologija</i>	
Irfan Muhammad	
The Significance of the Phenomenon in Immanuel Kant's and Edmund Husserl's Transcendental Philosophy	27
<i>Pomen fenomena v transcendentalni filozofiji Immanuela Kanta in Edmunda Husserla</i>	
Bence Peter Marosan	
Normalität als Grundphänomen des Lebens. Versuch einer phänomenologischen Annäherung	49
<i>Normalnost kot temeljni fenomen življenja. Poskus fenomenološkega približanja</i>	
Sazan Kryeziu	
Ontological Aspects of the Literary Work of Art in Roman Ingarden and Nicolai Hartmann	67
<i>Ontološki vidiki literarne umetnine pri Romanu Ingardnu in Nicolaiju Hartmannu</i>	
Petar Šegedin	
Das Freisein. Zum Begriff des Seinkönnens in Sein und Zeit	85
<i>Prostost. O pojmu môči-biti v Biti in času</i>	
Johannes Vorlaufer	
Die Stille des Seyns und die Fülle des Nichts. Zur Erfahrung des Heilsamen im Denken Martin Heideggers	143
<i>Tišina b i t i in polnost ničā. K izkustvu rešilnega v mišljenju Martina Heideggra</i>	
Manca Erzetič	
Pričevanje in prebivanje. Biti-priča in biti-v-svetu	169
<i>Dwelling and Witnessing. Being-Witness and Being-in-the-World</i>	
David-Augustin Mândruț	
Being-at-Home. Winnicott, Levinas, and Bachelard	185
<i>Biti-doma. Winnicott, Levinas in Bachelard</i>	

René Dentz	
Philosophical Foundations of Postmodernity	205
<i>Filozofski temelji postmoderne</i>	
Olena Budnyk	
In Search of New Concepts. The Challenges of the Modern Humanities in the Pedagogical Focus	225
<i>V iskanju novih konceptov. Izzivi moderne humanistike z vidika pedagogike</i>	
Maxim D. Miroshnichenko	
Nurturing the Ecosoma. Immune System and Impersonal (Dis)Cognition	253
<i>Kultiviranje ekosome. Imunski sistem in neosebna (dis)kognicija</i>	
Luka Hrovat	
Vprašanje epohalnega obrata. Ob članku Ivana Urbančiča »Jugoslovanska ,nacionalistična kriza‘ in Slovenci v perspektivi konca nacije«	279
<i>The Question of an Epochal Turn. On Ivan Urbančič's Article "The Yugoslav 'Nationalist Crisis' and Slovenians in the Perspective of an End of the Nation"</i>	
Tonči Valentić	
The End of the Political Subject. Wars without Revolutions	301
<i>Konec političnega subjekta. Vojne brez revolucij</i>	
Dean Komel	
O vojni nihilizma	325
<i>On the War of Nihilism</i>	
CONVERSATION RAZGOVOR	
Dean Komel	
Gespräch mit Bernhard Waldenfels	349
<i>Pogovor z Bernhardom Waldenfelsom</i>	
IN MEMORIAM	
Damir Barbarić	
Die Nähe zu den Dingen. Zum philosophischen Werk Günter Figals	359
<i>Bližina stvarem. K filozofskemu delu Günterja Figala</i>	

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The Thought of Leopold Blaustein in Context. Critical Essays and Materials 375
Misel Leopolda Blausteina v kontekstu. Kritični prispevki in gradiva

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Navodila za pripravo rokopisa 383

ONTOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE LITERARY WORK OF ART IN ROMAN INGARDEN AND NICOLAI HARTMANN

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Abstract

The aesthetics of Roman Ingarden and Nicolai Hartmann are phenomenological in the Husserlian sense of the term. Although both Ingarden as well as Hartmann owe their ideas to Husserl, each of them worked independently of the other and provided different accounts with regard to the anatomy and the mode of existence of the literary work of art, which have proven to be invaluable for its study. While Ingarden’s account utilizes the properties of conscious acts to explain the appearance of an aesthetic

object, Hartmann employs the founding properties of the conscious acts in the human temporality, within which these acts are performed. However, there are also some specific similarities to be found in their theories of ontology, concerning the “stratified structures” of the different kinds of aesthetic objects. The present paper is an attempt to develop a comparison with respect to certain questions related to Ingarden’s and Hartmann’s ontologies of the literary work of art. The aim is to answer these questions from the point of view of both Ingarden as well as Hartmann.

Keywords: phenomenology, ontology, aesthetics, literary work of art, Roman Ingarden, Nicolai Hartmann.

Ontološki vidiki literarne umetnine pri Romanu Ingardnu in Nicolaiju Hartmannu

Povzetek

68 Estetiki Romana Ingardna in Nicolaija Hartmanna sta fenomenološki v husserlovskem smislu t ermina. Čeprav tako Ingarden kot Hartmann poglavitne ideje dobila od Husserla, sta oba delovala neodvisno eden od drugega in prispevala različne poglede na anatomijo in način biti literarne umetnine, ki so se izkazali za neprecenljive glede njene obravnave. Medtem ko Ingardnov pristop uporablja lastnosti zavestnih aktov, da bi razložil prikazovanje estetskega objekta, se Hartmann poslužuje utemeljitvenih lastnosti zavestnih aktov človeške temporalnosti, znotraj katere se ti akti udejanjajo. Vendar je znotraj njunih ontoloških teorije mogoče najti tudi specifične podobnosti, ki zadevajo »slojevite strukture« različnih vrst estetskih objektov. Pričujoči prispevek skuša razviti primerjavo določenih vprašanj Ingardnove in Hartmannove ontologije literarne umetnine. Njegov cilj je poiskati odgovore na tovrstna vprašanja tako z vidika Ingardna kot z vidika Hartmanna.

Ključne besede: fenomenologija, ontologija, estetika, literarna umetnina, Roman Ingarden, Nicolai Hartmann.

Introduction

The literary work of art, as an aesthetic object, transcends the physical and cannot be confined to a thing, such as a text. Instead, it is characterized by its pure intentionality, existing beyond space and time that govern ordinary objects of experience; such objects exist, but only within the realm of consciousness that intends them. Consequently, the reader's role in concretizing the work becomes instrumental, as without such a concretization, the work of art would not be apprehensible.

However, if the apprehension of a given text requires specific concretizations of an eidetically established intentional object, then this raises new questions regarding the manner, in which the eidetic depiction of the intentional object itself was conducted. Phenomenologically speaking, reducing the physical text would merely yield a set of signs that serve as the means to generate an aesthetic object. Yet, in the absence of aesthetic cognition of such an aesthetic object, a fully concrete intentional object would not be possible, thereby rendering the provision of an eidetic description unattainable.

69

That is why both Roman Ingarden and Nicolai Hartmann preoccupied themselves with the importance of the intentional nature of aesthetic experiences and the role of consciousness in perceiving and engaging with artworks. Once this process is accomplished, it becomes possible for a reader to engage in the contemplation of the purely aesthetic properties of such objects, and to describe the attributes of the intentional object that determine its distinct aesthetic properties.

Following Husserl's analysis regarding the structures of different kinds of objects by identifying the ways, in which these objects are given to consciousness, both Ingarden and Hartmann refer to the "stratification" within different kinds of aesthetic objects. Yet, while Ingarden focused on the ontological status of aesthetic objects and their relation to subjective experience, breaking with Husserl's transcendental idealism, Hartmann began his work in aesthetics by attempting to bridge the two schools of German thought: Hegel's and Husserl's thought. However, the connection between the two schools was not "the thing in itself," the object of consciousness, but how that object, i.e., a work of art, can be explained to exist for us.

In the present paper, I explore this comparison concerning specific questions relating to the kinds of distinctions between Ingarden's and Hartmann's ontology. This pertains to their perspectives on the relationship between the literary work of art and reality, and also the complex interplay between form and content of the literary work. The purpose of the paper is to answer these questions from the point of view of both philosophers. If contrasting positions arise, they will be considered in light of the methodological differentiations discussed above.

I.

70 Many key concepts of phenomenology have been applied to literary theory and practice. Of all these applications, the work of Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) is the most representative of a phenomenological philosophy of literature, and of aesthetics in general. Ingarden's work may be seen as a contribution to the development of phenomenology in the Husserlian tradition. The goal of phenomenology, according to Husserl, is to describe the structures of different kinds of objects by identifying the ways, in which these objects are given to consciousness. When Husserl moved away from the realistic paradigm and embraced transcendental idealism, which came as a tremendous surprise to most members of the movement of phenomenology, Ingarden, too, parted ways with his teacher by setting out to focus on the necessity of establishing the existence of the material world as independent of consciousness.¹

Ingarden's work belongs mainly to three areas of philosophy: epistemology, ontology, and aesthetics. In epistemology, Ingarden distinguishes: (1) *the pure theory of knowledge*; (2) *criteriology*; and (3) *the critique of knowledge*. The first is actually a part of ontology, taken to be for Ingarden as an *a priori* analysis of

1 György Vajda, referring to Endre Bojtár's essay "Der ontologische Strukturalismus in der Literaturwissenschaft (Roman Ingarden)," shows the difference between Husserl's and Ingarden's conception of reality of the "outside" world: "In Husserl's view a thing is 'real' if it appears in the human consciousness (the 'outside' world being placed in brackets during phenomenological investigations). Ingarden, on the contrary, is taking the outside reality into consideration; while examining the literary work of art he refers to it when necessary and his unfolding of the layers of the literary work of art 'culminates' – as Eugene Falk puts it – in the layer of presented objects." (Vajda 1983, 138).

“knowledge.” The second investigates epistemic values, such as objectivity and adequacy, and the third evaluates the results of scientific and philosophical cognition.

Ingarden defines ontology as the analysis of the contents of ideas of the pure conscious experiences, i.e., phenomenology as well as existential ontology. Yet, it is necessary to understand that Ingarden’s existential ontology has nothing to do with Heidegger’s existential philosophy.² Many of Ingarden’s philosophical problems were elaborated in detail in his work on the *Controversy over the Existence of the World* (1947/48), which could be classified into three groups: (1) the ontological-existential, formal, and material; (2) the metaphysical; and (3) the epistemological.

Within the framework of existential ontology, Ingarden distinguishes four basic modes of being: (1) absolute being (autonomous, original, separate, self-dependent); (2) temporal (real) being; (3) ideal (extra-temporal) being; and (4) purely intentional (quasi-temporal) being. Through ontological analyses, he distinguishes three different but interconnected ontic foundations in the works of art: (1) *the material fundament* (thing) of the work of art (e.g., a painted canvas); (2) *the work of art* as a purely intentional and schematic product founded upon the material object; and (3) *the aesthetic object*, a concretization

71

² To show the difference between their ontologies, here is a footnote by Ingarden himself, entitled “Nie w znaczeniu Heideggera! [Not in the sense of Heidegger!],” from the first volume of *Controversy* as cited by Jeff Mitscherling (1997, 115): “In order to prevent misunderstanding, it must immediately be stressed that the existential-ontological examinations in the sense employed here, have nothing in common with the so-called ‘existential philosophy’ of *M. Heidegger* and both his German and French imitators [Nachahmer]. It would here divert us too far from our theme were I here to take part [auseinanderlegen] and clarify the ambiguous Heideggerian concept of ‘existence.’ The word ‘existence’ (also *Dasein?*) there means either a quite particular object (man) or a quite particular mode of existence or being supposedly characteristic only of man. For me, however, the word ‘existence’ never signifies an object, but always only its being or mode of being, and indeed in a very broad sense. In my “Remarks on the Idealism-Realism Problem” (1929) I sought to determine the meaning of existential-ontological investigations. *N. Hartmann* later developed an analogous problematic in his book *Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit* (1938) under the name ‘modal analysis.’”

of the work of art accomplished by the reader. In this regard, Ingarden writes:

[...] to this end I have sought an object whose pure intentionality was beyond any doubt and on the basis of which one could study the essential structures and the mode of existence of purely intentional object without being subject to suggestions stemming from considerations of real objectivities. The literary work seemed to me an object of investigation particularly suitable for this purpose. (Ingarden 1973b, lxxii– lxxiii.)

Roman Ingarden's primary philosophical concern lay not in aesthetics *per se*, but in ontology. Ingarden examines the literary work mainly from the viewpoint of ontology: as a purely intentional object, the literary work would require a different ontological state than intentional object. He considered the ontology of the literary work to be the central ramification of literary scholarship. According to Fizer, it can be said of Ingarden:

72

Ontology does not investigate particular literary individuals in their factual condition but rather the contents of general ideas of literary work and especially the work of literary art. It asks what pertains to this idea and in particular how certain individual objects ought to be constituted and what general qualities it ought to have in order to be something like the work of literature or the literary work of art. And further, what are the possible types and variants of literary works (works of literary art) admissible under the basic general structure of the work. (Fizer 1989, 160–161.)

His seminal works, *The Literary Work of Art* (1931) and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1936) address these questions extensively. Ingarden describes the literary work of art as a structure of various strata, each of its strata containing distinctive qualities of aesthetic value, which lead to a polyphony of aesthetically valent qualities. We should, however, note that Ingarden's principal aim is the "essence anatomy" of the literary work, in order to determine its "basic structure" and "mode of being." Prior to the discussion of *The Literary Work of Art*, it is necessary that we first state its most important statements.

(1) A literary work of art is a purely intentional object.

(2) A literary work of art is a formation (*Gebilde*), consisting of (at least) four heterogeneous strata: (a) the stratum of verbal sounds, phonetic formations, and phenomena of a higher order; (b) the stratum of semantic units: of sentence meanings and the meanings of whole groups of sentences; (c) the stratum of schematized aspects, in which objects of various kinds portrayed in the work come to appearance; and (d) the stratum of the objectivities portrayed in the intentional states of affairs projected by the sentences.

(3) The existence of the literary work of art depends, in part, on its existing as a material object.

(4) The literary work is an object that finds its fulfillment as a “polyphonic harmony” through the experience of the reader’s thinking and phantasy (i.e., its concretization).

First, we are faced with the problem of determining, whether the literary work is a “real” or an “ideal” object. As a “real” object, the literary work originates in an intentional act, i.e., the act of conceiving and writing. In addition to this, it becomes an “ideal” object, primarily for its readers. Thus, Ingarden’s aim is to show the existence of the “real” as being independent of the “ideal”—since it has a heteronomous structure, the work of art is neither real nor ideal: it has the basis of its existence, on the one hand, in “ideal concepts and ideal qualities (essences),” and, on the other hand, “in real word signs” (Ingarden 1973b, 361). The ontological status of the work of literature is “pure intentional object,” and the stratification is the stratification of this pure intentional object.

73

We now turn to the strata, which compose the structure of the literary work of art. The first stratum, that of verbal sounds, is the stratum of the “material” part of language, without meaning. The verbal sounds can be described by letters or can be listened to through our speech, but they do not have any meaning in themselves. Verbal sounds carry meaning-units and as such they play the most important role in the literary stratified structure, because they describe the objects presented in the literary work of art. If we eliminate the stratum of verbal sound formations, the stratum of meaning units will also disappear, along with the other two strata. The function of the second stratum, i.e., that of meaning-units, is to provide the structural framework of the whole work and thus “presupposes all the other strata that have in this stratum their *ontic* bases” (Ghigi 2010, 341).

The objects represented in a literary work are purely intentional objects. Any objectivity portrayed in a work of fiction, say, a person, a thing, or a city, is portrayed schematically. The stratum of schematized aspects emphasizes the realized and unrealized qualities that can be “filled in” by the reader during the reading of the work, that is to say, they are concretized by the reader. This is for Ingarden the problem of the “Spots of Indeterminacy in the Meaning Content of the Purely Intentional Object,” according to which each work of art contains parts, for which the text does not provide details.³ Since the imaginative world of a literary work of fiction is never complete, in the same way the perception of our actual world is incomplete; the reader, therefore, *fills* or supplements the author’s scheme of meanings (which is portrayed through a finite series of represented aspects) by re-orchestrating, in his imagination, a completion or fulfillment of those aspects of the work that remain incomplete or unfulfilled by the author.

74 In this respect, we *pretend* that we are dealing with a real object, even though it is in reality only a representation of the real. We dismiss the schematic character of the literary work and fill in the blanks or “the spots of indeterminacy,” which makes sense, only insofar as we take into account the fact that autonomous, intentional objects can as well be represented by word meanings.

The last stratum of represented objectivities is constituted by objects “represented by a proposition, the significance (intentionality) of which

³ Ingarden provides the following explanation in the second volume of the *Controversy over the Existence of the World*: “The purely intentional object is always—and this in accordance with its essence—*wholly indeterminate* in various respects; it displays ‘spots of indeterminacy’ [*Unbestimmtheitsstellen*]. Only those ‘facets’ of its Content are unequivocally, or even ambiguously, determined—but determined, at any rate—which are intentionally projected by the *explicit* intensive-moments of the non-intuitive content belonging to the correlative act of meaning. On the other hand, everything that is only co-intended *implicite* in the act of meaning or only belongs to its content potentially, as it were, or, finally, is not intended in it in any manner, but which in accordance with its essence should somehow belong to the intended object—all of that remains *wholly indeterminate* in the Content of the correlative intentional object. Gaps arise in a certain way in this Content that are not filled-in in any fashion. And it cannot be otherwise: the non-intuitive content of the straightforward act of meaning is always *finite* in its explicit intensive moments, even when the act is closely interconnected with a multitude of acts that refer to the same intentional object.” (Ingarden 2016, 215.)

depends on the conscious act of the reader, and thus constitute a unified ontic sphere where the objects (represented as existent) are operating” (Ghigi 2010, 341). In other words, by *represented objectivities* we understand all those things that are nominally projected in the work.⁴ Through these four strata,⁵ a literary work of art expresses truth: it presents *the metaphysical qualities* that are essential for a certain situation. As Ingarden put it in *The Literary Work of Art*:

[T]he “idea” of the work lies in the coherence of essence that is made clear in its “self-condition.” This coherence exists between a certain described life-situation and a metaphysical quality which achieves in this situation a form of self-revelation. The creative act of the poet lies in the revelation of such a coherence of essence, which cannot be put in terms. (Ingarden 1973b, 325.)

Ingarden asserts that metaphysical qualities are not properties of objects, but rather “derived or emotive qualities” (essences) contained in the semantic field of sublimity, such as: the sublime, the tragic, the grotesque, the dreadful, the charming, the peaceful, etc. The idea of the manifestation of the metaphysical qualities in a literary work becomes clear in Ingarden’s discussion of the problem of the nature of “literary truths,” which arises from his account of the nature of quasi-judgments.

75

It is important to note here that *the metaphysical qualities* are not the fifth stratum as René Wellek had claimed; nevertheless, they are very important for Ingarden. According to Ingarden, *the metaphysical qualities* are actually the only criteria to distinguish between, say, “literature” and “the literary work of art,” if we take this distinction as distinction in quality. Only literary masterpieces exhibit metaphysical qualities, and they in turn reveal the *essence* of the literary work of art. The ontological modus of a work of art is pure

4 For a thorough analysis of each of the four strata, please see Jeff Mitscherling’s illuminating book *Roman Ingarden’s Ontology and Aesthetics* (1997).

5 Concerning Ingarden’s proposal as regards the four strata, Robert Howell observes: “Ingarden is wrong to suppose that all such works must possess all these strata. Moreover, the social status of a character mentioned in a sentence may partly determine that sentence’s pronunciation and meaning (and vice versa). So strata can interact in ways that scramble the picture of putting a new layer of significance on top of an independent, lower layer.” (Howell 2002, 79.)

intentionality, the most important of the strata for Ingarden's *quasi-reality*, because in relation to these strata, and in combination with the concretization, there is hidden the essence of the quality of literature. Ingarden alludes here to Aristotle, and his reflection is something like this: when we read (concretize) artistic literature, we identify ourselves with the presented reality, since it is, "as real," "quasi-real," so similar to the "really" real that we can fully identify with it when reading. In this manner, we do experience what literary characters experience themselves. We experience great joy, grief, frustration, suffering, etc. We may even experience what is ordinarily impossible to experience. These experiences are somehow "real," but if they were "really real," this could cause traumas. Luckily, when we stop reading, and also due to aesthetic distance, the identification stops. This is possible, since, after all, it is not a real reality, it is only a quasi-reality. Nevertheless, we gain (in a safe way) an extraordinary experience, a new and valuable knowledge, and this is the extraordinary thing that the literary art does, it is its essence. And, thus, "plot" lies in the stratum of the objectivities; here is also the place of the metaphysical qualities, not in some sort of a fifth stratum.

76

Concerning the *quasi-judgments*, Ingarden holds that they are neither pure affirmative propositions nor genuine judgments, but rather modified genuine judgments. For instance, when reading a literary work, the reader adopts an attitude of "make-believe" (or "quasi-belief"), a character of reality short of genuine reality. Ingarden explains: "I do not look for arguments for or against the assumption that what the sentences say is or was true. I do not [...] assume that they claim a right to truth or even that they designate a certain state of affairs in the real world." Rather, as mental acts, the quasi judgments aim at achieving a "progress beyond the world already given, and sometimes liberation from it and the creation of an apparently new world" (quoted in: McCormick 1989, 213–214).

The state of affairs represented in the text does not express real judgements about the actual world, but "quasi-judgements" about a fictional world. In other words, a "quasi-judgement" is an evaluation that is based on the aesthetic qualities of the work of art rather than on objective or scientific criteria. This type of judgement is characterized by its subjective and personal nature, and is used to evaluate the aesthetic success or failure of the work. As such, "quasi-

judgements” are an important part of the process of interpreting and evaluating works of literature.

We ought to be careful with regard to the conception of *reality* as explained by Ingarden. Quasi-judgments are part of the second stratum; it is not a matter of an attitude towards any reality, but of the logical status of utterances. They are not utterances with the “true-or-false” quality; this simply does not apply to them. “Normal” utterances/judgments are either true or false, quasi-judgments are not. They have a form of a judgment, but actually are not so; they are only *as-if judgments*. A child also makes this kind of judgment, even if it utters them in the “real” reality. But since it does not know many things, we do not take these “judgments” about many complicated matters quite so “seriously.”

Finally, what the aesthetic experience reveals and concretizes to the reader is a possibility, and it is the existence of this possibility that is posited. But what mode of being does this kind of existence belong to? This “existence” is not, of course, a real existence; it is, rather, ideal. It is only by virtue of the moment of heteronomy (the dependence of an entity for its existence and entire qualitative endowment on something other than itself) that the other moments would enable the aesthetic object to fit into ideal relations. In this sense, Ingarden’s conception of heteronomy in the literary work of art suggests a tension between the objective qualities of the text and the subjective interpretations of the reader. While the reader’s engagement is crucial for the aesthetic experience, the literary work retains a certain autonomy and authorial intent that should be acknowledged and respected.

77

Yet, the problem that arises concerning the idea of heteronomy is that Ingarden analyzes only purely intentional objects when referring to it. One cannot say that a realization is equivalent to the essence of an object, because following such a premise it would be as if all ideal objects were heteronomous, given that they have an element of non-actuality.

II.

Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950) was the first to introduce the conception of the work of art as a structure (*Gebilde*), a conception that was probably adopted by Ingarden and subsequently by other scholars of hermeneutics and

literary theory. Hartmann posited that it is precisely the structural analysis of the work of art that would allow one to apprehend the specificity of aesthetic values, and he asserted that the most significant stimulus to aesthetics came from phenomenology with Husserl's request to return to *the things themselves*. The analysis of the subject of the act itself could not provide answers to the questions about the way of being, the structure, and the value particularity of the aesthetic object. Hartmann views aesthetic values as artistic qualities, and distinguishes them according to: a) the types of objects; b) different arts; and c) the value given to value-consciousness grasped as an object (intuitively) in the form of seeing. It is apparent that Hartmann approached these issues in terms of the metaphysical problem of values, which consists "in the question of the nature of the being of values, of the meaning and the origin of their validity, and their absoluteness or relativity" (Hartmann 2014, 366).

78 Hartmann's interpretation of the intentionality of a work of art differs from that of Ingarden, and Ingarden's analysis of this difference appears reasonably accurate. However, Ingarden did not clarify how his own ontological pursuits in aesthetics served as the determining factor behind their differences. Hartmann could not concede that the first ontic stratum of an aesthetic experience, namely, the perception of the physical attributes of an artist's creation, was inconsequential in describing the aesthetic qualities of those perceived artworks. It is not that these aesthetic properties existed independently of the act of perception, but rather that within our contemplative engagement with aesthetics, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the "artistic" and "aesthetic" values of a work.

Hartmann asserts that entities consist of a hierarchy of levels of reality; thus, a work of art, like any other entity, is, first of all, a material thing. The artist actualizes an aesthetic value in a work of art by way of a superstructure. Unlike ethical values, aesthetic values have a broader field of "action" in that they comprise everything that is there, whereas ethical values are concerned with individualistic qualities only. Aesthetic value is to be understood not as the value of something that appears, but as the value of the appearance itself; it is the value of aesthetic creations, the value of their *derealization*; aesthetic values cannot be realized by themselves, because they are always related to their real bearer. Yet, aesthetic values appear closer to us than, say, cognitive and

moral values, because they are more individual and are part of our everyday experience. However, all these kinds of values are spiritual, although they have different carriers.⁶

Here, we should again point out the difference between the work of art and aesthetic object: on the one hand, there is the artwork as a thing that exists by itself (objectively), whereas, on the other hand, the aesthetic object is a thing that exists only for us (only when we take a certain perspective towards it). The aesthetic object is constituted in the consciousness of the subject and it is a result of the subject's relation to the artwork, the aesthetic object therefore always being completely dependent upon the observer. There are, of course, those who want to know about aesthetic experience, what a work of art is and what is the relation between natural and artistic beauty, between creating and beholding, but we should understand that "one writes aesthetics, neither for the creator nor for the patron of the arts, but exclusively for the thinker, for whom the doings and the attitudes of both have become a puzzle" (Hartmann 2014, 1).

For Hartmann, aesthetics and the philosophy of art cannot be aligned, since they belong to two different disciplines: aesthetics is gnoseological, whereas the philosophy of art is ontological. After all, one may recall Kant here, for whom aesthetics is a theory of an *a priori* form of perception. In Hartmann's view, aesthetics is a kind of knowledge, "one with a genuine tendency to become a science," and "the object of this knowledge is that attitude of appreciation and that visionary attitude" (*ibid.*). According to Hartmann, aesthetics is borne by two means of procedure: 1) by the analysis of the structure and ontic nature of the aesthetic object, and 2) by the acts of observing, beholding, and enjoying

79

6 Predrag Cicovacki remarks: "In the case of cognitive values, the carriers are cognitive judgments; such judgments are valuable when they correspond to the given states of affairs. For moral values, the carriers are always human beings as persons; acts and attitudes of persons are what we judge as good or evil, just or unjust. Anything can be a carrier of aesthetic values, as long as it appears and is perceived in a certain way. The possibility of appearing of the irreal background in the real foreground is available only to a living spirit. An aesthetic value of something belongs to it only in relationship with someone who perceives it in the proper way. When this occurs the two meanings of 'aesthetics,' the original, which refers to what appears (αἴσθησις), and the later, which is related to artistic taste, are combined together." (Cicovacki 2014, 102.)

(cf. *ibid.*, 53). Hartmann posits that in the aesthetic object there exist the same ontic strata that make up the constitution of the real world: Thing (sensible)—Life—Soul—World of Spirit; “but each one can be broken down further, and [...] very differently in the different arts” (*ibid.*, 494).

Unlike painting and music, the literary work of art in its grander genres (drama, the epic, and the novel) is divided up differently:

The stratum of sensible objects is represented by nothing more than language (speech, writing); likewise, the stratum upon which animation appears is represented only by that of motion and gesture (apparent or real—by means of the actor—). The psychic stratum lies in character and response; the spiritual stratum can be broadly analyzed as follows: 1) situation and plot, 2) destiny, 3) ideal personality, 4) universal idea. There is a peculiar feature here: a partial stratum of the spiritual is prior even to the psychic (it is a foreground element in relation to the latter). That may lie in the human way of seeing; for the beholder, the situation and action are more immediately apparent than are the elements of character. (*Ibid.*, 495.)

80

Hartmann was not interested in the way the aesthetic object exists in itself, but rather in the manner of our experiencing it “as a creation of another living spirit.” According to Hartmann, art in its essence has two levels. The artwork exists at a sensuous and real level as well as in the form of a spirit that comprehends art. The spiritual content fixed on the sensuous level requires a spirit that comprehends it, and that is the source of the artwork’s historicity. This is clarified by Hartmann through the use of “foreground” and “background” elements:

The foreground is always a sensibly apprehensible configuration. The background can to a certain extent be apprehended by the senses and therefore appear as it is drawn into an act of perception, as is the case with many works of art, e.g., in sculpture and painting there is a living bodily presence. (*Ibid.*, 97.)

The question that needs to be clarified here is this: how can spiritual things exist in the material, given that the spiritual and the material are existent in different ways? The background, according to Hartmann, is not *inferior*; if

the foreground determines the boundaries of background formation, if any content allows only a particular type of material, it may therefore be said that it spiritually determines the material. The possibility of the spiritual manifestation in the material can thus be explained by the fact that the spiritual content of the artwork is not possible without coexistence with a living spirit; or as Hartmann puts it: “the material exists in itself, along with its form; the background, in contrast, exists only ‘for’ a living spirit ready to receive it, who contributes to it his own nature, and reproduces its content as he grasps it” (ibid.).

The work of art exists in an essentially different way: it can be separated from the time of its origination, from one epoch to the other, possessing thus a trans-historic nature, which enables the work of art to constantly open new contents, which were previously unknown. This new actualized “content” belongs to a specific form of ideal being, “the objectivated spirit.” By *objectivation* is understood “the realization of an ideal content in objective existence” (ibid., 90) Yet, objectivation, as Hartmann asserts, is not “living spirit in itself,” but simply “spiritual content,” a product of human spirit, a spiritual creation:

In this capacity it stands in a certain sense detached from “spiritual life,” and indeed from both personal and objective spirit and life; but at the same time it is lifted out of the spiritual life and is thus exempt from process of change to which that life is subject, and the objectivation can therefore have an existence of its own alongside of it. (Ibid., 91.)

It should be pointed out that the personal spirit and objective spirit are deeply heterogeneous, as both are bound to common spirit and embedded in it. The living personal mind as a spiritual product is atemporal, and as such it cannot be confined to a certain historical period; instead, it leads a life of its own by being objectified in a form that endures. The objectivation therefore manifests itself as a power, which moves the living spirit. The spirit is in all individuals of the community, but not exhausted in them. And this spiritual community goes beyond individuals, brings them together; it is the ground of their growth and differentiation. Thus, the determining factors of the personal spirit are made possible by way of the objective spirit. Every segment we divide in the continuum of temporal progression encompasses various stages of life.

The presence of memory, along with the interconnections among individuals, spanning different ages, defines the historical existence of any given present moment. This forms the immediate foundation of history and grants us insight into its fundamental nature. According to Hartmann's observations, this historical actuality relies upon the existence of intersubjective relations. However, it also necessitates the presence of individual consciousness, which holds primary significance within the realm of reality. This is because personal memory resides there and serves as the origin of intersubjective connections. Thus, personal spirit stands as the ultimate source in both domains.

82 From what we have just been discussing, the following may be deduced: if the meaning of a literary work is to be found in the experience of the writer at the time of the work's creation and by the experience of the one who reads it, then it is clear that these two meanings may be identical. But, unlike the artist's experience, the psychic experience of readers is infinite in that each such experience is different from the other and in relation to the author's experience. If every new reading creates at the same time a new work, this would lead to a lot of difficulties in trying to determine the structure of the literary work. Following Hartmann, one may read from present-day scholars of philosophy and aesthetics ideas about approaching the literary work from a different perspective: taking an aesthetic attitude, which would imply a contemplative perspective towards the work, and at the same time, maintaining a theoretical-rational involvement of the subject, which would enable that the same work be the subject of both aesthetic and theoretical observation.

Conclusion

It seems clear that both Ingarden's and Hartmann's work are systematic in their own way. Hartmann's phenomenological approach exhibits a great level of coherence; he systematically demonstrates how all forms of artistic media can be categorized as either representational or nonrepresentational. He then proceeds further into the intricate progression of associated strata within both classes of artistic media. Likewise, Ingarden's proposition of a harmonious coexistence of aesthetically significant properties across various strata of meaning within an aesthetic object draws upon the inherent capacity

of conscious acts to be embedded. This embedding of conscious acts mirrors the embedded structure observed in an act of aesthetic contemplation as exemplified in the works of Husserl, especially in his *Ideas*.

By way of conclusion, it may be claimed that the aesthetics of Roman Ingarden and Nicolai Hartmann are phenomenological in the Husserlian sense of the term. While both Ingarden and Hartmann share some similarities in their approaches, they also have notable differences, one of the main differences being their understanding of the relationship between the literary work of art and reality. Ingarden's phenomenology relies on the embedded nature of conscious acts to account for the emergence of an aesthetic object, while Hartmann's phenomenology centers around the founding and founded properties of sequentially occurring acts within the temporal framework of human experience.

Another notable difference between the two is their approach to the formal and thematic elements of the literary work of art. While Ingarden placed emphasis on the internal structures of the intentional object, characterized by their stratified structure, Hartmann, by contrast, focused more on tracing the relationship among the different strata. These strata manifest themselves in different contexts, ranging from the forefront to the backdrop, and are central to the creation of the artwork's reality.

83

Despite these differences, both Ingarden and Hartmann shared an interest in understanding the nature and significance of the literary work as well as in developing a framework that could account for the multi-layered structure of the literary work of art. As the literary work of art creates a world of its own, but is at the same time itself a created thing, it expresses its subjective objectivity in contact with the human consciousness as an objective subjectivity. In this sense, the work of art, through its creation and manifestation, invites us to experience the world in a more authentic and meaningful way.

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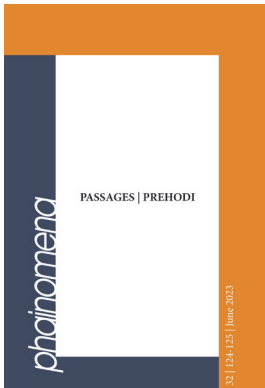
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Phainomena 32 | 126-127 | November 2023

Demarcations | Razmejitve

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Phainomena 32 | 124-125 | June 2023

Passages | Prehodi

Alfredo Rocha de la Torre | Miklós Nyíró | Dario Vuger | Ming-Hon Chu | Maxim D. Miroshnichenko | Jaroslava Vydrová | Malwina Rolka | René Dentz | Igor W. Kirsberg | Izak Hudnik Zajec | Primož Turk | Adriano Fabris



Phainomena 31 | 122-123 | November 2022

Cathrin Nielsen – Hans Rainer Sepp – Dean Komel (*Hrsg. | Eds. | Dirs.*)

Eugen Fink

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Cathrin Nielsen | Hans Rainer Sepp | Alexander Schnell | Giovanni Jan Giubilato | Lutz Niemann | Karel Novotný | Artur R. Boelderl | Jakub Čapek | Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback | Dominique F. Epple | Anna Luiza Coli | Annika Schlitte | István Fazakas

