

# An Ontology for the Perplexed: A Critique of the Ontological Aspects of Roman Ingarden's Literary Work of Art

AIVARAS STEPUKONIS

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute  
 astepekukonis@gmail.com

The article presents a detailed exposition and a critical evaluation of two particular sections of Roman Ingarden's *Literary Work of Art*, the first of which is concerned with the general characteristics of the sentence and the second with the purely intentional object of a simple intentional act. It is thereby shown how questions of being, essence, and experience intersect to make a fruitful and rewarding philosophical inquiry into the complex nature of a literary work of art.

**Keywords:** literary work of art, ontology, sentence, intentional act, intentional object, Roman Ingarden.

An inquisitive philosophical scrutiny, whatever its subject-matter, is, as a rule, impelled and guided by a threefold quest concerning the being, the essence, and the experience of the object under consideration. Whether it is the nature of goodness or merely that of a ship, an earnest philosopher will not fail to ask *whether* and *how* a thing is, *what* it is, as well as what *kind of perception* corresponds to that thing. None of the three heuristic perspectives is missing in Roman Ingarden's book entitled *The Literary Work of Art*.<sup>1</sup> By way of many and scrupulous theoretical analyses, the author attempts to elucidate the ontic, essential, and modal forms of givenness of a work of art<sup>2</sup> known as *belles lettres*. The goal of the following paragraphs is to present a critical

exposition and evaluation of two particular sections of the book the first of which is concerned with "General characteristics of the sentence" (§ 19) and the second with "The purely intentional object of a simple intentional act" (§ 20). It is thus just a fragment of Ingarden's copious investigations, a segment of some twenty pages from a text of some four hundred, that will be considered here, yet even this will suffice to show how questions of being, essence, and experience intersect to make a fruitful and rewarding philosophical inquiry.

The typology of sentences is the first matter addressed by Ingarden in the context of a discussion of the general characteristics of the sentence. In literature one finds a great diversity of sentences which express commands, questions, or judgments and are correspondingly classified as imperative, interrogative, or declarative sentences.

1 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 1973.

2 See David Michael Levin's Foreword to Roman Ingarden's *The Literary Work of Art*, p. xxiv.

Whether the expression of a sentence is the only or even the principal factor that determines its type Ingarden leaves open to question, though he is willing to adopt it as a tentative “working” criterion for sentential typology.

Notwithstanding the fact whether sentences happen to express desires or convictions, they remain *sentences*, to wit, they are united by a common identity that stays stable even if their expressive contents undergo variation. It is in light of the possibility of such an essential identity that Ingarden shifts his analysis from a plurality of sentences and their types to consider *the sentence* itself as a determinate essence. A general characterization of the sentence for Ingarden should inquire into “(1) what a sentence is in itself, (2) what it performs, purely of itself, as an objectivity constructed in a particular manner, and (3) what services it performs for psychic individuals in connection with their lives and experiences.”<sup>3</sup> In brief, three groups of questions must be posed if such a sentential characterization is to be thorough, namely, questions of the essence, function, and intersubjective influence of the sentence.

Just as each word, so does every sentence exhibit a structure of two layers. It is at the same time a phonetic and a conceptual entity. Though its sound layer cannot be viewed as a strict equivalent to the word sound<sup>4</sup> and its universal phonetic character which shapes the actual usage of words, still, the sentence contains what Ingarden terms “sound formations of a higher order”

manifested in such phonetic qualities as melody, pitch, rhythm, and so on.<sup>5</sup>

The meaning of the sentence is in part built up out of the individual meanings of words serving as its components. This is the reason why so many properties of word meanings are also attributable to the sentence.<sup>6</sup> Even so, merely because of such commonalities the sentence cannot be simplified and treated only as a sum of its word meanings. Firstly, even the properties shared by both the sentence and individual words in addition to their operational kinship manifest certain differences and thus should be viewed as *analogous*, rather than *identical* properties. Secondly, there seems to exist a number of properties that exclusively pertain to the sentence and not to the individual words which are its [the sentence’s] constitutive members. One of the salient features of the sentence is its being a composite “*functional-intentional* unit of meaning.”<sup>7</sup> The sentence is intentional in that its meaning is permeated by a certain conceptual reaching outwards, whereby, as Ingarden puts it, the meaning “transcends itself and points to something different from itself.”<sup>8</sup> This “something different” need not be a real object. It may also be an ideal essence, a positive or negative state of affairs, or a fictional entity.

In criticizing Karl Bühler’s theory of language<sup>9</sup>, Ingarden emphasizes that the

3 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 107.

4 For a discussion of word sounds see *ibid.*, §§ 9–10.

5 *Ibid.*, § 11.

6 Such as the intentional directional factor, the material content, and the formal content (consult *ibid.*, §§ 14 ff.).

7 *Ibid.*, p 107.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 107–8.

9 Expounded in his article „Kritische Musterung der neueren Theorien des Satzes“, 1920.

intentionality of the sentence is not to be mistaken with a certain “*coordination of words to objects [and] of sentences to states of affairs.*”<sup>10</sup> Even if such a coordination occurs between the sentence and its objective correlate, its performance must still be effected by a function that is distinct from the coordination itself. In other words, there must be a coordinator which realizes the various relations binding the coordinated terms. This coordinator is the intentionality of the sentence’s meaning content. A single word meaning exhibits an intentional-directional character, too, but the manner of its manifestation in the word is different from that in the sentence – as noted above, it is analogous, yet not identical.

By calling the sentence a ‘functional’ unit, Ingarden means that “it performs a function which specifies which functions the word meanings appearing in it must perform if they are to appear as its components.”<sup>11</sup> Before we turn to a critical examination of this statement – and this we shall do a while later – it is important to notice that, in the author’s view, the sentence’s function is not just similar to the functions of its word components’ instead, it is from the start defined as an *original* function determining what concrete roles individual words assume by becoming its conceptual parts. Here we have an instance of a characteristic appertaining to the sentence but not to individual words.

According to Ingarden, each sentence is the “result of a subjective sentence-forming operation.”<sup>12</sup> In their concrete application,

however, sentences are usually accompanied by a cluster of operations which originate in the psychic acts of a subject. Thus, a sentence may be used as a medium to convey a piece of information to another subject, or to influence the latter in some emotive fashion, it may also serve as the means of expressing a conviction or a judgment, or else, as Ingarden describes it, it may be utilized in order to fix the “results of the free play of the imagination.” Even so, in all of the enumerated cases a sentence is supplemented with something which does not arise or stem from its *pure* structure, with something that is due to the concrete and actual manner in which a subject opts, having his own personal reasons, to use a given sentence in this or that way. Yet, as we have observed, Ingarden’s subject-matter is the “sentence purely in itself;” whereas the diverse roles and purposes that are bestowed on it by some subject’s actual motivation in using it is an extraneous element which must be purged from a theoretical analysis of the *pure* sentence. Ingarden confesses that he is in doubt whether sentences in their actual occurrence may be entirely emptied of such roles and purposed, but this, he thinks, is irrelevant, since it is enough for his investigations that the sentence can be “viewed”<sup>13</sup> purely in itself. As a consequence, the sentence used by Ingarden as an example for demonstrating the general characteristics of the sentence as such, i.e., “A wagon passes,” must not be taken as a judgment, as applied to any determinate state of affairs, as thought by a cognitive subject. With the establishment of this proviso, Ingarden moves to the

10 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 109.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 110. For a discussion of subjective meaning-forming operations consult § 18 of the same work.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 111, footnote 72.

task of unraveling the essential structure of the above proposed sentence.

The words “a wagon” and “passes” do not yet make up a sentence, though even in this individual and isolated form each of them possesses its own signification. By the name “a wagon” a certain determinate object is projected as something distinct from the infinite multitude of other objects. The verb “passes,” in turn, brings forth a particular activity with a hunch that there must be also a performer,<sup>14</sup> which, however, remains unspecified. Yet, what is of interest here is the precise difference between the words “a wagon” and “passes,” on the one hand, and the sentence “A wagon passes,” on the other. Or, to approach the issue from another angle, provided that the words “a wagon” and “passes” occur as word components of the sentence “A wagon passes,” still the latter exhibits a number of traits which elevate it to a new type of entity, rather distinct from individual words; to wit, it becomes a sentence.

What are, then, those traits? Ingarden discovers three of them: 1) The activity ‘passing,’ by way of the finite verb “passes,” is related back to its cause which effects it. It is envisaged thus as an activity of a determinate object. 2) In virtue of this causal or effective<sup>15</sup> relation, the object (which is ‘a wagon’) becomes the subject of exactly that activity (which is ‘passing’). Yet, simply by being a subject of ‘passing’ it is not yet named as “a wagon,” i.e., it is considered as a *mere* subject of the activity

‘passing’ without being circumscribed as a *determinate* subject.<sup>16</sup> 3) Finally, the object (‘a wagon’) and the activity (‘passing’) are brought together into the specific subject-verb relationship as precisely that subject “a wagon” which “passes” and that verb “passes” which is of “a wagon.” The result is a fresh meaning formation: “A wagon passes,” a formation, moreover, that is essentially different from what Ingarden calls a “loose juxtaposition” of a subject and an activity present in steps one and two.

This threefold function, assiduously differentiated in the above example, sustains a kind of linguistic-conceptual reciprocity between a subject and a predicate, and is called by Ingarden a “*nominal-verbal* development of an activity.”<sup>17</sup> The latter development occurs even in such sentences like “This rose is red,” albeit under a different aspect. Here the type of activity is *attributive* in nature, to wit, it is that type of activity that is developed from the viewpoint of “attributing a characteristic to something.”<sup>18</sup> It is in the light of the function of the nominal-verbal development of activities and its universal applicability to sentences, that the language of ‘states of affairs’ draws its substance and inspiration, since in such expressional constructs as, for instance, “the being-red of this rose,” “the being-red” is generally interpreted as an activity of sorts.<sup>19</sup>

Nominal names, by operating as subjects of sentences, do not merely name

14 Ingarden calls this the ‘searching’ function of the verb.

15 Causality is just one type of various predicative relations possible between a subject and a predicate, such as qualitative predications (“The sky is gray.”) or numerical predications (“Cities are numerous.”).

16 At this stage it is not decided whether it is a wagon, a horse, or a car that “passes.”

17 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 114.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

19 In my opinion this is implied from Ingarden’s current reflections, although he does not make an overt pronouncement on the matter.

objects, such as “a wagon,” but also become “carriers”<sup>20</sup> of certain predicates, such as “passes.” Hence, one of the functions of a subject is to resolve the conceptual incompleteness of its correlative predicate, when the latter is thought of as not yet related to its subject. That there is a need for such a conceptual completion and that it is a function of the subject to perform it becomes especially evident in cases where in a phrase instead of a name one places a functional word and then tries to relate it to some predicate. Thus, for example, by relating the functional word “but” to the verbal predicate “passes” one attains the phrase “But passes.” There is not a subject here. Every time an attempt is made to complete the meaning of the verb “passes” by trying to connect it to the word “but,” that attempt is frustrated, i.e., the meaning of the verb *is not* completed, since the functional word “but” is essentially incapable of this. Because of such a predicative incompleteness, which is due to the absence of a proper subject expressed by a nominal name, there is not here a sentence, either. As a result, only the subject of a sentence is able to carry out the conceptual completion of its predicate.

Furthermore, the sentence “A wagon passes” should be contrasted with the nominal expression “a passing wagon.” Though the resemblance of the two samples seems to be obvious, nonetheless there obtain significant mutual differences. By means of the phrase “a passing wagon” an object is projected one of whose defining features is the activity ‘passing.’ From the

very beginning, that is, the object is conceived with a specific determination signified by the word “passing.” Yet, this is what does not take place when a determinate object is projected through the subject-term (“a wagon”) of the sentence “A wagon passes.” Here merely ‘a wagon’ is given. It is a question of a logically distinct act that it becomes supplied with an activity assigned to it by the word “passes,” whereby the sentence “A wagon passes” comes into being.<sup>21</sup>

The *performative operation* of the sentence is to intentionally create a sentence correlate that is a state of affairs. The relationship between the state of affairs created by the sentence and the sentence itself is characterized by three marks: 1) The state of affairs is transcendent to the meaning content of the sentence; 2) still, it is ontologically and essentially relative to the sentence that creates it. 3) It is in the creation of a state of affairs that the sentence becomes what it is, it attains its essential identity. In Ingarden’s words, “[T] here is no developed state of affairs without a sentence, and there is no sentence without a developed sentence correlate,”<sup>22</sup> (i.e., a state of affairs).

Caution must be taken that the type of states of affairs created by the sentence be not confounded with those states of affairs that are objective and ontologically autonomous from all acts of consciousness. To provide a terminological distinction, Ingarden calls the former type of states of affairs “purely intentional states of affairs” or “purely intentional sentence correlates.”

<sup>20</sup> Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 113.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

The two kinds of states of affairs can in principle be “coordinated,”<sup>23</sup> as when a purely intentional state of affairs projected by the sentence happens to be in accordance with some in reality obtaining state of affairs. Yet, the latter need not be the case: there can be both objective states of affairs matching no purely intentional state of affairs as well as purely intentional states of affairs matching no objective state of affairs.

The examination of what services the sentence is expected to perform for human persons is allotted by Ingarden one paragraph consisting of three sentences. As a result, only several details are provided and even this is done in a rather tentative manner. It is claimed that every sentence *can* perform the function of “manifesting” or releasing”<sup>24</sup> some response on the part of the addressee, though in actuality this *need not occur always*. Thus, two kinds of sentences, or better, of speeches must be set apart according to their communicative or non-communicative purpose. To communicative speech belong all sentences that are directed to another person and capable of leaving some psychic impact on him, whereas non-communicative speech refers to those sentences that are conceived by the person for himself without the intention of sharing them with others. Such sentences Ingarden describes as “solitary”

23 The precise explanation of the nature of this coordination and of the essential demarcation between pure intention, on the one hand, and objectively independent states of affairs, on the other, may be found in *Ibid.*, §§ 22 and 25.

24 Ingarden says nothing about what these two terms mean. He simply refers the reader to Karl Bühler’s “Kritische Musterung der neueren Theorien des Satzes,” 1920.

or “nonexternalizing.” They, *as a matter of fact*, exhibit no releasing operation, even though *in principle* they could if meaningfully received and appropriated by some other subject.

It is time now to consider a number of critical remarks that may be posed in regard to various philosophical items unfolded and discussed by Ingarden in the course of the preceding paragraphs.

1) From the outset Ingarden separates his analyses of the sentence as pursuing “three different directions” concerning a ‘sentence in itself,’ its ‘pure performance,’ and ‘its capacity to influence psychic individuals.’ Yet, as one carefully looks at those three methodic directions and at the actual manner in which Ingarden employs them in his analyses, it is not clear at all how they are different. The *essential* fact that the sentence is ‘functional-intentional’ does not pertain to the discussion of a ‘sentence in itself’ in any way more properly than the *essential* fact that it generates a ‘purely intentional state of affairs’ does. The sentence as an entity is dissolved the moment any one of the two facts is absent from it. Again, is it not a part of the question of what a sentence in itself is to discover that it, the sentence, is essentially capable of evoking mental states in persons who are addressed by way of that sentence? Is not such intersubjective influence its very *raison d’être*? The contention here is that Ingarden from the outset of his investigations into the general characteristics of the sentence sets forth a theoretical classification of questions that lacks reason and accuracy. This then negatively affects the reader’s

ability to discern the precise respect(s) in which diverse linguistic and conceptual characterizations of the sentence relate both to that sentence and, within it, to one another, even when the characterizations themselves are genuine.

2) The phrases 'a sentence in itself' or 'purely in itself' – both occur in Ingarden's book – should not be bypassed easily. For such an emphasis on "itselfness" and "purity" is meaningful only when set in contrast to the *possibility* of 'a sentence not in itself' or of one that is 'not pure.' Yet – and this is not a sophistic maneuver – to talk about a sentence which is 'not in itself' is in fact to talk about something *nonsensical*, or better, it is to talk about a contradiction in terms, since something not in itself is something other than itself, i.e., it is what it is not.<sup>25</sup> It is even more perplexing to try to explicate the sense of the saying 'not purely in itself' which, besides other things, must imply that something is in itself, yet not purely so, as if there is a manner of being in itself that is being not quite in itself...!

For instance, somebody may say that 'water is not pure' having in mind that it chances to be mixed with some substance, (e.g., mud, aquarelle colors, or citric acid) that has penetrated the fluid of water and changed one of its natural qualities (e.g., its transparent clarity, its relative tastelessness,

etc.). Yet, if water has acquired a certain flavor, for example, that of a lemon, perhaps there is no longer mere water, but a lemonade; or if it has been used as a solvent for aquarelle hues, probably there is no more just water, but a paint? Otherwise, one would be licensed to speak of nearly everything as water; thus, rocks and plants and smoke and cement all would be water, even though "not pure," since all of them contain water. Nonetheless, perhaps rocks should stay rocks and plants – plants, both being things that contain water as their component – water, moreover, which, inasmuch as it is what it is, is "purely" so.

Indeed, the contemporary understanding of the terms 'in itself' and 'pure' seems, to a great extent, to be stipulated by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, especially his epistemological doctrine. According to Kant, the process of knowledge is initiated by a contact of 'pure' sensations with a thing 'in itself.' Yet, no one can experience 'pure' sensations *qua* 'pure,' because they reach the awareness of man only in the mode of having been formed, or better, transformed by the subjective forms of space and time which are the necessary conditions for the possibility of human experience. The sensations, as a consequence, are experienced as not pure, as transfigured by the two subjective conditions of the faculty of sensibility, to wit, space and time.

Also, a thing 'in itself' is never given as 'in itself,' since the mode of experience through which it is approached, i.e., spatially and temporally formative sensibility, supplies it with an appearance after its own subjectively peculiar fashion, and it is this appearance and not the thing in itself that is

25 Notwithstanding such assertions as J. P. Sartre's notorious description of man and his temporal nature as someone who is not what he is (the past identity of self), and who is what he is not (the future identity of self) (see his *Being and Nothingness*, 1986, Part II, Ch. II "Temporality"). Such declarations, however, are only possible by shifting the exact object of one's discourse or the respect in which it, the object, is apprehended.

open to human cognition.<sup>26</sup> In this context, the emphasis falls on the notions ‘not in itself’ and ‘not pure,’ since for us, humans, things are knowable only in these forms. Furthermore, both notions take on sense just in reference to entities (e.g., ‘pure sensations,’ ‘things in themselves’) which are in principle unknowable! But if no noetic access is available in regard to the latter, then no meaning can be assigned to them, and if so, they cannot signify anything. All talk thus of sensations as ‘pure’ or of things as ‘in themselves’ becomes futile. The immediate corollary of this fact is that also all talk about sensations as ‘not pure’ or of things as ‘not in themselves’ is nonsensical, since the source of their meaning consists in their reference to the above two concepts which but now have been rejected.

Kant was an Idealist, who sought the explanation of the nature of things in the generation of ideas. It appears that he failed to justify his usage of the words ‘pure’ and ‘in itself,’ though the preceding paragraph is clearly unsatisfactory in order to establish such a conclusion for which purpose an number of critical reflections must be kept in mind that cannot be unfolded in the scope of this essay. Be it as it may, what about a Realist, who, in contrast to an Idealist, seeks for the explanation of the generation of ideas in the nature of things, and who nevertheless

wishes to avail himself of such words as ‘pure’ and ‘in itself’?

This fits well Ingarden, a Realist who in his examination of the essence of the sentence overtly relies on the notions of ‘pure’ and ‘in itself,’ in fact making them the key concepts of his investigation. Throughout the text, regarding the general characteristics of the sentence, Ingarden uses the phrases ‘a sentence in itself’ and ‘a sentence purely in itself’ interchangeably. Thus, nothing is appended to or meaningfully specified of ‘a sentence in itself’ when it is complemented by the adverb ‘purely.’ The focus must then be diverted to the term ‘in itself.’ As has been indicated earlier on in this essay, the operation which generates a sentence is a certain “subjective sentence-forming operation.” Let us name it ‘the primary operation.’ *De facto*, however, the primary operation is, as a rule, accompanied by many other subjective ‘operations,’ ‘functions,’ or ‘purposes’ as, for example, judging, informing, imagining, etc. Let us name these ‘secondary operations.’ The latter for Ingarden constitute an extraneous element to the essence of the sentence; they, are as he puts it, “changeable and arbitrary”<sup>27</sup> with respect to that essence. Hence, to obtain the sentence in itself is to treat of it “exclusively as a product of the sentence-forming operation, free of any other functions or purposes.”<sup>28</sup>

What a sentence-forming operation is Ingarden attempts to clarify in § 18 of his book, where word meanings, sentences, and complexes of sentences are construed

26 It is left out of account here the additional fact that spatially and temporally modified sensations, i.e., intuitions are further modified by the categories of the intellect. This is the condition for their conscious presentation. See Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Part I of “The Elements of Transcendentalism” entitled “Transcendental Aesthetic.”

27 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 111, footnote 72.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 111.



as products of subjective operations. Indeed, throughout this section Ingarden is occupied not so much with the task of demonstrating *what* such operations are, as with the establishment of the fact *that* such operations exist, to begin with.<sup>29</sup> Sentence-forming operations play a fourfold role in the generation of sentence meanings. First, they “create” the sentence in the very sense of originating “something that did not exist before.”<sup>30</sup> Second, they are the ontological basis of the duration of the being of the sentence. That is to say, not only is the sentence “established” by sentence-forming operations, but it is “maintained in its existence” by them, as well.<sup>31</sup> Third, it is in virtue of sentence-forming operations that sentence meanings are susceptible to a variety of conceptual modifications and manipulations. It is thus possible to assign multifarious shades of meaning to separate words by grammatically positioning them in a sentence, by supplying them with diverse conceptual specifications drawn from the potential stock of meaning. Likewise, it is on account of these operations that, in the case of a complex of sentences, a particular sentence is accorded additional significations due to its participation in such a complex. Fourth, just as sentence-forming operations are the cause of the coming into existence of the sentence as well as of

its existential duration, so can they be the cause of the abolishment of the sentence from existence, the ground of its ontological obliteration. Ingarden concludes with the following statement: “the stratum of the literary work which is constructed out of word meanings, sentences, and complexes of sentences has no autonomous ideal existence but is relative, in both its origin and its existence, to entirely determinate subjective conscious operations.”<sup>32</sup>

In light of the preceding observations Ingarden’s study seems to have indicated two essential facts about sentence-forming operations: 1) they are the ontological foundation of sentence meanings, 2) they are the source of the manifold conceptual determinations that sentence meanings may in principle possess. Ingarden’s study has not demonstrated the “essential structure of the sentence-forming mental operation,” nor has it classified the “possible varieties of this operation.”<sup>33</sup> At this point we find good reasons to question whether Ingarden’s division between sentence-forming operations and subjective functions like judging, the one being essential and necessary to the sentence *in itself*, the other – changeable and arbitrary – we question whether this division is correct.

To start with, according to Ingarden, the sentence is generated by a *plurality* of operations and not by just one. Thus, some sentence-forming operations are destined to perform peculiar functions that others do not. In other words, since no operation performs all the possible functions of

29 This is evident from the overall content of the section. But it is also explicitly stated by Ingarden in a footnote (no. 57, p. 103) that, “it would be the task of a noetically directed logical investigation to thoroughly study the essential structure of the sentence-forming mental operation and also to set forth the possible varieties of this operation.”

30 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 101.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

32 *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 103, footnote 57.

sentence-formation, every operation must be capable of certain functions and incapable of others. Such functional differences, however, in no way challenge the fact that each of the operations in one or another way remains a *sentence-forming* operation. The danger, as a result – one, perhaps, that Ingarden did not overcome (?) – is that because of the multiplicity of sentence-forming operations it is easy to *contrast* two such operations, different in function, by adopting an inconsistent point of juxtaposition and then erroneously contrasting the fact that ‘operation *A* is *this* or *that* sentence-forming operation’ with the fact that ‘operation *B* is a sentence-forming operation *at all*’ and falsely concluding that *A* is not *B* in the sense of not being a sentence-forming operation, rather than (correctly) concluding that *A* is not *that type* of sentence-forming operation which *B* happens to be. The potential error is thus twofold: a wrong comparison and a false inference.

Let us take the sentence meaning ‘the cane is crooked.’ It is not some ontologically independent meaning unit. In its existence it is completely relative to some *concrete* conscious act (since the latter by its nature is a concrete event). For Ingarden the meaning ‘the cane is crooked,’ as it is conceived by the conscious act, in and of itself is not a judgment, not even an assertion (because it need not be externally announced); it is simply a “declarative” conceptual intention. “The cane is crooked” becomes a judgment only on the condition that some additional subjective motive, namely, the will to coordinate that sentence with an objectively obtaining state of affairs,

is associated with it. This ‘coordinative will,’ however, is brought to the sentence as an extraneous element, it does not belong to the sentence in itself. Yet, must this be really so?

In the event when somebody happens to judge, ‘the cane is crooked,’ in his mind he originates a series of concepts which he arranges into a compound meaning unit and thereby judges, ‘the cane is crooked.’ If judging is a rational activity, if it is further a rational-conceptual activity, than *judging*, ‘the cane is crooked,’ is *meaning*, ‘the cane is crooked.’ The *very* meaning, in this instance, is not accompanied by some extra-conceptual motive, i.e., judging, that is somehow not that meaning itself; no, the meaning itself *is* judging. If we are to learn what the individual means in this instance, we shall learn that he judges. And this we shall discover by turning to *what he means* and not to *what motives he has* when he means it! The intention to precisely judge what is judged is essentially related to the intention to precisely mean what is meant. As it appears, the two intentions are identical.

In cases where someone means, ‘the cane is crooked,’ but by meaning it he does not judge it, a *new* meaning unit is presented. It is not the same meaning unit as that of the judgment, ‘the cane is crooked,’ only this time bereft of the extrinsic judicative factor. In other words, the difference between ‘the cane is crooked’ *qua* mere thought and ‘the cane is crooked’ *qua* judgment is basically one of meaning and not of extra-conceptual motives. To say that one is the “pure” sentence or the sentence “in itself” and the other is not is to be confusing

and misleading. We do not puzzle ourselves with asking which is “pure” or “in itself” – the meaning unit ‘what do you know!’ or the meaning unit ‘what do you know?’ much though they externally resemble each other, for plain reason and sobriety allows us to acknowledge that these are two different meanings. There is, as a consequence, a considerable evidence that ‘judging’ is a special type of sentence-forming operation with its own range of functions and limitations just as ‘mere thinking of’ is. To say thus something essential about the sentence *as such* as opposed to “sentence-questions” or “sentence-commands,” etc., is to undertake a classification of all the possible sentence-forming operations and then to assert that every sentence in its actual occurrence must *by necessity* be a product of one or more of a definite class of sentence-forming operations. This is not achieved by Ingarden – neither in the sections under scrutiny here, nor, as I believe, in the book as a whole.

3) Earlier we have seen that the sentence is circumscribed by Ingarden as an ‘intentional’ unit of meaning. He pointed to the fact that sentence intentionality is distinct from word intentionality, but did not disclose the actual items of difference. One such item of difference, not considered by Ingarden, might be found in the fact that it is primarily the sentence and its complex intentional meaning that creates the context in which functional words, also known as syncategorematic words, acquire their relational signification and are thus utilized in their full grammatical capacity.

Ingarden’s endeavor to explicate the category of intentionality in terms of

transcendence merits some reserve. ‘Transcendence’ is first and foremost an ontological concept signifying something as ‘being beyond’ something else. In this sense ‘to transcend’ means ‘to be transcendent,’ that is, ‘to be beyond’ in the realm of being. ‘Transcendence’ can also mean a certain ‘going or moving beyond.’ But the latter are very much spatial descriptions concerned with extension and a possible movement from one spatial point to another. It is in the second sense of transcendence that the meaning of a sentence manifests the feature of going beyond itself and, as Ingarden puts it, “pointing to something different from itself.”

Even so, Ingarden would have done better using the widely adopted term ‘directionality,’ which he himself uses while examining the intentionality of word meanings. Direction or orientation in their broadest sense, need not presuppose something objectively distinct from themselves toward which they would “aim.” In this sense, every change, movement, or development that contains some intelligible and purposive principle is directed or oriented, but just because of that it need not be a transient direction or orientation, it need not imply a reality beyond itself. On the other hand, the theoretical hazard of such expressions as ‘transcending’ or ‘pointing’ to something other than itself is that there arises a tacit suggestion that there must *be* something different from the transcending or pointing itself. And this already is an ontological affirmation, one, moreover, too readily espoused by Ingarden, it seems, and without appropriate testing. Hence, the notion of intentionality for him becomes

primarily an ontological category, it no longer so much designates some essential quality of the conscious act of meaning as a *state of being* which various objects share (e.g., intentional states of affairs, intentional objectivities, etc.).

Accordingly, when he turns to the question of what the sentence performs purely of itself he has no trouble in the least to posit the existence (even if relative) of “purely intentional states of affairs.” The latter, indeed, have being that is “transcendent...to the sentence content.” This time, however, ‘transcendent’ is intended in the sense of ‘being beyond’ and not merely of ‘reaching beyond.’ At this stage the notion of intentionality has become explicitly “ontologized.” Not only has Ingarden moved from ‘transcending’ to ‘being transcendent,’ neither duly recognizing the difference between the two concepts, nor in any way substantiating his questionable transition from the one to the other – not only that, but he has also moved from ‘transcendental’ to ‘transcendent,’ from ‘illusory’ to ‘objective,’ and this probably more because of oversight, than good reasons. And this is why:

During his discussion of the sentence as a product of subjective operations, Ingarden distinguishes between what he calls the “intentional designation contained in the meaning” and the “intentional designation contained in the act of consciousness.” The explanation of these terms cannot be undertaken here, nor can it be easily gathered from Ingarden’s actual statements which make up scarcely a half of a paragraph. What is important, however, is that while the intentional designation contained in

the act of consciousness shares the mode of existence belonging to the act of consciousness, for one or another reason, the intentional designation contained in the meaning is “fully *transcendental* with regard to the act of consciousness.” A little later Ingarden uses the word “illusion” in order to describe that which is created by the act of consciousness as “something which only pretends to be something though it is not this something in an ontically autonomous sense.”<sup>34</sup>

As a result, three more or less synonymous predicates come to the foreground in the preceding passages about the intentional designation of the meaning: it is transcendental, it is illusory, it is something other than its appearance. Why does Ingarden call the intentional designation of the meaning transcendental and not transcendent to the act of consciousness? The notion of transcendence connotes a certain ‘ontological autonomy,’ it is applied in regard to objects insofar as these possess independent existence. Yet, this is not what Ingarden wishes to say about the intentional designation of the meaning and its relation to the conscious act, namely, that the former is transcendent to the latter. Quite on the contrary, it is his claim that the mode of being of the intentional designation of the meaning is completely dependent on the mode of being of the conscious act. Instead, by naming the intentional designation of the meaning “transcendental” or “illusory” Ingarden is addressing, as it appears, a new and different datum, and in order to characterize it he makes use of two Kantian terms.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

The reason, as we learn in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, why Kant calls “our” knowledge ‘transcendental’ is that its occupation is not with objects, but with “our manner of knowing objects.”<sup>35</sup> This, however, does not mean that on a given occasion we choose to examine our manner of knowing objects, but on some other we would be free to turn our attention to objects themselves. No, Kant’s tacit claim is that our knowledge of objects in fact amounts to our knowledge of the manner of knowing them! What has been traditionally deemed to be the intellect’s noetic activity aiming at the intelligibility of *transcendent* objects, is in reality an activity that is *transcendental*, i.e., one that grounds the knowledge of *so-called* transcendent properties of objects in the manner of the knowing itself. The intellect’s activity, thus, contains an illusory aspect in that it, the intellect, is *bound* to posit something as transcendent, though it is neither *what* it appears to be (i.e., its essential identity) nor *how* it appears to be (i.e., its transcendence); in other words, the intellect posits something as that something only because it is *bound* to (if it is to posit it at all), only because it is necessitated to do so by its very subjective structure. Knowledge is transcendental, therefore, for what it actually knows in knowing *so-called* transcendent objects is *itself*.

In light of the preceding remarks let us reconsider Ingarden’s insight that what is created in the intentional designation of the meaning is “something which only pretends to be something though it is not this

something.” It is due to this “pretension” of being what it is not that the intentional designation is termed ‘transcendental’ and ‘illusory.’ That is to say, there is a conscious act of meaning that pretends to mean something distinct from itself, though in reality *it means but itself*. Such would be a consistent unfolding of Ingarden’s insight. Unfortunately, no careful elaboration of this insight is undertaken by Ingarden. Not only that, he in fact seems to repudiate the implications of transcendentalism in the intentional designation of the meaning. For it is only by disregarding the transcendental character of meaning that one would be disposed to affirm the existence of purely intentional correlates of the sentence meaning. The entire problematic of purely intentional states of affairs cannot be dealt with in the framework of this essay. I believe, nevertheless, that such entities are *nonexistent*. To be sure, there still remains the *phenomenon* of meaning intentionality-directionality and its transcendental mode of self-manifestation, the *phenomenon* which is as yet in want of explanation.

4) At one point in this essay we looked at Ingarden’s solution concerning the linguistic-conceptual difference between the sentence “A wagon passes” and the nominal expression “a passing wagon.” And yet his following remarks were exclusively directed to the difference between “a wagon” and “a passing wagon.” What he has said with respect to the latter distinction may very well be true, but it should be admitted this is not an answer to his initial question.

5) One of the goals that Ingarden sets for himself in his inquiry into the general characteristics of the sentence is to ask

<sup>35</sup> See “Introduction” and “The Ideal of Transcendental Philosophy” in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1966.

what a sentence is purely in itself. Yet, the variety of sentences considered by him amounts but to a singular type, to wit, declarative sentences. The cardinal terms animating Ingarden's analysis thus become the grammatical categories of 'subject,' 'predicate,' and a certain linguistic reciprocity between the two called by Ingarden 'nominal-verbal/attributive development of an activity.' To begin with, he himself confesses at one point in § 19 that the problem of "subjectless" sentences *may* still be a problem, which he then circumvents by way of "whatever the case may be"<sup>36</sup> (i.e., even if for the time being it stays *unresolved*). But if the possibility of subjectless sentences is not precluded, then the very subject-predicate correlation embodied in the nominal-verbal development of an activity cannot be proposed as an essential characteristic of the sentence in itself, but at best as a peculiar feature of merely one type of sentences, namely, of those possessing subjects and predicates.

Since Ingarden confines his analysis to declarative sentences alone, his theoretical confidence that he can generalize his result in regard to all possible types of sentences is a trifle daring. The claim 'to be able to generalize' is rather empty, if such an ability is not demonstrated *de facto*. And demonstrated it is not! Instead, we have Ingarden's (habitual) apology:

If it were a question of a complete theory of the sentence, one would have to demonstrate in detail that this function is performed by every sentence, whatever its form and content. And of course it is no

easy task to show, on the one hand, the various modifications and complications of this function, and on the other, its identity in all these variations. However, this would lead us too far from our main subject.<sup>37</sup>

But is not this precisely the task to be fulfilled if the question is to be decided whether the function of the nominal-verbal development is to be regarded as *an essential* feature of *the* sentence or as *a particular* feature of *some* sentences, though perhaps not of all? Will it be enlightening to even try applying the category of the verbal-nominal development of an activity in exhibiting the essence (or the meaning) of such sentences as "Aha!", or "Really?," or "Why to ask 'why?'," or "No" to the Greeks, 'yes' to the Romans!," or "Don't steal!?" The risk arises that instead of earnestly testing whether such a function is actually revealed in each and every kind of sentence, one will rather busy himself with "accommodating" a multiplicity of sentences to one preconceived finite principle, much after the fashion of Procrustes' Bed.

This tendency is present in Ingarden's effort to view every case of the nominal-verbal/attributive development as a development of *some activity*. Even the sentence "This rose is red" is said to develop an "activity"; an activity that, in Ingarden's vocabulary, is conceived "in terms of the characteristic structure of 'attributing a characteristic to something'"<sup>38</sup> Is not this turning the term 'activity' into a metaphor, is it not stretching the bounds of its meaning to comprise phenomena which are not

36 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 108.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 115, footnote 78.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

activities but qualities whose nature is to be *possessed* and not to be *done*?

\*\*\*

Our next topic is the purely intentional object of a simple intentional act as it is presented in § 20 of Ingarden's work. He understands by a 'purely intentional object' an "objectivity that is in a figurative sense 'created' by an act of consciousness [...] exclusively on the basis of an immanent, original, or only conferred intentionality and [that] has, in the given objectivities, the source of its existence and its total essence."<sup>39</sup> The purpose of the latter description is to set purely intentional objects apart from those entities which, with respect to acts of consciousness, are ontically autonomous, without yet characterizing in detail their essential structure (this will come later). Purely intentional objects are called intentional inasmuch as they constitute the "target of an intention." Moreover, in contrast to ontically independent objects, which may also be at times intentional, this species of objects is "purely intentional." That is to say, their being the target of an intention is all they are.<sup>40</sup>

39 Ibid., p. 119.

40 Our critical remarks concerning Ingarden's transformation of the concept of intentionality into an ontological one apply here, too. An ontically independent object in and of itself is *not* an intentional target; at most is *made* into a target by some intention or is *viewed* as such, i.e., 'being a target' is neither what it is nor how it is; rather, an ontically independent object's being intentional is a mere nomination on the part of some intention, or better, of some intender for the selected objects of his intendings. Whereas an object that is ontically dependent on conscious acts in and of itself is an intentional target, i.e., 'being a target' is both what it is and how it is; here no longer

Purely intentional objects are "transcendent" to each and every act of consciousness even though the latter are its indispensable source of origin, nay, of its very being and essence. They are transcendent, however, in a very specific sense, namely, "in the sense that no real element of moment of the [conscious] act is an element of the purely intentional object, and vice versa."<sup>41</sup>

The aforementioned features of 'pure intentionality' and 'transcendence' are necessary attributes of all purely intentional objects. Ingarden's next step is to address one definite type of such objects, i.e., those that "belong to a simple act of

---

is it a matter of nominating or naming, it is a matter of *being*. There is a gulf in meaning between 'intentionality' when it is grouped with such categories as 'real,' 'fictional,' 'ideal,' etc., and when it is matched with such descriptions as 'self-directing,' 'reaching,' 'targeting,' etc. The evidence from the text strongly suggests that Ingarden is not adequately conscious of such a difference, though both meanings of 'intentionality' are operative in his work. His own differentiation of the various possible significations of the term is mostly based on the subject-object perspectivism, to wit, something is titled 'intentional' either because it is intended (i.e., object) or because it is an element of the activity of intending itself (i.e., subject).

41 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 118.

Our earlier criticisms directed to Ingarden's opinion that purely intentional states of affairs are transcendent to the content of the sentence generating them still hold, since there a suggestion was made that the content (i.e., the meaning) of the sentence and the purely intentional state of affairs are ontically distinct entities, though of course necessarily interconnected in their existence. But the meaning of transcendence as something 'containing no element of the act of consciousness within itself' is, if anything, odd. It is not clear whether this sense of transcendence represents an ontological designation.

intending.” He makes a threefold distinction isolating, first, the content of a purely intentional object; second, its structure; third, the manner in which the content and the structure co-operate within the purely intentional object. In order to forestall certain inconveniences of employing the terms ‘content’ and ‘structure,’ from now on we shall instead use the terms ‘material content’ and ‘structural content.’

The material content of a purely intentional object, say, of a determinate table that one imagines, comprises three elements. First, it is thought of as a thing such that it is capable of bearing a range of definite qualities. Ingarden terms this the “formal structure of the thing.”<sup>42</sup> Second, the concrete range of definite qualities is apprehended and rendered into a definite thing, ‘a table,’ which is now apprehended *over against* the infinity of other imaginable things. Third, ‘a table’ is imagined as a fictional or real or ideal entity, that is, in imagination it is assigned a certain ontological appearance.

These three moments giving the imagined object the form of ‘a table’ refer to the material content of ‘a table’ (in the sense of a mental image?), which in turn is just a component of the structural content of the given intentional object *qua* intentional object. The latter, though it includes the imagined qualities of ‘a table’ as a part of its content, possesses its own original attributes such as, for example, the fact that is “only something intended.” Notice, that the reverse does not hold, namely, the material content of ‘a table’ in and of itself includes no “informative vestige” that it is

purely intentional. Ingarden calls the difference between the material content of a purely intentional object *qua* ‘a table’ and the structural content of the same purely intentional object *qua* purely intentional object a “double-carrier quality” in that both contents carry distinct properties. The fact that the double-carrier quality can in no way be extracted from the material content of a purely intentional object, that is, one must move beyond the material content in order to discover that this content as such *also* belongs to that kind of object that is purely intentional, this fact, according to Ingarden, is the unique trait radically distinguishing purely intentional objects from all other objects that are ontically autonomous to acts of consciousness.

In the order of ontological foundation the structural content is prior to the material content just as the datum that something is a purely intentional object is prior to the datum that it happens to bear this or that definite set of material properties. In the order of perceptual apprehension, however, an interesting inversion takes place, for here the act of intention almost exclusively concentrates on the material content of a purely intentional object, this time the focus falling rather on the “morphic” qualities of an intended object and not on its structural intentionality. Indeed, the structural content can also be given, and this, moreover, in the *same* act of intention, but it can be properly apprehended only when the corresponding act of intention is willfully modified. “Only a particular manner of executing the act,” explains Ingarden, “which exhausts the *full* capacity of the act of consciousness,

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.



as it were, makes the true carrier of the intentional object fully visible and shifts the relation of the two carriers toward each other in the way discussed above.”<sup>43</sup> Still, it is *one simple* act of intention that produces its purely intentional correlate.

Ingarden polemicizes with those who hold that in order to conceive the structural content of a purely intentional object as opposed to its material content one has to perform “a new objectivization,” to wit, one has to direct a new thought to the intentional object of a previous thought in consequence of which two conscious acts and two intentional objects are considered and not just one. Ingarden does concede that such an objectivization is feasible, but he objects that it is necessary for attaining an awareness of the structural content of a purely intentional object. He merely reiterates his earlier conviction that a simple act of intending is thoroughly capable of presenting us with both carriers, the material and the structural, provided that the act is that of apprehending the double-carrier quality.

The ontological nexus between a purely intentional object and its genetic source, a conscious thought, is such that the object “in its total existence and essence is dependent on the existence and essence of the appertaining act of consciousness.”<sup>44</sup> Any change, any alteration in the conscious act, however delicate or perspicuous, has immediate repercussion on its intentional correlate similar to the way in which the design of an artifact is susceptible to the

details of its execution, however graceful or unskilled.

In his endeavor to exhibit the nature of the existence of a purely intentional object, i.e., to disclose as precisely as possible the mode of ‘how it is,’ Ingarden struggles. He openly admits that the description he is providing “is inordinately difficult.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, there ensues a whole stream of tentative designations: a purely intentional object is portrayed as ‘a nothing,’ ‘a projection,’ ‘a creation,’ ‘a something indeterminate,’ ‘a nonsubstance,’ ‘a mere appearance of a carrier,’ ‘an illusion,’ ‘not a complete nonentity.’ And each of these is further “enriched” by such phrases as ‘not genuinely,’ ‘in terms of,’ ‘not in a true sense,’ ‘not in the strict sense,’ ‘not completely.’ Such a bounty of expressions is, moreover, disseminated but in one paragraph! No earnest search for all the meaning “tints and shades” of Ingarden’s language will be undertaken here, since the risk of “never coming back from the search” is too great and too likely. It would also appear immoderate to insert here the entire paragraph. Let then the principle in this particular instance be “what has not been developed by Ingarden himself, will be left undeveloped also by us.”

It is curious, nonetheless, that for Ingarden a purely intentional object possesses no “immanent” determination. That is to say, all determinations that seem to accrue to the purely intentional object are in fact “assigned” to it by the act of consciousness. Yet, to have no immanent determination means to be indeterminate, *amorphous*, because, in Ingarden’s own words, “only

43 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the qualitative and formal elements that in a true sense are immanent in an object can 'determine' it, can form it as this or that object."<sup>46</sup> A purely intentional object merely appears to carry certain determinations, but very much in a transcendental fashion, since *it appears to be what it is not*.

On the one hand, each and every conscious act "has its *own*" intentional object, on the other, one and the same intentional object can be the correlate of "a *discrete* manifold of acts."<sup>47</sup> In other words, it is possible that a single intentional object is intended as "identically the same" by more than one conscious act. Ingarden also suggests that an intentional object can be retained identical even when it is qualitatively altered by a willful move of intention. Even so, he leaves it an open matter to what extent such alterations can be enacted once a given intentional object has been established by conscious thought as an identity.

Due to the twofold manner in which an intentional object stays identical, that is, identical in face of alteration and identical in face of a plurality of acts, due to this there emerges a new kind of transcendence, which, however, should not be confused with the transcendence spoken of above (i.e., between a purely intentional object and its correlative act of consciousness). The new transcendence consists in the fact that the content of the intentional object as intended by a manifold of acts may at least in principle go beyond the content of the same intentional object as intended only

by one act. To illustrate, the depiction of a character in a single section of a novel is "transcended" by the numerous depictions accorded to the same character throughout the whole of the novel. Just as a whole transcends its fragmentary parts, so does the complete picture of a character developed by the entire work transcend any one of the episodic portrayals of the same character in just a segment of the work.

The range of conceivability of purely intentional objects by far surpasses the corresponding ranges of either real or ideal objects. There cannot be an ideal round square, nor can there be a real wooden iron. Yet, claims Ingarden, both are realizable as purely intentional objects. Thus, there may be such objects as round squares and wooden irons, though not among real or ideal objects. In the realm of purely intentional objects, to have it short, anything goes.

We are ready now to voice several critical points. One caveat, however. It becomes somewhat difficult to deal with problems that arise from a recognition of the existence of entities which the writer of this essay in fact denies. Thus, many problems raised by Ingarden must be declared here not only as non-problematic, since that would still leave the field of concern in question intact; no, many problems must be considered as outright non-existent, since their *raison d'être* lies in entities which are themselves non-existent. It then becomes even more difficult for the writer of this essay to deal with the possible solutions of problems which he is not willing to treat as problems, to begin with. Be it as it may, some critical items, specific as well as general, should not escape the eye of the reader.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

1) Ingarden's thesis that the material as well as the structural contents of a purely intentional object are or can be apprehended in one simple intentional act may be challenged in two ways.

Firstly, a reader who reads a literary work of art as a literary work of art is *exclusively* concerned with the material content of purely intentional objects. His aesthetic attitude responds but to *what qualitatively* appears to him by way of represented purely intentional objects (not to what appears as purely intentional objects!). It is, therefore, not simply a matter of intentional emphasis or thematic focus in one simple act of intending to move from the fact that something is a 'table' to the fact that a 'table' is a 'purely intentional object.' It is not a matter of shifting attention, it is a matter of *pursuing a different activity*. One who reads a literary work of art by looking at its numerous 'tables,' 'horses,' 'shoemakers,' 'flowers,' 'rivers,' 'meadows,' 'birds,' and 'clouds' as purely intentional objects is at best a metaphysician, a theoretician who surely does not read a literary work of art as a literary work of art, and if he reads at all, what he reads is something which is readable *despite* the literary work of art. Now, whether it is possible to be a metaphysician and an aesthetically disposed reader at one and the same time is a question of empirical testing. Ingarden is convinced he is able to do both simultaneously. Very well. But to claim that reading a novel and doing metaphysics is just two aspects of one simple act of consciousness is to exaggerate, nay, to claim something weird and, most likely, false.

Secondly, as has been shown, the third moment constituting the material content of a purely intentional object is its ontic

characterization. Thus, what is imagined or represented is characterized as something real, ideal, or fictional. In addition, however, it has been also shown that more often than not Ingarden treats intentionality as an ontological category. And so purely intentional objects are named by him 'intentional' because they possess a corresponding mode of being, i.e., intentional being. It seems then that one simple act of consciousness relates to a purely intentional object, on the one hand, as a 'real table' and, on the other, as 'something that is purely intention,' to wit, as 'something that is not real.' It is an act which, even in different respects, still intends something as real and not real simultaneously. It is an act strained with a divergence of intending, a clash of meaning, for that which is meant as real, cannot be that which is meant as not real (i.e., as purely intentional). Really, in one or another way two different things are meant and two different meaning-acts are generated. Ingarden himself acknowledges two distinct "moments," material and structural, in a simple act of consciousness. He is reluctant to split the act from without, so he does it from within.

2) Ingarden's statement that purely intentional objects in and of themselves are devoid of any determination, in the final analysis, begs the question as to whether there exist such objects at all. For to view something as an object, moreover, to view something as purely intentional, is to view it precisely as possessing these determinations. Perhaps Ingarden's reply will be that even the latter determinations are merely "assigned" by the conscious act. Yet assigned to what? The answer to this

question is possible only by reintroducing some kind of determination, since to conceive of something is to conceive of it as determinate, or is Ingarden to abolish the very fact of 'what'? As a consequence, there would be a mere act of 'assigning to...' without assigning it 'to something.' This alternative, however, is excluded by Ingarden, who beside the assigning act of consciousness posits purely intentional objects, distinct from and transcendent to the act of consciousness; he posits, that is, beside the act of assigning also entities to which something is assigned.

Indeed, Ingarden appears to be torn between his theoretical suppositions and his immediate experience. In his philosophical system the existence of purely intentional objects is indispensable, because establishing the identity of a purely intentional object over against a plurality of "material" alterations and a manifold of conscious acts is providing a foundation for the identity of a literary work of art over against a plurality of concretizations and a manifold of subjective experiences. Once, however, Ingarden pauses to consider the conscious act in its actuality, setting for a brief moment his theoretical goals aside, he finds an "illusion," a "pretension," a "seeming" and an "appearing." But then again he regains his vision of the theoretical goals, and there follows a laborious search for ways out of the paradox of a "nothing" that is not a "complete nonentity."

He calls a purely intentional object an "illusion" because, "its illusory existence and essence [is drawn] from the projecting intention of the intentional act." And so a purely intentional object is an illusion,

its existence is illusory and its essence is illusory. Still, it exists! What may the term 'illusion' possibly signify? On the one hand, a man might mistake one thing for another. (And let us assume that both things exist, only they are mismatched.) Consequently, he would erroneously treat the first thing as being the second. By encountering the first thing, in reality, he would not encounter it, since in its place there would be the second thing, and the other way round; thus with every encounter he would be under the illusion that he has encountered something that in fact he has not, yet even under this illusion there would still always be something he encounters, even if it is falsely identified.

On the other hand, one might indulge oneself in a different sort of illusion when he develops positive convictions and beliefs regarding the existence of something that simply does not exist – much in the fashion of seeing a mirage. When in the heated sands of a wilderness a traveler suddenly notices a patch of water in the distant horizon, and a vivid though rashes through his mind, "Behold, there is water!"; he is not mistaking water for sand, for he sees neither, he is simply deluded by a phantom, an appearance, and concludes to the existence of something that does not exist. Mirage is just an analogy. What is important is that under the sway of illusion in the second sense, a man has to do with a mere image or thought, though he believes he is in touch with a being that is different from the contrivances of his own imagination.

Neither of the two senses of 'illusion' is to avail Ingarden in removing his dilemma. If a purely intentional object is called illu-

sory in the first sense, then it is so because it is mistaken for something else, e.g. for the sentence content by which it is created or for the act of consciousness whereby it is projected. Yet this cannot be the case, for, according to Ingarden, a purely intentional object is *correlative* to the sentence and to the conscious act, but in itself it is neither of them, it is *transcendent*. The latter claim automatically excludes also the possibility that a purely intentional object be an illusion in the second sense. The evidence that it exists is as substantial as the evidence that there are sentences and acts of consciousness. It is not a fruit of someone's free powers of imagination, subsequently endowed – rather pathologically – with a belief concerning its “realness”; no, it is a genuine discovery of a fact by a philosopher in a state of unimpeded consciousness. A purely intentional object, therefore, cannot be an illusion. But then it is... Ingarden's argument seems to have reached an impasse. His way out is to skip it.

3) Let us one more time consider Ingarden's assertion: “[E]very intentional act indeed ‘has’ its *own* purely intentional object but..., despite this, a *discrete* manifold of acts can have one and the same purely intentional object.” The first clause states that there must be as many purely intentional objects as there are intentional acts, the second clause states that can be many intentional acts but only one purely intentional object. Does not Ingarden contradict himself in claiming both? It is not clear. At least he makes no effort to reconcile the two clauses, nor does he explain the meaning of “despite” which bridges them. Perhaps he means that two or more

intentional acts can in common possess one purely intentional object, which is, so to speak, in addition to the many intentional correlates possessed by each intentional act individual.

Ingarden explains that two or more intentional acts have one and the same purely intentional object in the sense that each one of them intends it as “identically the same.” Even so, the transition from saying, “it is *intended* as identically the same by several acts,” to saying, “it *is* identically one and the same to those several acts” is not justified. ‘Being intended as one and the same’ pertains to the content of a singular intentional act that among many other qualities represents also that one which is “being one and the same.” If it happens that one act intends as a part of its content the quality of “being one and the same” and then another act does the same, this in no way implies that therefore there *is* something “one and the same” *vis-à-vis* both acts.

In fact, no two acts can intend a quality of “being one and the same” that with respect to their individual contents would *be* one and the same. Say, there are two acts, act *A* and act *B*. Now, suppose someone claims that what act *A* intends and what act *B* intends is “one and the same.” What we shall find under closer inspection, however, is that either act *A* intends a quality of “being one and the same as what is intended by some other act (*B*)” or act *B* intends a quality of “being one and the same as what is intended by some other act (*A*).” Which ever is the case, still it should be noted that what is intended by act *A* is different from what is intended by act *B*. Hence, a clear theoretical division must be kept in

mind between 'is intended as one and the same' and 'is one and the same,' however tantalizing and puzzling may their mutual interconnections be.

4) One can also question whether Ingarden's demarcation of the range of ontic conceivability of purely intentional objects is not too far-fetched. Although purely intentional being is neither ideal nor real being, it is, nonetheless, some mode of being. Purely intentional objects are called so because they possess that mode of being which is purely intentional. Thus, when Ingarden says that there cannot be an ideal object which is a round square, nor can there be a real object which is a wooden iron, but there can very well be purely intentional objects which are one or the other or, perhaps, even both at the same time – to wit, when he says that purely intentional objects can be contradictory, he makes a statement that there is an ontic realm of being that is compatible with contradictoriness. As a result, being that is the final tribunal for deciding what is contradictory and what is not is itself rendered as open to contradiction.

The writer of this essay is convinced that the *factual* locus of contradiction is thought, and thought alone. Being, in turn, whatever its mode, whatever the perspective from which it is approached, being is what it is, and in so far it is what it is, it is not what it is not. To be contradictory is to be anti-being. It is due to Ingarden's attempt to transform the category of intentionality into an ontological category as well as to posit the being of purely intentional objects that it becomes possible to talk of contradiction as an ontic quality, nay, as a mode

of being, since there are entities, or at least there can be, whose manner of existence is being contradictory.

There could be other objection, as well. For instance, Ingarden's overtly "psychophobic" attitude toward anything mental. At times it seems that he has equated psychology with psychologism. He is haunted by a suspicion of anything psychic. He thus is able to call a certain phenomenon 'conscious' and 'subjective' but then immediately caution the reader that it is not a 'concretely experienced mental or psychic content.'

Another objection would be directed to Ingarden's descriptive terminology. He constantly uses language which properly belongs to subjects as agents in order to describe entities which by nature "defy" such predications. Sentences are said to create, intend, project, develop, perform, etc., and to do all of these in and of themselves. Yet, it is only persons who can properly intend, create, or perform, and not sentences. Such an inverted usage of language tends in the long run to contort the reader's as well as the philosopher's paradigm of thought in that sentences are looked upon as "making use" of the subject in order to achieve their own ends, rather than being a mere means by which the subject communes both with himself and with the world.

Lastly, I must confess that the reading of *The Literary Work of Art* has been a bitter-sweet experience – sweet, because all throughout the book Ingarden's intellect has proved to be acute, argumentative, and erudite; bitter, because Ingarden has built his ontology on the experience of the casual man who reads a book and understands it as "one world which is common to all."

Ingarden forgets that just as the casual man is uncritical in his theory, so is he in his experience. He forgets that just as a

philosopher must re-think reality, so must he re-experience it. Ingarden did the first, he failed to do the second.

### Literature

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Friedrich Max Müller, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966.

Bühler, Karl, „Kritische Musterung der neueren Theorien des Satzes“, *Indogermanisches Jahrbuch*, 1920, Bnd. VI, S. 1–20.

Ingarden, Roman, *Das literarische Kunstwerk: eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1965.

Ingarden, Roman, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of*

*Literature*, translated by George G. Grabowicz, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Levin, David Michael, “Foreword” / Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature*, translated by George G. Grabowicz,

Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973. pp. xv–xliv.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel Estella Barnes, London & New York: Routledge, 1986.