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ROMAN INGARDEN'S THEORY OF INTENTIONAL MUSICAL WORK

Abstract: Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) is a representative of the phenomenological trend in philosophy. He pursued his ontologic interests in his fundamental treatise *Das literarische Kunstwerk* that was the starting point for his studies of other areas of art including music. For Ingarden, direct musical experience is a starting point for philosophical reflection, which should be free from any theoretical prejudice. He considers the essence of the musical work in such dimensions as ontological, the work's structure, its perception and axiology (aesthetics). Ingarden formulates a thesis about a single layer of the musical work, an aspect which distinguishes music from other works of art. A musical work is for him a purely intentional object, whose origins spring from creative acts of composers and whose ontological basis rests directly in the score.

Key-words: Roman Ingarden, philosophy of music, phenomenology.

1.

It is not unreasonable to claim central subjects of musicological studies in the distributive and attributive sense. It results from a historical review of encountered concepts of the musical work (W. Seidel) and current practice of musicological studies, but also a timeless sense of the musical work's analysis. For example, a composer may become the subject of biographies, often naïve, or subjected to deeper and more professional psychological and also sociological aspects of his or her music perception – and reception.

Although a human universal, music can rightly be considered as one of the most important distinguishing features of our humanity and yet it is worth noting that it is rarely acknowledged, and even less noticed are the consequences which could be drawn from what is obviously shared amongst all peoples – of every nation and tribe. It transcends cultural differences without compromising them.

Numerous thinkers have been interested in music and musical works many centuries before musicology became a science to study it. Music, and musicians, are often intriguing representatives of other scholarly disciplines, employing adaptive thinking, tools, and standards thereof. But postulates of modern philosophy could expand upon multilateral, interdisciplinary and in-depth studies as though “forever”, while “self knowledge” of the disciplines is like a ticket to the front row seat of an unfolding human drama – at least from an historical perspective.

2.

Tracing sources of reflection on music in disciplinary terms would go as far back as to the Ancients. (Dionysius of Syracuse enshrined the lyre, and stylus and tablets, of Euripedes in the temple of the Muses following his death.) But from the twentieth century we have many philosophers who studied music and the Polish philosopher, Roman Ingarden, is one of the most prominent. Indeed the twentieth century can be described as very successful in the history of Polish philosophy. It was so even despite the fact that the most accomplished were subjected to varying degrees of severe Marxist dictatorship after the Second World War.

Some were forced to go underground. Others faced severe censorship, both personal and with regard to their subject matter. They were also deprived of *veniam legendi*. Such was the case with K. Ajdukiewicz, Ingarden, T. Ajdukiewicz, S. Ossowski, W. Tatarkiewicz, L. Kołakowski, et.al.. Others, like L. Kołakowski, immigrated or did not return to the Polish People's Republic after World War II. A. Tarski and J.M. Bocheński were two philosophers who did not return home. This does not mean, however, that they do not belong to the history of Polish philosophy.

Since popular knowledge about Polish philosophy of the 20th century is not generally discussed in the modern musicological environment, it is worth reminding, in chronological order, a dozen names of the most eminent philosophers. From Polish as well as international perspectives, they were distinguished amongst themselves and highly regarded. A concise résumé of their disciplines tends to place Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) squarely on the map of Polish philosophy.

There names are: Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), Władysław Tatarkiewicz (1886–1981), Stanisław Leśniewski (1886–1939), Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967), Stanisław Ossowski (1887–1963), Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981), Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890–1963), Roman Ingarden (1893–1970), Alfred Tarski (1901–1083), Józef (Inocenty) Maria Bocheński (1902–1995), Karol Wojtyła (1920), who became John Paul II, Mieczysław Gogacz (1926), Leszek Kołakowski (1927), Józef Tischner (1931–200), Władysław Stróżowski (1933), Józef Życiński (1948).

This esteemed group of philosophers concerned themselves with virtually all areas of philosophy, beginning with history of philosophy, ontology, metaphysics, epistemology with philosophy of science, logic, methodology of sciences and arts, and finally philosophic anthropology and axiology along with philosophy of art. (Karol Wojtyła also studied the phenomenology of Husserl.) Amongst orientations represented in various versions and combinations were the analytical philosophy headed by Lvov-Warsaw school: critical rationalism, phenomenology (including phenomenology, existential phenomenology and dialectic phenomenology), tomism, and Marxist materialism – the importance of which has decreased almost to zero.

3.

Roman Ingarden read philosophy, mathematics, and physics at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, then continued his studies in Göttingen, mainly with E. Husserl, in Vienna and Freiburg i.Br. Using his dissertation *Essentiale Fragen. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Wesens*, he became a reader in Cracow, in 1923. He pursued his ontological interests in his fundamental treatise, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, written in Paris in 1927, which served as a starting point for his studies in other areas of art, including music. He was a professor of philosophy at the universities of Lvov, until 1939, and Cracow from 1945. In 1950 he was deprived of his tenure, and did not return until seven years later.

Ingarden was a representative of the phenomenology trend, explored new roads when studying with Husserl. But it does not imply that he stuck closely to Husserl's paradigm. His theories of phenomenology introduced new dimensions to the analysis of arts— in particular ontological, epistemological, as well as creative philosophic innovations.

4.

Philosophical texts are best read in the original so as to preserve the taste of their content, gain deeper insight into the explications used, and style of linguistic narration and expression. Neither summaries nor commentaries can substitute for original philosophic texts. An important part of the article is a reprint, a chosen extract, of the work in which Ingarden presents his essential theory of an intentional musical work. It serves to encourage the reader to reach for the whole Ingarden's work.

When reading Ingarden's original text, it becomes apparent he concentrated on European classics of J. S. Bach, L. van Beethoven, F. Chopin, R. Wagner, program music of K. Szymanowski and I. Stravinsky. [Incidentally, the credit for distinguishing between artistic (structural value) and esthetic dimensions (evaluating the quality of a work of art) goes to Ingarden.] Therefore, in his considerations, Ingarden does not appear to have devoted thought, per se, to avant garde music, (popular, pop, or folk music with its oral character), without material base (musical notation), and social character in it.

For Ingarden, direct musical experience was a starting point for philosophical reflection, free from any theoretical prejudice. The essence of the musical work in such dimensions as ontological, the work's structure, its perception and axiology (aesthetics), comes through in his expressions.

It can be simply said that in Ingarden's studies the musical work was not at all identical with musical notation – which can be highly schematic. It is set apart from sound concretions, whose number and quality are individualized, conditioned by the time when they are performed – uncountable, and unpredictable.

Even more imperceptible and irrelevant for defining the musical work's identity are psychic perceptions of sound realizations of the work, which add

up to particular concretions. Their number, diversity and indeterminateness make it impossible to accept one version as a determinant of the basic identity of the musical work.

Finally, Ingarden formulates a thesis about a single layer of the musical work, an aspect distinguishing – in his opinion – music from other works of art. However, it has to be born in mind what kind of musical works Ingarden considers. He points to indivisibility or integrity of the musical work. Then he writes that the musical work (as opposed to its performances which structure is quasi-temporary), is an object lasting in time, characterised by separateness of expressive values planned with musical means from emotions, which are experienced by variously conditioned audience of the musical work.

What is a musical work then? Again, by way of simplifying Ingarden's concepts, it can be said that a musical work is a purely intentional object, whose origins spring from creative acts of the composer and whose ontic base rests directly in the score.

Following a commentary by J. J. Jadacki, in Ingarden's idea of the musical work six separate purely intentional objects can be marked out: the score, ideal work-pattern, aesthetic object, performance, concrete aesthetic object and inter-subjective aesthetic object.

The acceptance of Ingarden's explanation of the intentional musical work, the reception of his theses, their modifications and polemics resulting thereof, gives way to:

- a. wide perspectives of responsibilities to be fulfilled by the musicologist in his research when seeking the essence of particular musical works studied and attributive qualities of the musical work;
- b. numerous dangers he will face when carrying out the task.

5.

The chosen and attached chapter of *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity* is chapter 6 titled *How Does a Musical Work Exist?* (116–122) by Ingarden. Its context is determined in the remaining chapters: 1. *The Musical Work and Its Performance*, 2. *The Musical Work and Conscious Experiences*, 3. *The Musical Work and Its Score*, 4. *Some Features of a Musical Work*, 5. *The Sounding and the Nonsounding Elements and Moments of a Musical Work*, 7. *The Question of the Unity of a Musical Work*, 8. *The Problem of the Identity of a Musical Work in Historical Time*.

6.

How Does a Musical Work Exist?

Our discussion so far will enable us to consider the ontological status of a musical work.

Such a work originates in specific, creative, psychosomatic acts by the composer. These may culminate in the work's being notated in a musical score, as has been the practice for centuries, or in immediate performance by the composer, in which case we speak of improvisation. Because of the imperfection of musical notation, the score is an incomplete, schematic prescription for performance. It fixes only certain aspects of its sound-base, whereas the remaining ones and especially the non-sounding elements, are only partially defined and within certain limits open to various interpretations. Both the fixed and the open elements have been conceived by the composer as fully defined and fixed, but he does not command a musical notation that would do them justice. Until recently we had no other ways of notating musical works except as schematic products. It is true that at least some of the undetermined features fixed in the musical notation flow indirectly from the elements of the work, but they can only be uniquely determined and fixed in the specific performances of the work. If, however, the work remains in the form in which it has been notated, these further elements remain existentially potential, as though there were only a possibility of their future realization in individual performances. Actually, in the work itself as notated, we have gaps or areas of indeterminateness which can be removed only in performance.¹ The fact that such gaps or areas of indeterminateness are found in a musical work is sufficient reason to regard the work designated by its score as a purely intentional object whose origins spring from the creative acts of the composer and whose ontic base rests directly in the score.²

Someone might object that we no longer must fix musical works by such imperfect means as musical notation. We may use gramophone records or tape-recordings, thus achieving a full definition of a musical work and collapsing the argument that the work is not a real but only an intentional object. The gramophone record would also insure that, at least in principle, we could have identically sounding works, a state of affairs that would affect crucially our discussion regarding the identity of a musical work.

Let us first of all observe that with regard to the musical work on a gramophone record made by the composer, we would in many cases obtain the work in a faulty performance, for composers are not generally good interpreters of their own works. And in many cases where more than one instrument is involved, especially in orchestral works, this would be quite impossible, even if the composer were a good conductor. Calling on the aid

¹ Something similar occurs in a theatrical performance that in its staging comprises the performance of a certain written work.

² I have elsewhere shown in detail that a schematic construct with areas of indeterminateness is and must be a purely intentional object whose mode of existence is heteronymous and dependent on acts of consciousness. See my *The Literary Work of Art and Does the World Exist?*, volume 2.

of good performers, say famous pianists, does not remove the danger of possible deviations from the original. The fact that gramophone records wear out and that gramophone equipment is not perfect leads to further possibilities of deviation from what the work ought to be. In any event, this is a record of a work in performance and not of the work itself. Surely what is recorded on wax or tape is not the work itself but certain effects arising from sound waves broadcast by the vibrant parts of the instrument upon which a given piece has been performed. And vice versa, the recorded traces of those sound waves played back on a suitable instrument give us a new performance of the work, which undoubtedly is very close to the first one, with properties affecting the realization of the new performance. The only part of the work which is now being realized, (in the second performance), is a system of sound waves that, since they constitute a physical impulse for our hearing organ, make it possible for us to hear the performance. But what is directly conveyed to us in this way are only the sounds themselves, and these always with small deviations from the intentionally designated original, deviations that within certain limits may be of no consequence for aesthetic perception and for the subsequent constitution of the work in performance.

These sounds must be interpreted by the listener as the work's sound base. Only through the understanding of this base and through appropriate acts of consciousness do these sounds designate the artistically significant remainder of the musical work, beginning with sound-constructs and ending with the non-sounding elements of the work, in particular its aesthetically valuable qualities and the aesthetic value itself. Here the interpretation of the performance to some extent removes the "gaps" we have sensed in the musical work— though not all of them, as this is, on the whole, impossible— but they are replaced only with a system of certain qualities that in themselves are nothing more than concretions of qualities ideally belonging to the work. Thus, with the method of realizing or recording the work that we have just discussed, nothing in effect is realized but only concretized. The work itself remains like an ideal boundary at which the composer's intentional conjectures of creative acts and the listeners' acts of perception aim. The work thus seems to be an intentional equivalent of a higher order, belonging to a whole variety of intentional acts. These acts, of course, are formed by real people possessing real sense organs, who employ these organs either in the composition of musical work or in its realization in new performances or in listening to successive new performances. At that ideal boundary, the work remains one and the same in contrast to the many concretions in specific performances and thus, as I have already shown, it is in some respects de-individualized, although it does not cease to be an artistic individual in the sense previously defined. Whether this ideal boundary can ever be reached in individual performances and hearings or whether there must always be certain deviations and falsifications, which at times may be very acute, is a problem of the identity of a musical work. It is much more

difficult to solve the problem here than in the case of a painting or work of architecture, since we do not have an “original” object as we do when an artist completes a painting or builds a specific edifice. In whatever way we might seek to solve this difficulty which in the present case becomes so acute, the problem itself is the best proof that a musical work is not a real but a purely intentional object and, strictly speaking, one of a higher order.

Even if we were naive realists and believed that all sensible qualities of objects given in sensible perception constitute the real properties of physical objects and that, therefore, a grouping of sounds is something real, we would still not be able to regard the musical work as a real object. I have already shown that the musical work, as an artistic creation that because of its very nature ought to be perceived in an appropriately developing aesthetic experience, is not identical with the arrangement of concrete sounds heard in specific performances and constituting the performances’ acoustic bases. As I have shown, the musical work does, in many of its artistically significant details, go outside the qualities of concrete sounds. Yet, it never attains the status of concrete sounds because these sounds are spatially and temporarily individuated objects, whereas a musical work is a supra-individual and supra-temporal structure, its individuality being purely qualitative. These facts constitute the base of my second argument in favor of regarding a musical work as a purely intentional object with its original source in a specific real object and its ground of continued existence in a series of other real objects.

To ascribe the character of an intentional object to a musical work is not, however, synonymous with, or even equivalent to, recognizing it as a certain psychic reality or with turning it into something subjective. In my interpretation, a musical work remains something that we can create only intentionally and not in reality. We cannot endow it with the ontic autonomy that characterizes all real objects, including all psycho-physical subjects and their experiences. Had the musical work itself been a mental or a conscious experience, it would be just as real and existentially autonomous as all human experiences are, but it never is an experience or any part of it. If we were to treat it in this way, we would subjectivise it. This is avoided by the thesis that in accord with experience proclaims a musical work to be itself the product of certain conscious and psycho-physical acts of realization as well as being an object given to a subject listening to a given performance. This object, as purely intentional, is neither purely the perceptual experience in which it is given nor an experience that creatively designates the object nor yet any part or element of these experiences. It is solely something to which these experiences refer; it is neither mental nor subjective.

It was not my aim here to present a general theory of intentional objects. Others have done this before me. I have attempted elsewhere to

make it more precise and correct it in certain respects.³ The present study supplies only detailed material for this general theory, and I must, at this point, emphasize that the attempt to show that a musical work is a purely intentional object constitutes an element in my protracted struggle to collect as many varied arguments as possible against the idealistic conception of the real world as an intentional object of a particular type. This effort is not, as some say, an expression of my supposedly idealistic position. To avoid misunderstandings, which might arise from the ascription to me of statements I have never made, I must add a few remarks without, however, any detailed justification.

In accepting the proposition that no purely intentional object is real, I ipso facto logically accept the converse; namely, that no real object is purely intentional. I accept both these propositions not so much because of their logical relationship, but because I see a fundamental difference between the form and mode of existence of real and purely intentional objects. Because of the mode of existence of purely intentional objects, I also accept the proposition that the existence of purely intentional objects implies the existence of certain real objects. Specifically, with reference to musical works, we may agree that they exist heteronomously insofar as there are also existentially autonomous objects; specifically real objects—namely, the composer and his mental and physical acts, which lead to the creation of the given musical work. Insofar as a musical work is to exist as an object that, although purely intentional, is nevertheless intra-subjectively accessible (and therefore one and the same for various psycho-physical subjects—for the composer and his listeners), then there must additionally exist some method of preserving the work and making it accessible to a variety of subjects through the score or specific performances. The constitution of a musical work as an inter-subjective aesthetic object demands that both the composer and the listeners should fulfill certain specific mental and physical acts called aesthetic experience or, if you wish, aesthetic perception. This perception in turn is possible only if certain real objects that we call psycho-physical subjects, namely, human beings, really exist.

I do appreciate that one might push realist views further and declare that musical works, too, should be treated as certain real objects, and in particular as certain clusters of conscious experiences occurring in the composer and his listeners. As we have noted at the beginning of these reflections, such identification of a musical work with certain conscious experiences does not form a tenable thesis. Specifically, it is equivalent to the rejection of the existence of, say, Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata* and the recognition only of the existence of several collections of conscious experiences, none of which, incidentally, is the *Pathétique Sonata* or any of its performances. In such a case, there is no music and nothing for us to discuss. Naturally,

³ See *Does the World Exist*, volume 2, chapter 10.

anyone interested in the psychology of particular collections of experiences, or in the relevant area of sociology, will have a good deal of material to work on, but persisting in the position that there are no musical works, he will undoubtedly find great difficulties in establishing the scope and examining the properties of those collections of experiences he is seeking. But this is not my problem.

7.a.

Works of Roman Ingarden

Artistic and Aesthetic Values, translated by H. Osborne, "British Journal of Aesthetics 4", no. 3 (1964), 198–213.

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Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Kunst, Tübingen 1962

Uwagi do uwag Zofii Lissy, "Studia Estetyczne" 3 (1966), 115–128

Utwór muzyczny i sprawa jego tożsamości. Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków 1973

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7.b. Commentaries

Lissa, Z., *Szkice z estetyki muzycznej*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków 1965

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Јан Сџешевски

ИНГАРДЕНОВА ТЕОРИЈА ИНТЕНЦИОНАЛНОГ МУЗИЧКОГ ДЕЛА

(Резиме)

Основано се може тврдити да је музичко дело у оба смисла, дистрибутивном и атрибутивном, главни предмет музиколошких студија. Филозофија је дисциплина у којој се могу наћи најранији записи рефлексива о музици. Међу пољским филозофима 20. века који су показали интересовање за музику, најзначајнији је био Роман Ингарден (1893–1970). Студирао је у Кракову, Гетингену (углавном код Хусерла), Бечу и Фрајбургу. Ингарден је представник феноменолошке струје у филозофији. Заинтересован првенствено за онтолошке теме, он се после свог фундаменталног трактата *Књижевно уметничко дело*, окренуо и другим областима уметности, па тако и музици. Његова феноменологија је увела нове димензије у анализу уметности, нарочито на подручју онтологије, епистемологије и стваралачке иновативности. За Ингардена је директно музичко искуство полазна тачка за филозофску рефлексиву која треба да буде ослобођена било каквих теоријских предрасуда. Суштину музичког дела посматра из перспективе онтологије, аксиологије, структуре дела и његове перцепције. Може се једноставно рећи да Ингарденово схватање музичког дела није идентично са музичком нотацијом, која је крајње схематска. Музичко дело није идентично ни са својим извођењима, чији су број и квалитет индивидуализовани и условљени многим околностима. Исто се односи на перцепцију звука. Најзад, Ингарден формулише тезу о једном једином слоју музичког дела, аспекту који разликује музику од других уметничких дела. Шта је, дакле, музичко дело? Поједностављујући донекле Ингарденову мисао, могло би се рећи да је музичко дело чисто интенционални објекат, чије је порекло у стваралачком чину композитора и чија онтолошка основа почива директно и непотпуно у партитури.

Аутор свом раду прилаже део студије „Проблем начина постојања музичког дела“ из Ингарденове књиге *Ontologija umetnosti (Studije iz estetike)*, која је преведена на српски и објављена 1991. године (prevod s poljskog Petar Vujičić i Ljubica Rosić, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, Biblioteka „Nova theoria“, Novi Sad 1991). Та Ингарденова расправа, под насловом *Identitet muzičkog dela*, првобитно је, у преводу Петра Вујичића, емитована од 13. до 15. маја 1971. године на Трећем програму Радио Београда, а потом објављена у часопису *Трећи програм*, Beograd, jesen 1973, br. 4, 471–595.

Иначе, Ингарден је доста превођен на српски. Види: Р. Ингарден, *О сазнавању књижевног уметничког дела*, превео с немачког Бранимир Живојиновић, Српска књижевна задруга (Библиотека „Књижевна мисао“, 3), Београд 1971; *Isti, Napomene na marginama Aristotelove Poetike*, превео s poljskog Petar Vujičić, Polja, Novi Sad, avgust-septembar i oktobar 1974, god. XX, br. 186–187. i 188; *Doživljaj, umetničko delo i vrednost*, prevela s nemačkog Drinka Gojković, Nolit (Biblioteka „Sazvežđa“, 49), Beograd 1975; *Isti, Vrednosti, norme i strukture po Rene Veleku*, prevela s nemačkog Štefica Martić, Savremenik, nova

serija, Beograd, januar – februar – mart 1987, god. XXXIII, knj. 5, br. 1–2–3, str. 53–61, Isti, *Poetika: teorija umetničke književnosti*, prevela s poljskog Ivana Đokić, Autorsko izdanje, Beograd 2000, itd. Ингардену је посвећена магистарска теза Драгана Стојановића, *Феноменологија и вишезначности књижевног дела: Ингарденова теорија ојализације*, „Вук Караџић“ (Библиотека „Аргус“, 12), Београд 1977. (Теза је урађена под менторством проф. др Николе Милошевића и одбрањена 1976. године на Катедри за општу књижевност и теорију књижевности Филолошког факултета у Београду.)

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