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**Cultural Themes in Polish Theoretical Literary Studies:
A Case of Reference, or, Roman Ingarden
for Children and for Adults***

If the history of knowledge did not already exist, it would be necessary to invent it.¹

The sentence quoted in the epigraph opens Peter Burke's most recent work. He reinforced this provocative opening in the title of his first chapter, in which he used both "knowledge" and "history" in plural form: "Knowledges and their Histories." Be it in English or in Polish, this phrasing is at least partially ungrammatical. "Knowledge" is an uncountable noun. Nonetheless, this rhetorical device quite aptly captures the paradoxical state of parallel existence and non-existence: the existence of histories of individual "knowledges" and the non-existence of a history of "knowledge". The Polish case is in fact analogous to the one discussed by Burke: there are multiple histories of Polish literary theories, but we do not have a history of Polish literary theory as a unique specific phenomenon.

To be more precise: such a history of course does exist in some sense. To start with, however, it has only been written up to 1939. Secondly, it exists as a corpus of arbitrarily selected authors and texts that has unwillingly become the canon; as it is the only canon since the late 1960s, it also remains beyond dispute. And thirdly, it actually exists as chronology rather than history; its historicity (the principles of development, evolution

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¹ Peter Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 1.

or accumulation, constancy, and change) has not been subject to reflection. Neither has it been thought through as order (that is to say a system, or regime). And so it comes as no surprise that such a history is dead for the readers. The texts it describes are completely detached from other cultural texts, not embedded in any cultural contexts (whether political, social, institutional or economic), isolated from the biographies of their authors, and not compared with any other orders on a regional or global scale. Such a history is by definition of no interest to anyone today, given how radically the ideas of history and historiography have been changing since the end of the 1960s.

It is therefore high time to think about the history of Polish literary theory differently, and to invent its other history. The core of my proposition would be to configure a corpus of texts regarded as theoretical (I will refrain from delving too far into how this would be decided) around the so-called cultural themes, a term once coined by Morris Edward Opler.²

The idea of “cultural themes” allows for a better understanding of complications within the scholarly culture of literary studies than the concepts developed by Ruth Benedict and Clyde Kluckhohn, to which Opler referred. This is because it takes into account, not only the themes that are distinctive of a culture, but also its counter-themes and tacit themes. In addition, all of these may be reflected in a declared or implied form, may be openly promoted or tacitly approved; but either way, they always take on regulative roles. Only by considering the relationship between themes, counter-themes and tacit themes – as well as their actively promulgated or passively accepted variants – are we able to mark the borderlines of the field of Polish literary theory as well as differentiate it.

One instance of such a theme in the history of Polish literary theory, perhaps even the key one, is reference.

1. *The theme of “literature-reality” in the culture of Polish literary theory*

It is a paradox that anything that was perceived as an anti-value in Polish literary culture turned out to be of outstanding cognitive worth in the Polish culture of literary studies. More specifically, the focus on national problems and the constant habit of referring to “Polishness” has been seen as a slightly embarrassing feature of Polish literary art for two centuries. Critics, essayists, and writers themselves would rant

² Morris Edward Opler, “Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 3 (1945): 198–206.

about how it was immature, narrow-minded and provincial, and thus incomprehensible to the rest of the world. By the same token, in literary theoretical thought the necessity of taking a stance towards the specific nature of a literature as such had a completely different impact. It brought about perfect, in-depth, and inquisitive concepts of literary discourse that made reference to their surrounding spheres. These ideas engaged with arguments from various disciplines, were formulated in many distinct academic languages, and employed changeable terminology. Regardless of these discrepancies, for the last two centuries – since 1814 when the first Polish history of literature written by Feliks Bentkowski came into being – these ideas have set the dominant trends in theoretical efforts to conceptualise literature. Since then, they have also determined how the field of literary studies would be partitioned.

There is a good, if not a compulsory, starting point for reconstructing the theme of reference that is so important for Polish scholarly culture of literary studies. More specifically, in the 1930s Roman Ingarden formulated the concept of *quasi-judgements*. In the context of world literary studies this idea was without any question absolutely unique. Neatly and meticulously explicated in the language of logic and semantics, it surpassed, in terms of precision, the intuitive approaches and postulates of Russian and Polish Formalists, as well as American representatives of the New Criticism. In the context of Polish literary studies, it has arguably been discussed with the utmost vigour even up to the present day.

2. *Roman Ingarden for beginners and advanced students*

2.1. *What we do not know about Ingarden*

It might seem as though we already know everything about Ingarden's concept of the literary work of art and its author. But in fact, academic memory has recorded only five of his phrases: anti-psychologism, intentionality, the many-layered structure of the literary work, the work of art, and concretisation, and perhaps primarily, *quasi-judgements*. And finally, of course, the fact that Ingarden was a disciple of Edmund Husserl.

But actually, both Ingarden's biography and his concept of *quasi-judgements*, which have a close relationship, contain numerous "spots of indeterminacy," to use his own term.³

³ Cf., for example, Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 243.

Ingarden's thought was strongly influenced by his apprenticeship in Kazimierz Twardowski's Lvov-Warsaw School, and by the doctoral thesis that was admittedly written under Husserl's supervision, but was in fact devoted to Henri Bergson. An acquaintance with Edith Stein, full of intense emotions, presumably not only intellectual ones, left an imprint on his ideas.⁴ His friendship with the painter, self-taught philosopher and key Polish Modernist artist Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy) was of momentous significance.⁵ It is arguably Witkacy's lexicon from which Ingarden derived his "metaphysical qualities,"⁶ a term so central to his understanding of reference. His epistemological remarks on other states of consciousness and their role in cognition, which explicitly allude to Witkacy's experiments with narcotics, must have stemmed from the same source. Thanks to his friendship with Witkacy, Ingarden became closer to Tadeusz Kotarbiński, a philosopher from the Lvov-Warsaw School whose principle of parallelism between ontology and semantics found its way into Ingarden's conceptualisation of *quasi*-judgements.

A similarly crucial role in formulating this idea was played by his own writing and translation practice. We know relatively little about this aspect, so it is worth mentioning that his manuscripts found in the family archives include translations from German poets (mainly from Rilke, of 1915), the 1910 narrative poem with dramatic and fantastic motifs titled *W zaraniu* [In the Dawn], the 1912 novel *Wędrowcy* [Wanderers] written in Gottingen, the 1915 novel *Zetłate dusze* [Smouldered Souls] and four notebooks of poems from the years 1909–1911.⁷ This artistic *oeuvre* should not be disregarded as mere juvenilia typical of the epoch and environment. Ingarden himself treated it otherwise. The family archives hold a file of manuscripts entitled *Sam na sam ze sobą* [One to One with Oneself]. Its 156 pages comprises: the first chapter of his novel *Zetłate dusze*, titled *Spotkanie* [A Meeting]; two loose poems, one untitled but dated 1922, and the other, *Na Forum Romanum* [On Forum

⁴ Cf. Roman Ingarden "Edith Stein on Her Activity as an Assistant of Edmund Husserl," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 23, 2 (1962–63); Edith Stein, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden 1917–1938*, einl. von Hanna Barbara Gerl (Freiburg: Herder, 1991); Jaromir Durczewski, "Głosy do listów Edyty Stein do Romana Ingardena: uwagi i wnioski z materiału edytorskiego," *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici* 1 (1996).

⁵ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Roman Ingarden, *Korespondencja filozoficzna*, oprac. Bohdan Michalski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Collegium Civitas Press, 2002); "Nieznany traktat metafizyczny Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza dedykowany Romanowi Ingardenowi," oprac. Bohdan Michalski, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (2002).

⁶ Ingarden, *The Cognition*, 290.

⁷ Roman Stanisław Ingarden, "Wstęp do 'Archiwaliów' Ojca," *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 2 (1999).

Romanum], from 1946; as well as a sixteen-part cycle of poems selected from his manuscript drafts and written in his youth. They were diligently copied on a typewriter, annotated with handwritten corrections, arranged thematically, and accompanied by a list of contents. This file has clearly been prepared for publication.

In the light of the aforementioned facts it comes as no surprise that the concept of *quasi*-judgements must appear very differently from how it has been expounded in all compendia *ad usum delphini*.

2.2. *What we do know about quasi-judgements*

The common theoretical consciousness knows about the term “*quasi*-judgements” through abridged remarks on literary utterance that is separated from its outside reality (that is, of the author and the recipient). Such an interpretation hinges on the arguably most frequently quoted sentence from Ingarden’s first version of *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego* [The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art]. According to it, the presence of *quasi*-judgements in the literary work “cuts us off from the reality transcendent to the work, making us constitute our own reality and submit to its aesthetic contemplation.”⁸ Thus, becoming synonymous with non-reference, aesthetical autonomy, and the fictionality of the literary work, in this version the term is seen as representative of the entirety of modern literary theory. The recapitulated interpretation of *quasi*-judgements prevailed in the theory of literary studies both in Poland and worldwide from the 1930s until the 1980s. It served as a basis for juxtaposing Ingarden’s phenomenological concept with Formalism, Structuralism, and Semiotics. These comparisons were not really without reason, but they overlooked a fundamental difference. Ingarden did not search for linguistic exponents that determine the suspension of reference. Contrary to Jakobson, for instance, he posed questions about cases in which a *quasi*-judgement does

⁸ Roman Ingarden, “O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego,” in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 1. (Warszawa: PWN, 1957), 111; first printed: Lwów: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1937. This version of the work, which was published earlier than the one quoted previously, has not been translated into English. The English translation has been based on its extended and complemented edition that was first released in German: Roman Ingarden, *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968). In Polish literary theory, however, it is the Lvov version that was commonly known and quoted; the ideas formulated in this edition laid foundations for opinions about *quasi*-judgements still before the Polish translation of *Das literarische Kunstwerk* was released: Roman Ingarden, *O dziele literackim*, transl. Maria Turowicz (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1960). Unless stated otherwise, further quotations from Ingarden’s works unpublished in English have been translated by Katarzyna Szymańska.

not differ from a judgement *sensu stricto*. What lay at the heart of his analyses was the problem of how to tell whether a proposition is a *quasi-judgement* when “the assertive propositions appearing in a literary work have the external *habitus* of judicative propositions.”⁹

2.3. *What we do not know about quasi-judgements*

First of all, we do not know or we do not remember that it was not Ingarden who invented *quasi-judgements*. It was Aristotle, in *De interpretatione* (17a2).

Secondly, Ingarden was not the only advocate of *quasi-judgements* of his time. Propositions beyond true or false were a central interest for numerous philosophers of the Lvov-Warsaw School. Laying the foundations for many-valued logic in 1934, Jan Łukasiewicz identified them in science as well:

Two types of propositions must be distinguished in science. Let us assume that the first type recreates the facts given in experience, whereas the others are *created* by the human mind. The propositions of the first category are true because the trueness consists in the compatibility between thought and being. But are propositions of the other category true as well? We cannot state with all certainty that they are *false*. What was created by the human mind cannot be pure fantasy. But we have no right to deem them true, since we do not generally know whether they have their equivalent in a real being.¹⁰

Thirdly, we cannot tell how a *quasi-judgement* differs from a judgement. This difference is not determined by the shape or content of an utterance: “the question whether a declarative sentence [...] is a judgement, an assumption, or an apparent assertion, does not form part of its material content.”¹¹ Language has neither grammatical nor semantic exponents at its disposal which would indicate the status of an utterance.

In his polemics with Käte Hamburger’s *Die Logik der Dichtung* [The Logic of Poetry], published in 1957, which is over 25 years later

⁹ Ingarden, *The Cognition*, 167.

¹⁰ Jan Łukasiewicz, *O nauce* (Lwów: Polskie Towarzystwo Filozoficzne, 1934), 34–35.

¹¹ Roman Ingarden, “On So-Called Truth in Literature,” trans. Adam Czerniawski, in *Selected Papers in Aesthetics: Roman Ingarden*, ed. Peter J. McCormick (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 138. First printed in Poland as: Roman Ingarden, “O tak zwanej ‘Prawdzie’ w literaturze,” *Przegląd Współczesny* 1(1937).

than *Das literarische Kunstwerk*,¹² Ingarden stated emphatically, but not without a touch of irony, that:

It would be [...] of course extremely pleasant to find a special grammatical form of the verb and prove that its sole presence in a sentence prevents it from being a statement of real facts, and makes it refer to the realms of poetic fictions. I am not a specialist in the German language and must leave to those who are the question whether there really is such a past form of the German verb. As a matter of fact, however, German grammarians have so far somehow not noticed such a form or such a use of the German verb.¹³

The status of an utterance is also not determined by any specific sound qualities, nor by stylistic or syntactic ones, which in modern theory are prototypically linked to “literature”.

Fourthly, the status of a *quasi*-judgement does not result from the performativity of language, i.e. from the ability of linguistic units to simulate the intentional object. This object comes into being every time language is used: “every sentence ‘has’, according to its own essence, a derived purely intentional sentence correlate.”¹⁴

Fifthly, the status of a judgement or *quasi*-judgement is not associated with the specific qualities of the intentional object performed by language, either. In particular, it is not established by the spots of indeterminacy. These appear in every intentional object, the reason being that language is limited and unable to transmit the infinite richness of data quality contained in direct experience within its finite number of units.

Most probably, Ingarden adopted this belief from Bergson, but did not draw from it any radically critical Bergsonian conclusions. The outcomes of his considerations about the difference between a judgement and *quasi*-judgement lead elsewhere. They result in a fundamentally different partition of the field of utterance than in the prototypical Modernist literary studies. Ingarden does not divide this field into separated areas of “literary” and “non-literary” utterances (“everyday”, “scientific”, “colloquial”); in his understanding, the boundaries between these areas

¹² Ingarden’s polemics with Hamburger’s work published in his introduction to the Polish translation of *Das literarische Kunstwerk* for obvious reasons was not included into the English version.

¹³ Ingarden, *O dziele*, 18. The translation of the following fragment: “I am not a specialist in the German language and must leave to those who are the question whether there really is such a past form of the German verb” is reconstructed after an analogous passage included in the English translation of Ingarden, *The Cognition*, 64.

¹⁴ Roman Ingarden, *Literary Work of Art: an investigation on the borderlines of ontology, logic, and theory of literature with an appendix on the functions of language in the theater*, trans., with an introduction George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 130.

are historically changeable and depend on neither grammar nor semantics, but pragmatics.

3. *Semantics and pragmatics in Ingarden's idea of reference*

The following discussion might resemble an anthology of quotations. Nonetheless, I would like to convince you that an alternative interpretation of Ingarden's thought is not only possible but simply necessary: namely, one that is rooted in his native Polish intellectual context and based on more than two of his treatises (unlike the usual interpretation). Besides *Das literarische Kunstwerk* [The Literary Work of Art] and *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks* [The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art], I will also freely make use of his other works on philosophy and logic. This is legitimised by the subtitle of *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, namely: *Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft* [An Investigation of the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Language]. N.B. some contemporary editions omit this subtitle or, God knows why, extend them with the additional parenthesis: "Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy". For the purposes of fundamentally reinterpreting Ingarden and revising his idea, lengthy quotation will provide good evidence.

I do not want to claim categorically that my interpretation is the only right one. But it is definitely in agreement with a perspective on the problem of reference and literariness that I recognise as characteristic of interwar Polish literary studies.

3.1. *Semantic foundations for homogenising the discursive field*

The fact of Ingarden's not working on, or even not aiming to work on a separate idea of poetic language stemmed directly from his semantics. Its basic postulates include the distinction between the object "indicated" [wyznaczany] and "designated" [oznaczany] by utterance, which then leads to the difference between "congruous" [trafny] affirmative sentence and "true" [prawdziwy] sentence.

Let us start with the "indicated" and "designated" objects. Like Gottlob Frege and Husserl, Ingarden differentiated between two of language's representing functions. Following the distinction between *Sinn* [sense] and *Bedeutung* [reference, denotation], he argued: "there can be two different names which 'refer' to the same object, but express

different ‘senses’, for instance: the first Emperor of the French, the victor of Marengo, the vanquished at Waterloo.”¹⁵

This rationale was additionally legitimised by his belief that the subject is not erasable from the act of cognition:

The creation of meaning [in] works is a derivative function of, among other [things], the cognising of certain objects, particularly of perceiving them in [one or another] manner. This perception can be diverse to the extent that, for example, in looking at an object we are struck by a certain feature (e.g. colour), where someone else notices some other feature that imposes itself on him.¹⁶

As already mentioned, the object is “indicated” by every utterance and each instance of utterance simulates a “mental” (i.e. intentional) being. A logical conclusion follows: every utterance is primarily a *quasi*-judgement, and only secondly, also a judgement. It becomes a judgement only when it obtains the “designating” function, which happens when the subject finds an equivalent of the “indicated” object in the world implied to be real. This might be the actual turn of events, but it does not follow necessarily. What is most important is that this world is only “implied” as a reality independent from consciousness. It therefore belongs to possible worlds in accordance with the subject’s knowledge, worldview and beliefs:

For instance, when I turn from an unbeliever into a one-hundred-percent believer, then the words ‘angel’ or ‘devil’ in their meaning cease to refer to any fiction. In the same vein, when I transform from a believing Platonist into, for example, a Positivist, then while confronting the name “square”, I start understanding something completely different in existential terms from previously.¹⁷

We should not, however, jump so soon to the conclusions that, in Ingarden’s view, literature precedes science, fiction comes before truth, or everything is fiction. The right conclusion is, rather, that despite the proliferated interpretations *ad usum delphini* of Ingarden’s phenomenological concept, it is not reference that determines the division of the discursive field into the literary and non-literary part. The entire

¹⁵ Roman Ingarden, “O języku i jego roli w nauce,” in *Z teorii języka i filozoficznych podstaw logiki* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972), 47–48.

¹⁶ Roman Ingarden, “On Translations,” trans. Jolanta Wawrzycka, in *Ingardeniana III. Roman Ingarden’s Aesthetics in a New Key and the Independent Approaches of Others: The Performing Arts, the Fine Arts, and Literature*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Boston & London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 154.

¹⁷ Ingarden, “O języku,” 49.

field of linguistic practices has from the outset been fully covered with *quasi-judgements*.

Now, further to the “congruous” and “true” judicative propositions and to the question of *mimesis* and *poesis*. The “indicated” object is a monosubjective object. It acquired inter-subjectivity only in the act of linguistic communication. The sentence is “congruous” when it comprises “the emergent meaning intentions that are the same and equally interconnected as the primary intentions in cognition expressed or preserved by a given judgement.”¹⁸ In other words, the “congruity” or “aptness” of the judicative proposition depends on how the quality of the object of experience is mimetically projected into the semantic components of the object’s name.¹⁹

Thus, the condition for a judgement being “congruous” is the parallelism between ontology and semantics. But a “congruous” judgement does not necessarily have to be a true one (although every true judgement must necessarily be congruous). The conclusion that follows from this argumentation is identical with the one formulated previously: the field of linguistic practices is from the outset fully covered with congruous judgements.

Both congruous judgements and true judgements lie within the responsibility of the subject’s linguistic activity. According to Ingarden’s apprehension, the right to create language limitlessly works in every domain. Likewise, when in science “we have to capture a completely new experience for the first time [...], we are unable to put it into words and so we first need to coin a meaning and then place it within a vocal symbol.”²⁰

The philosopher also characterised his own discursive practice in terms of a free play between experience and language:

When in the course of observing, I come to realise in my experience that something is of a certain kind, then my next effort is to provide names being equivalent to these data, to enrich the conceptual apparatus.²¹

All utterances, therefore, belong to the realm of *mimesis* and *poesis*.

Acknowledging the right to create language in science, something that in Modernist literary theory was a privilege granted exclusively to art, emerged from the postulated resistance towards linguistic automatisations, including in the domain of knowledge. Rather dramatically, Ingarden

¹⁸ Ingarden, “O poznawaniu,” 191.

¹⁹ Cf. Ingarden, “On So-Called Truth,” 154.

²⁰ Ingarden, “O języku,” 100.

²¹ Ingarden, “O języku,” 110.

labelled given fixed language as “denaturalised” and “degenerated”. He referred to the analyses of the scholar of Indo-European, Jan Michał Rozwadowski, author of a 1911 work entitled “Zjawisko dysautomatyzacji i tendencja energii psychicznej” [The Phenomenon of Deautomatisation and Tendency of Psychic Energy].²² He assumed that this dead language distorted cognition, working as a machine that “controls the man that drives it. [...] We become dogmatic worshippers of bygone experiences: our cognitive activities cease to be free and open to the guidelines dictated by experience, and instead the fixed language *patterns* come into play.”²³

And so let us summarise: the principle of *poiesis* governs the entire field of linguistic practices. The only factors that determine the partition of this field into literary and scholarly practices are pragmatic.

3.2. Pragmatic foundations for differentiating the discursive field

In his article *O poetyce* [On Poetics], written already after the war, Ingarden sketched a programme of studies spanning “all works of art (all ‘writing’ output), which encompasses both the works of literary art as well as other ‘written’ works: scholarly, journalistic, religious, diarist, etc.”²⁴ His interwar treatises focused on the cases of ambiguous utterances that may be classified as either literary or scholarly works. According to him, although “homogeneous in their construction,” these peculiar hermaphrodites (or borderline cases) “may be read in two different ways. Two different [concretisations] may be derived from the same work, which can be read either as a) a work of literary art, or b) a learned treatise.”²⁵ But it is the approach of the reader that dictates the mode of reading:

Which way of reading [...] will come into effect in a certain case is from the perspective of a literary work purely coincidental: it depends on the reader and their interests both in the moment of starting their reading as well

²² Jan Michał Rozwadowski, “Zjawisko dysautomatyzacji i tendencja energii psychicznej,” *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 1 (1922). Rozwadowski presented his idea for the first time in his 1911 paper delivered at the Philosophical Section of the 11th Congress of Polish Doctors and Natural Scientists in Cracow. Although this begs for further comparison between Rozwadowski’s and Shklovsky’s concepts, it is a topic for another article. Here, the crucial fact is that Ingarden’s and Rozwadowski’s semantic ideas curiously converge, which resulted from their shared sphere of influence, namely, the semantics of Twardowski’s Lvov school.

²³ Ingarden, “O języku,” 112–113.

²⁴ Roman Ingarden, “O poetyce,” in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 1., 255.

²⁵ Ingarden, “On So-Called Truth,” 157.

as in the course of it. For even during the reading, the reader's interest can change.²⁶

The way an utterance is shaped can at best have an effect on the reader's focus. But then again, it can only make it possible for "certain qualities to appear in its concretisation. These qualities are themselves neither elements nor moments of literary constructs, but solely in being present throughout the work [...], they come to constitute a foundation for aesthetical value."²⁷

From among the non-linguistic qualities that direct the recipient's approach, Ingarden attached great significance to what he referred to as the "tone" of utterance. Having first asked "how can we tell that certain sentences [...] demand that when we take up an aesthetic attitude, they should be construed as *quasi*-judgements?", he then answered this question as follows: "the decisive moment is primarily the tone in which they are uttered."²⁸

According to Ingarden, the "tone" (deriving from the Romantic philosophy of art, and arguably staying quite close to the "expressive intonation" of Mikhail Bakhtin and Valentin Voloshinov) is comprised of the suprasegmental components of language. This involves its polysensory aspects, whether prosodic, kinetic, or emotional. They all have an expressive and pragmatic function: "Expression and action come into force primarily through the 'tone' of utterance."²⁹ The tone points to the attitude of the subject towards the object, indicates the reference of the speaking "I" to the "you", and becomes the main exponent of the perlocutionary effect of speech. In doing so, it is available through the oral text as well as the written one. As he put it in his *Szkice z filozofii literatury* [Sketches in the Philosophy of Literature]:

Having well understood a given literary work we can [...] appropriately read and respectively 'recite' it. And this entails choosing exactly the tone, or more generally a way of articulating the words and whole sentences of the work, that – so to speak – 'demands' to be chosen in a given situation.³⁰

²⁶ Roman Ingarden "O tzw. 'Prawdzie' w literaturze," in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 1., 432. This fragment is absent from Adam Czerniawski's abridged translation of the article.

²⁷ Roman Ingarden "Funkcje artystyczne języka," in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 3 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970), 317.

²⁸ Ingarden, "On So-Called Truth," 155.

²⁹ Ingarden, "O języku," 99.

³⁰ Roman Ingarden, *Szkice z filozofii literatury* (Łódź: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Polonista", 1947), 62.

However, the tone does not play the key role in the reader's approach; it is the context that does that. According to Ingarden's apprehension, the idea of context is ambivalent. It signifies the co-text along with the metatext, as well as a host of socio-pragmatic factors. The co-text and metatext serve as a special kind of user's manual to the text. Nevertheless, this manual still follows the socio-pragmatic directives which are superior to it. And according to Ingarden, they are part of the so-called cultural atmosphere and, in a narrower sense, the atmosphere of the literary epoch. The "atmosphere" refers to "the given historical environment in which a reading takes place. It is determined by diverse factors that 'bind' [literature – D.U.] with the history of political and social changes as well as the development processes of a certain community."³¹

Most notably, cultural atmosphere covers the current styles, conventions, and norms of reading, which have been introduced by authoritative experts and recorded in various instances of concretisation. These instances manifest themselves in the history of literature and literary criticism, but also in visualisations through film, theatre, and painting, as well as musical adaptations. They set the models that are consequently introduced into didactic, common, and popular circulation and affirmed through the evidenced instances of reading by what Ingarden called "consumers". Alongside material factors (such as the book cover, graphics, and paper), as well as institutional and ideological ones, they create a hierarchised environment of reception. Individual concretisations are a derivative of the social models of concretising. They are an exponent of "the relation between the work and the literary atmosphere of a given epoch; and only in the second place do they reflect the relation between the work and the individual structure of the reader."³²

At the end of the day, what decides a text's status as either "a work of literary art" (i.e. the discourse composed from *quasi*-judgements), or "a work of scholarship" (i.e. the discourse composed of judgements), or a borderline discourse that could be read in a twofold way, is a social norm of reading. Interconnected with other models within the social and cultural sphere, as well as with the users' beliefs and viewpoints, this norm is subject to constant change. These changes lead to permanent shifts in the corpus of texts regarded as literary. They also dictate how some of them "drop out" of the current repertoire, while others are

³¹ Roman Ingarden, "Dodatek. Przedmiot i zadania 'wiedzy o literaturze'," in *Studia z estetyki*, vol 1., 241.

³² Ingarden, "Dodatek," 242.

“revived” back into it. Relocations in the corpus then affect the models of concretisation.

In short, Ingarden’s “literary work” is a dynamic phenomenon regardless of the fact that its constituent linguistic units are stable and unchangeable. Depending on the current model of reading, this work can be received as a literary or non-literary text. It has a labile affiliation and is always relocating within the discursive field. With respect to these properties, it remains close to Tynyanov’s “literary fact”. This article is no place for a comparative analysis between the Russian Formalist and the Polish phenomenologist. It is still worth mentioning that both cases demonstrate a transition from non-referential ideas emphasising the autonomy of literature towards a closer relationship between literature and the socio-historical reality, which was due to the reading activity of its recipients. It was easy to notice this shift of emphasis in the interests of Modernist literary theorists already from the end of the 1920s, although it became considerably more intense in the 1930s. Its relation to the socio-political situation of Eastern and Central Europe remains a topic for a separate study.

4. *Semantics and pragmatics in Polish interwar literary studies*

Ingarden was not the sole thinker in Polish interwar literary studies who focused on how to determine whether an utterance is literary, or who assumed that its attributed status is settled by custom among the readership. Neither was he the only one to postulate that the field of literary studies could be extended to any linguistic utterance. Literature was defined beyond the criteria of fictionality, aesthetical autonomy, and linguistic specificity by scholars such as (to mention just a few):

1. Juliusz Kleiner, who in his 1913 article “Charakter i przedmiot badań literackich” [The Character and the Object of Literary Studies] admittedly maintained that “the object of literary studies [...] is a separate sphere of human reality,” but still assigned this fact of separation to “the scholar’s stance” rather than the object’s properties:

It is difficult to divide objects into mutually exclusive categories; the boundaries [...] are [...] fluid and vague; the same object can belong to different categories and can oscillate on the border between two categories just like those creatures [...] that can be classified as both plants and animals.³³

³³ Juliusz Kleiner, “Charakter i przedmiot badań literackich,” *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1 (1913); quoted after the reprint in *Teoria badań literackich w Polsce. Wypisy*, vol. 1, ed. Henryk Markiewicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie), 205.

2. And so Waclaw Borowy in his 1939 treatise “Prawda w poezji” [Truth in Poetry]:

When we imagine a ‘setting’ or time of action [in a novel], we go through complex operations [...]. But we carry out equally complex operations while reading [...] works that are not poetic, but diarist or annalistic [...]. Admitting that, we abolish one of the artificially drawn boundaries between poetry and ‘non-poetry’.³⁴

3. Likewise, in her numerous works on genre theory written from the 1930s onwards, Stefania Skwarczyńska formulated literary theory as a secondary genre of speech:

Since we do not see any dissimilarity between the structure of the literary genre and the artistic structure of any other genre [...] – we believe there is no reason to cover the entire field of verbal construct with the research field of literary theory. Thanks to this, different types of works will be included there and treated on a par with each other: the meaningful verbal works traditionally ascribed to literary studies, the ones ‘invited’ to them from time to time, the ones that wander about within the observation scope of the so-called study of prose, and the ones that are dealt with by ethnography.³⁵

4. Zygmunt Łempicki in his 1930 project of stylistics wrote as follows:

[A]s for the scope, it needs to be stated that it encompasses the *entire language* [...]. Formerly applied to single works or to the epochs of poetry’s development, the stylistic point of view got significantly extended to the whole range of linguistic expression.³⁶

5. Konrad Górski, who argued following Benedetto Croce: “There is no reason to distinguish poetic language as a certain variant of the general language serving as an instrument of literary art.”³⁷

³⁴ Waclaw Borowy, “Prawda w poezji,” *Glossy* 3 (1939); quoted after the reprint in *Studia i szkice literackie*, vol. 2 (Warszawa 1983, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy), 139–140.

³⁵ Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: PAX), 54.

³⁶ Zygmunt Łempicki, “‘Gehalt und Gestalt’ Oskara Walzla,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 53 (1928); quoted after the reprint in *Wybór pism*, vol. 2 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966), 198.

³⁷ Konrad Górski, *Poezja jako wyraz* (Toruń: Księgarnia Naukowa, 1946); quoted after the reprint in *Rozważania teoretyczne* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1984), 54.

These ideas did not converge with Ingarden's thought in all respects, however, because for him, literature had an indispensable advantage over other forms of expressing the social consciousness. On the one hand, just like science, literature was a special kind of laboratory in which possible articulations of different kinds of experiences were concocted and tested. For the phenomenologist, even radically avant-garde linguistic experiments had a significant cognitive value. With reference to Julian Tuwim's suprarational work titled *Attuli mirochlady*, he wrote, for instance: "It is essential to realise what we deal with while approaching 'mirochlady' not only for the sake of the theory of literary art, but also for the theory of language and theory of cognition."³⁸

But on the other hand, only literature reflected the mechanisms of intersubjective communication. As Ingarden wrote in the article that in the end not coincidentally became an appendix to *Das literarische Kunstwerk*:

The existing 'dramatic' literature could better inform us of the manifold functions of spontaneous speech in human co-existence. The reason being that it demonstrates an extraordinary wealth of different forms of human intercourse as if preserving in a ready-made preparation what in everyday life remains fluid and elusive.³⁹

Translated by *Katarzyna Szymańska*

Abstract

The central methodological question posed in this article pertains to the possibilities and methods of pursuing the history of science. The author discusses this problem with regard to Polish literary theory. Deriving from M.E. Opler's ideas, she proposes to systematise its history around the so-called cultural themes. According to the Author, the most important theme in Polish literary theory is the one of reference, which she discusses with respect to Roman Ingarden's most renowned and influential concept. In analysing the semantic and pragmatic foundations for the phenomenologist's concept of reference in more detail, the Author

³⁸ Ingarden, *Szkice*, 94.

³⁹ Ingarden, "Funkcje mowy w widowisku teatralnym" in *O dziele*, 391. First printed "Von den Funktionen der Sprache im Theaterschauspiel," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 1 (1959). Quotation reconstructed after the slightly abridged English version of this passage: "The existing 'dramatic' literature, with its extraordinary wealth of different forms of human intercourse in speech acts, can best inform us of the manifold functions of speech in human life."

demonstrates how it was more closely associated with the socio-pragmatic ideas formed by the Modern literary theory of the 30s than it is typically assumed.

Key words: histories of knowledges; cultural themes; reference; *quasi-judgements*

