

HISTORICAL CONTEXT, STRATA AND UNITY OF MEANING: THE HERMENEUTIC MENTALITY OF ROMAN INGARDEN

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Abstract

We live in a world in which visiting a museum, listening to music or reading a book has become commonplace. Long gone are the times when only a minority was able to read or attend great concerts. We have become accustomed to move in an environment where contact with artistic creations is easy and accessible. However, if we pause to reflect or question the true meaning of art and its intrinsic nature, many would be surprised to find themselves without a clear or concise answer. It may be that if we were truly aware of art's role we would dedicate more time to contemplate and enjoy the artistic works available to us. The question of defining, delimiting or framing the notion of the "artistic" is not a trivial one. Engaging with art brings us into contact with the sublime, with that which we most need but fail to recognise or understand.

However, rapid technical or technological access to works of art does not necessarily translate into a proportional interest in art. Many look forward to their retirement to begin enjoying the pleasures of art while others frequent artistic or cultural milieux merely in order to project an image of sophistication to others, rather than out of any real personal interest; still others simply believe that art is not for them because they are too busy in their daily lives and have no interest in investing time and money in something that requires quietude and repose. Some regard art in purely decorative terms: books, artwork or records are adornments to make walls and shelves more attractive and appealing. Here art is exclusively ornamental. Within this final group are those who take

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a real interest in these theoretical and practical questions, themselves creators or not, who look to art simply for that which is lacking or can profoundly nourish their own lives.

But what is art? What does it consist of? The question of art is a philosophical and anthropological question. To understand art one must look beyond the merely apparent, the concrete, through a phenomenological approach where what matters is the relation we establish with what confronts us as a subject. To understand the truth of an artistic composition, if it is truly artistic, is to understand ourselves.

In this vein, we will analyse the work of the Polish thinker Roman Ingarden and his specific notion of the literary work of art as the foundation of modern aesthetics. We will thus pursue an understanding of artistic creation by exploring its essence, its ontology and epistemology within literary theory.

Key words: *Truth, Aesthetics, Tempo, Culture, Constitution*

1. ART, CONSTITUTION AND TRUTH

The phenomenological attitude, so necessary in art, requires an approach to what exists, what is present as an entity. The artistic encompasses truth, beauty, goodness and unity, although this does not mean to suggest it is exclusively the province of a select few nor is it something subjective. As we shall explain, the essence of art, what necessarily corresponds to art, is found in transcendence. Truth, and the understanding of truth by subjects, can be defined in three ways, as three types of truth or three manners of relating to the cosmos, the beyond and ourselves: the truth of correspondence, of relativism, of hermeneutics.

The truth as correspondence is a traditionalist conception, consisting of the adequation between the subject and reality. We admit the existence of a subject and the world, independent of whether the former exists or not. Here the existence of truth is taken for granted, a truth which is beyond the opinions of any particular individual and which can be known, if not entirely then at least partially. Thus, the understanding of the subject of specific reality is correct or erroneous according to whether their judgement adjusts or not to what truly exists. Opinions, when aspiring to truth, must correspond to reality, to that which has its own entity beyond whatever we might wish it to be.

The second type of truth is relativist, proposed by Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century, which does not admit the existence of any objective truth as described above but rather affirms that there are as many truths as there are subjects, with all positions being equally valid and acceptable. There is no thermometer that indicates if we are correct or incorrect, only what I consider to be true or untrue in a given situation and within my own personal experience. Relativism, also known as perspectivism, validates subjective opinion, which may be imposed by force, by consensus, by manipulation or by the virtue of having obtained a majority vote. Facts do not exist, only the interpretation of facts. Thus, everything depends on human perception in relation to my physiology, my individuality, my tastes, beliefs, fears, experiences, etc. This is the absolutisation of the individual subject, the individual self.

The third type of truth is interpretive or hermeneutic. This also originated in the 19th century with Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, which Martin Heidegger would relate to facticity, consisting of the notion that truth is not something closed but rather arises in the encounter between reality and the subject, between the human being and what lies beyond him. In the 20th century, the Constance School, led by Hans-Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, explored the aesthetics of reception in modern literature. For these authors, Ingarden's thought, as the founder of neo-hermeneutics, would serve as a starting point for their own proposals (Hermosillo, 2016: 41-42). Interpretive truth is the link between the universal and the particular, and thus is distinguished from relativism in that it considers not only the perceiving self as the subject but also external reality. Truth is constitutive; a process in which the individual participates but does not produce the facts. Knowledge is the equivalent of the bridge between what is within and without the human being. Joan Pegueroles, following on Hans-Georg Gadamer, affirmed the following: "A hermeneutic truth is only true if it is true "for me", that is, if its interests and impassions me. If it is true for everyone, impersonal, disinterested, then it is a scientific truth" (Pegueroles, 1998: 38).

What is interesting in this third option is that both the subject and what exists externally are important, the principal elements of affirmations either thought or expressed. Subjects are not the creators of the real but the creators of the relation between them, and thus give rise to a form of truth in which the self is both affected and protagonist and, to an extent, the recreator of reality. The result of the relation of each individual with what exists is unique and particular, never foundational, although contributing to the

reality of which we form a part. At the moment we discover for ourselves, the known acquires a new significance, suggestive and specific to ourselves.

Hermeneutics admits the existence of truth as correspondence or adequation, something also present in art. This means that when we contemplate a work of art we discover an aspect of reality which helps us to understand ourselves. Art refers us directly back to ourselves, inevitably leading us to question the meaning of our own existence:

“See thus, hermeneutics allows the possibility of approximation to any text, understood not as a closed or limited text but precisely as a living experience evidenced by the wide-eyed wonder of those living or contemplating it appropriating or integrating it into their understanding, and what’s more, their self-understanding” (Prado, 1987: 26).

For the literary work of art, the attempt to identify a work exclusively with the experience of the author is absurd, as this considers only one aspect of the work and ignores the artistic dimensions of the created composition. If, on the contrary, we exclude the experience of the author, we are left with only a series of graphics printed on the page. Another option we must also rule out is to consider the work as the product of the experiences or points of view of its readers. In this way, for example, there would be countless Hamlets with each reading producing a radically new work. In this case, the literary is considered as a means of provoking pleasurable experiences. The work of art requires a rational animal to become materialised; once created it becomes more than a mere physical entity, a text. In the words of Ingarden:

“If we wish to avoid this absurdity and adhere to our assertion that each literary work is something that in itself is one and identical, it appears that we must consider the stratum of meaningful words and sentences a component part of the literary work” (Ingarden, 1998: 34-36).

Thus, the author rejects two prevalent literary theories of his time; neo-positivism, which reduces the work to its mere physical aspect, to letters on a page; and psychologism, which maintains that a work cannot be subjected to scientific analysis because it resides exclusively in the experience of the reader. As we shall see, Ingarden’s phenomenological approach opposes these conceptions as well as the dichotomy between realism and idealism. The phenomenological approach is thus a constitutive attitude, a hermeneutic attitude in which the subject participates in reality, reclaiming its proper

place in the state of things. In order to be understood, the world and art need our collaboration, hence the importance of returning to the ideas of this thinker, often poorly understood and unknown: “(...) the work of Ingarden in its original state has been scarcely studied and confronted with the most elemental principles of Husserl’s phenomenology, to which Ingarden himself pays tribute” (Carrillo, 2015: 7).

2. THE VALUE OF HISTORICAL-LITERARY ART IN ROMAN INGARDEN

As we have mentioned, the hermeneutic approach is proposed by, among other authors, the Polish philosopher Roman Witold Ingarden (1893-1970), especially well-known for his studies of art and literature. Ingarden was part of a privileged group of students around Edmund Husserl at the German universities of Göttingen and Freiburg, witness to the development of modern phenomenology on which he would base his concept of the work of art on the basis of the aesthetics of reception (Warning, 1989: 14). Ingarden taught at the Lvov (Łódź, Poland) and the Jagiellonian (Jagiellónski, Krakow) universities, until 1945 when a Stalinist commission accused him of propagating “idealist” doctrines and he was dismissed and his books banned from publication for twelve years. In 1957, the Polish communist authorities permitted the publication of certain previously banned works, including those of Ingarden, and reinstated a number of university professors. Thus, Ingarden returned to the Jagiellonian University where he taught until his retirement a few years later. He died suddenly on June 14th, 1970, of a cerebral haemorrhage.

As mentioned above, Ingarden produced a great deal of work on the importance of art, its ontology and epistemology, from a phenomenological perspective. In literary theory, his most renowned work, *The Literary Work of Art* (Das literarische Kunstwerk), is a radiographical study which offer a different perspective of the literary works: “It’s an x-ray vision of a work to identify the essence of its different layers and the function of each one of them” (Mendoza, 2008: 28). Published in German in 1931, the Polish version was not published until almost thirty years later in 1960, the same year a second German edition was produced. *The Literary Work of Art*, as the present study will show, is fundamental to understanding Ingarden’s intuitions and initial propositions regarding art and its ontological foundations. According to Nyenhuis, this work is an essential starting point in the study of Ingarden’s literary theories, presenting basic concepts on the

existence and essential structure of a literary work of art (Nyenhuis, 1998: 17). Ingarden would later write another work on these themes in *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (Vom Erkennen des Literischen)*, expanding on his aesthetic epistemological research and the concepts expressed in the former work.

Attempting to engage in a literary work of art as if it were a mathematical formula is, at the very least, illogical. Art is not limited to personal experience, but rather is immense, inexhaustible and uncertain. Furthermore, there are two different approaches to the study of a work of art: that which refers to artistic creation itself and that which refers to the ontology of the work; following our author we will address this second question of the produced, complete and concluded work of art: “We consider a literary work as completed where the enunciations and individual words, all of those appearing in it, have been unequivocally defined and fixed their meaning in the verbal sounds and in the global structure” (Ingarden, 1998: 41). In the gestation process, the work of art is conditioned by the ideas, sentiments and tastes of the author; this is a necessary and self-evident process dependent on the relation between the psychic life of the author and the artistic results; here we can differentiate two of the alluded stages or processes, the generative and the ontological.

Art seeks relation, the encounter of a person with themselves through beauty. Hermeneutics thus consists of the relation between the theoretical meaning of a subject and the particularities of the text which leads to its contemplation. It is the individual’s frame of reference that comes into play when contemplating a work. Art invites us to reflect, helps us to understand ourselves as human beings. Reflection is an act of return to oneself; here the subject recaptures, through intellectual clarity and with moral responsibility, the unifying principles which underlie the actions in which it is normally dispersed and unremembered as a subject. We explore and delve into the hidden depths of ourselves thanks to art, itself inexhaustible, that helps us to continue living. Artistic greatness resides in connecting the work with lived experience and to advance, to carry on.

Awareness of a literary text and the awareness of ourselves is a difficult task in the world of today where we are subjected to constant and fleeting stimuli. We seem to be led towards a banal and vacuous existence, carrying out innumerable tasks empty of purpose or meaning. In our experience, it seems more important to buy and view rather than observe and contemplate. Through social media, for example, we expose ourselves constantly to a numberless audience, most often unknown to us, eager to know what we

eat, buy or the exact location of our hairdresser. We take our pictures and tell our stories but we do not relate. Reality is something more than mere appearances, and this something, although often dissipated in our daily tasks and routines, accompanies us as a silent, diffuse and mysterious necessity. This something is part of our human nature to which we can connect, although momentarily or even partially, and savour through the experience of art which itself is transcendental.

3. STRATA OF THE LITERARY WORK OF ART

In analysing the nature of a literary work of art, Roman Ingarden affirms that a work of literature is a purely intentional object having within itself a basic structure. Both are characteristic of all works of art, which allows us to make a general ontological analysis based on these fundamental qualities. Regarding intentionality, and, to truly capture Ingarden's meaning, we must dismiss the consideration of a work of literature as either a real or as an ideal object. In the first case, we would thus affirm its independent and isolated existence, beyond individual consciousness and, in the second case, the existence of the work depends on this consciousness to exist. That Ingarden raises both of these notions indicated his interest in the concrete mode of being and dynamic of art; for Ingarden art's importance lies in its hermeneutic structure, its intentional meaning. That the artistic is a purely intentional object is presented as a solution to the realist and idealist question; it is not a choice between these two theories but rather to understand and reinstate the constitutive element as the ontological basis. The work of art is always in reference to something, neither existing independently from me nor depending exclusively on my individual consciousness for its existence; art and the subject who contemplates it are completely interrelated, and it is precisely in this phenomenological approach that the internal and external of the subject are joined: "The object transcends consciousness and at the same time is intentionally in the consciousness intentionally, not really" (Tornero, 2007: 454). This does not mean that we cannot differentiate between the object and the act of knowing it: "This consists in considering all act of knowledge is strictly different from the corresponding object of knowledge or, in other words, that to gain knowledge, a completely new act of knowledge is necessary" (Crespo, 2006: 7).

With regards to its essential and common structure, the literary work is a formation constructed by a number of heterogenous strata in which are found the aesthetic values

that make a literary piece a work of art. Specifically, there are four strata present and necessary in every creation: 1. The stratum of “verbal sounds”, related to phonic material. 2. The stratum of “meaning units”, elements of meaning in words or sentences. 3. The stratum of “represented objects”, which refers to the relations between orational phrases, many indeterminate. 4. The stratum of “multiple schematised aspects” or the objects represented in the works, where the reader incorporates what is written into their experience. Over the course of the work, Ingarden always places the first two strata in the same order while the third and fourth are occasionally in reverse order, indicating that the disposition of the final two attributes is less important. The present work will also analyse the metaphysical qualities of a work which, far from being an additional stratum which Ingarden himself occasionally situates in a fifth position, is a value that affects the composition as a whole; thus, we have considered it fundamental to address this aspect separately. Each stratum is evident within this totality of the work, providing a specific element to the general composition and so contributing to the relational unity of the work. In the words of the author:

“The diversity of the material and the roles or functions of the individual strata makes the whole work, not a monotonic formation, but one that by its nature has a polyphonic character. (...) In particular, each of the strata has its own set of attributes which contribute to the constitution of the qualities of aesthetic value” (Ingarden, 1998: 52).

The literary work of art is thus a multi-stratified composition, indivisible, in which remains a single unity. The interrelation between its compositional elements is fundamental as it is the interplay between them and the heterogeneity of its dialogues that make it subject to different concretisations and thus forming a whole, polyphonic harmony containing indeterminate spaces. The work therefore requires a reader with artistic sensibility, a reader who approaches the work with an understanding of its aesthetic rather than psychological, economic or historical value. It is the human being who actualises and gives meaning to art: “It is the aesthete who reads a literary work as a work of art” (Nyenhuis, 1939: 18). We will now define each of these strata to identify their specific scope and meaning.

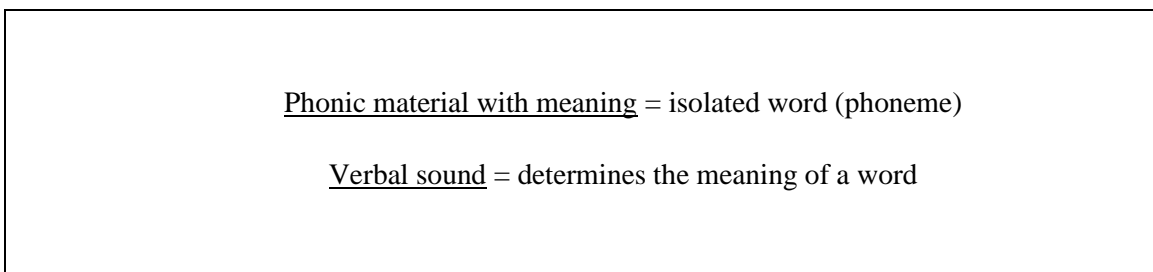
3.1. Stratum of the linguistic formation of sound

Linguistic formations are the material substrate of a literary work of art, fixing the ideas and the work of an author. This is the frame, the fixed, external structure which, as

we shall see, is indispensable in making the other strata possible and where they find their support (Ingarden, 1939: 79 and 82). The phonetic is not a means but is rather the foundation and constitutive part of literature.

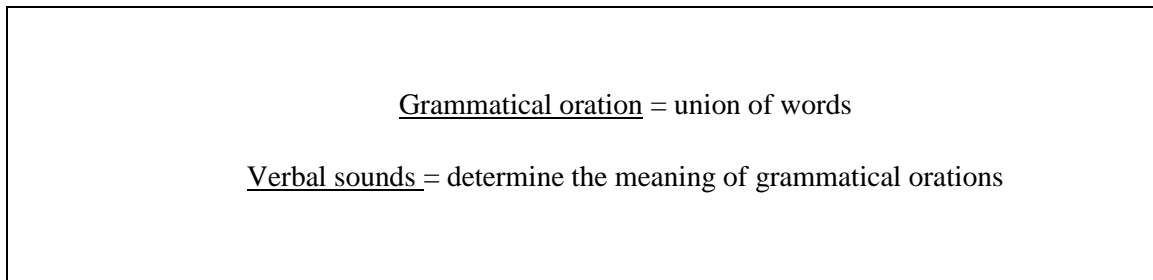
In every linguistic formation, from a literary work to a dialogue, we distinguish the phonic material and word sounds, where a single word is the most basic and original linguistic formation. Roman Ingarden distinguishes between specific phonic material, new and different in each case depending on distinct aspects such as intonation, volume or timbre, and the verbal sound whose function consists in determining the sound of a word. As the author affirms: “Although a single word may be spoken many times, and the specific phonic material is always new, the *verbal sound* remains the same” (Ingarden, 1998: 58).

That is, the verbal sound provides the intentional meaning of the phonic material, requiring exclusive attention to capture its meaning and to achieve its assigned function. The link between both terms is accidental and arbitrary, thus, any sound could be associated with any meaning. The meaning of a word requires the existence of an external frame of reference within which it can be expressed and understood. The following graphic shows how we are able to go beyond phonic material:



Graphic 1. Authors: Romero, C., Lozano, V.

Both in living language and in literary works the word is never, or almost never, isolated or solitary as an independent linguistic unit; in a grammatical oration words are linked together to produce what the author calls an “orational melody” (Ingarden, 1998: 65-66). The phonic formation of oration now constitutes an ensemble of meaning that cannot be evoked in the same way as particular sounds. The isolated word, known in linguistics as the phoneme, is the same as the phonic material which, placed in an orderly manner with other words (oration), produces a verbal sound that includes rhythm, meter, phonic patterns, physiognomy and feeling to the words (Wellek, 1981: 58).



Graphic 2. Authors: Romero, C., Lozano, V.

With regards to the rhythm of a literary work, it is important to underscore its importance and relation to the phenomenon of *tempo*. It is also important to distinguish between regular rhythm, producing a succession of equal accents, a free rhythm, which rests on the repetition of certain sequences of sounds, accentuated or not accentuated: “A rhythm imposed on a text can deform, change or disguise the immanent rhythm” (Ingarden, 1939: 69). This rhythm is new every time, given the many and varied readers of a work, also affecting the emotional qualities of the sound and the artistic meaning; it is not the same to approach a work with sadness than with melancholy or with joy. The latent artistic emotion explains, for example, how a poem read aloud can often transmit something even if we do not understand the language. Thus, the phonic qualities of the language of a literary work are not neutral but are subject to the affectivity of the reader. Here we see the union between the phonic and the semantic. As human beings, none of our acts are neutral; we take different actions or have thoughts to make what surrounds us our own. We are those who grant the status of art to artistic works.

Words, orations and verbal sounds have always had a historical development in close relation with the life of communities and peoples; there are words which over the course of time acquire diverse connotations or fall out of use. It is the subject who, at all times, makes phonic material what it is and imbues it with meaning. In this way, we are able to identify the meaning of an oration, although the words which make it up have diverse meanings.

3.2. Stratum of meaning units

The stratum of meaning units is the semantic stratum. Its importance lies in making possible the understanding of the other strata, beginning here at the level of the hidden, the interpretive. Meaning units not only determine the elements represented as characters, actions or time but also the way in which these are represented in schematised aspects, thus having their own voice in the polyphony of the work, influencing in its

specific design and of singular importance in the construction of other strata although these meaning units normally go unnoticed. When an author gives life to a work or the readers engage with it, they are not aware of the existence of this construction of orations which establishes bridges and connections; in fact, the invisibility or transparency of this stratum is the best indication that a work is well structured.

The aesthetic is thus the union of two artistic poles, the work and the audience; every work has material content and formal content in which artistic value requires a physical structure. As a reader, I reconfigure the work based on the decision of the author. The most sublime aesthetic perception rests on understanding and the rational aspect of the work of literary art is essential; that is, the presence of *logos* as an essential element of the configuration which gives a specific ontic which distinguishes the literary work of art from other art forms (Ruíz, 2006: 43). In this way, Ingarden affirms that in the literary sphere, the formation of a work may never be entirely irrational; a work must be intellectually comprehensible. The rational is the starting point to reach the irrational, something which, in other artistic manifestations such as music or painting is not the case. The enjoyment we experience then is not ecstasy, although it is a state of pleasurable calm, a feeling of satisfaction with the beautiful and the positive, which is not the case with negative values. (Ingarden, 1998: 251, 256 and 257). The stratum of meaning commands the polyphony of the work, giving rise to beauty and ugliness. There are mediocre works which do not move the reader because they lack the substratum crafted by the author. There are also disharmonious works where there is a discordance between the aspects represented and the style of the work.

No literary work is entirely and precisely structured and circumscribed nor is it required to be so. In fact, literary works contain indeterminate elements which require *concretisation* by the reader, their rational imagination and perception. This fact or stratum would explain why we consider literary places and characters as real, as well as their personal histories or experiences. The dependence of a literary work on its readers is evident. The potential aesthetic value of a work of literature is revealed when we read it, providing the reading leads us to *concretisation* and not the contrary, since in this way we are performing another type of activity. The artistic object, if not experienced and *concretised*, cannot be catalogued as an aesthetic object; consequently, only the intentional expropriation by the interpreter by means of *concretisation* can provide access to this aesthetic transformation (Argüelles, 2015: 74). Part of the charm of a work of

literary art, its aesthetic delight, rests in the ambiguities it presents both in individual words and in complete orations. If one wished to improve or retouch a work, or even add new ambiguities, we would be speaking of a work of art that is now different from the original.

It is important to recall Roman Ingarden's direct relation with the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which oriented his thought and work. Ingarden maintains that the literary work of art is a purely intentional object, always referring to something, to subjects or readers. We can distinguish between individual and intentional objects, the latter being themselves transcendent while the former are independent of conscious actions. The intentional is ontically heteronymous, finding its ontic basis not in the real but rather in the imagination of the subject which makes it possible and projects its essence. For example, on an individual level there is no such thing as a square circle, something which on an intentional level would be possible although it cannot be intuitively imagined. The intentional in art, as opposed to ontic and autonomous objectivities, individual, may contain elements which contradict the real world. Objects in the real world self-present themselves, they are exhibited. Our relation to objects represented in literary art is intuitive, imaginative, and thus schematised aspects are necessary.

Orations produce what Ingarden calls *intentional correlation*, which is opalescent and polysemic, since each oration corresponds to a single correlation and no more; thus the meaning assigned by the receptor may be invalid and not do justice to all the possible readings of a specific work of literature. The *intentional correlation* is neither object nor behaviour but rather a set of non-objective circumstances. Each oration, without exception, also has its *derived correlation*, arising from the *intentional* and without being completely ambiguous since it is only through the determinate that the indeterminate can be evoked.

3.3. Stratum of represented objects

The third stratum is that of represented objects, normally associated with the literary work of art, the characters and events they are involved in, referring to things, and characters, occurrences and actions. Evidently, a work of literary art is something more than the objects represented therein, although when we read it the first thing we perceive is precisely these. We may even think that, if someone were to ask what we were reading

we would refer to what is represented in the work, that which situates us in the story and allows us to visualise and understand the plot. We must take into account that, in literature, the actions or course of events are essentially related to the ontology of the work; it is in what is represented that we discover metaphysical qualities.

The represented objects, characters and structure of the work are intentional, the specific content may be real or ideal. That is, invites us to relate and intervene as constitutive subjects, rather than creators, of the unfolding of the story where what is most fundamental are the elements that appear and those that do not, thus producing its true identity. As receptors we access and make our own the worlds represented by the creators, thus making possible a hermeneutic literary relation or access. According to Ingarden: With regards to represented characters, these are derived objects, purely intentional and projected by the meaning units (Ingarden, 1998: 260). It is important to revisit the idea, commented and defended on many occasions by the author, that the work is also a representation produced by its readers. In reading, we actualise what we read, incorporating it into our space, time and circumstances: “The act of understanding is a dynamic structure and the engine of this dynamism is in the text” (Lledó, 1991: 31). The reader fits what they read into their world, their history and their reality. This third stratum is connected to the previous two and, as we shall see, also with the following stratum. Representation is produced by meaning units, made possible through phonic material, and by assigning, as we shall see, schematised aspects to the represented objects.

But what is represented cannot be directly identified with the real. Consider, for example, the literary representation of the city of Madrid and the real Madrid. These are two different spaces that never intersect physically; one being representation space while the other is imaginal space. In this case, if there is a reference to Madrid in a text, and I am familiar with Madrid, I am able to visualise it thanks to my intuitive imagination. But what if I imagine something which does not and has never existed? Imagining the non-existent is possible, something Ingarden calls imagined space, just as I can imagine a unicorn or a siren. What determines the space and our means of accessing it is the type of object referenced: represented, imaginal and imagined. Thus, the three types of space Ingarden refers to combine in a certain manner the philosophical doctrines of phenomenology, realism and idealism. Ingarden brings together in literature the real, the ideal and the imagined. For him, represented space is properly literary, taking as its point of departure and origin that what exists beyond the specific individual, who integrates it

into their own experience and particularity and thus forming a hermeneutic phenomenological unity. Regarding realism, the existence of the real world does not depend on the individual consciousness, integrated by the author in what he calls the imaginational space. Finally, idealism maintains that reality depends exclusively on the subject, finding its parallels in the imagined space. The following graph outlines the relation between spaces and knowledge:

SPACES	REFERENCED OBJECTS AND KNOWLEDGE
Represented space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present in the literary work 	Represented object: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its existence depends on the human being • Phenomenology
Imaginational space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exists independent of the subject 	Imaginational object: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not be known by the reader • Realism
Imagined space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed individually (does not exist imaginatively) 	Imagined object: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its existence depends on the subject • Idealism

Graphic 3. Authors: Romero, C., Lozano, V.

The graph does not represent a work exactly and should be regarded in the broadest sense. The literary work is never exhaustive, does not express or communicate everything indicated or suggested within, there are always indeterminate elements which in fact form a part of its ontology. Reading is not a passive act; in reading we reconstruct and connect with a reality in which we participate, patches which remain undefined or indeterminate are defined by the reader, who “fills in” these gaps. The greatest literary works fire our creativity, giving insight into ourselves and it is precisely in these indeterminate patches which make this possible, since just as in life, literature is not precisely defined and circumscribed, there is always a fog of indeterminacy surrounding it. We see this, for example how Albert Camus, awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, describes the city of Oran at the opening of his novel *The Plague*. Although here we offer merely a brief fragment, as readers we cannot help but imagine the way of life of the workers in the city, the climate they ‘endure’ every day, their loves and hates, their manner of doing things, etc. We cannot avoid taking what is written and going beyond what is represented:

“Perhaps the easiest way of making a town’s acquaintance is to ascertain how the people in it work, how they love, and how they die. In our little town, perhaps an effect of the climate, all three are done on much the same lines, with the same feverish yet casual air. The truth is that everyone is bored and devotes himself to cultivating habits. Our citizens work hard, but solely with the object of getting rich” (Camus, 1996: 297-298).

A reality is represented in literature which cannot be reflected in its fluid continuity, can never be fully represented. The representation of time in literature is usually analogous to real time, although it may have special particularities or be order differently for the way time is experienced in the real world. The represented is not merely a copy of the real, hence its artistry, its beauty.

3.4. Stratum of schematised aspects

It may be helpful to begin this section corresponding to the final literary stratum, schematised aspects, referring again to the unity and interrelation of all the strata. Schematised aspects are neither physical nor concrete; they belong to the structure of the work and at the same time are isolated, playing a special and signifying role as we are dealing with a work of literary art (Ingarden, 1998: 311). Hence, this fourth stratum is not properly a part of the work because its purpose is to actualise the potentiality of the contents of the work.

The existence of schematised aspects is determined by a set of projected circumstances, meaning that all schematised aspects belong to the represented objects where both strata are coordinated. In some works, or even in parts of some works, schematised aspects are prepared, *kept ready* for actualisation on the part of the reader. Hence it is necessary to view the work in its own terms and nature, not confusing it with specific or individual concretisations. For a work to be considered artistic, and to meet its aesthetic function, schematised aspects must be at the disposition of the work, otherwise these would depend on the numerous readers actualising them individually. The following graph outlines the relation between represented objects and schematised aspects:

Schematised aspects = necessarily present in the represented objects

Actualisation of schematised aspects = readers

Graphic 4. Authors: Romero, C., Lozano, V.

Although schematised aspects apport aesthetic value to the polyphonic harmony of the literary work, the correct reading of the work will depend on the aesthetic sensibilities of the reader, essential to set the literary work in motion. There are two functions which Ingarden assigns to schematised aspects. The first consists in constructing represented objects and the second, in making possible the realisation of inherent metaphysical qualities, essential for the aesthetic perception of the work. Schematised aspects reveal the represented objects in the work and the reader, in actualising them, completes them, incorporates them and integrates them into their own personal experience. The reader schematises within the scope of their own personal experience which is made possible because the text never reflects everything, it contains indeterminate spaces which must be concretised. Reading implies reconstructing, filling the indeterminate gaps within the literary work: “Reading great works of literature helps to construct our own world in that these works, thanks to their descriptive power, requires us to reconstruct our vision of the world and respond to their pretensions to truth from a defined position” (Valdés, 1955: 61).

4. METAPHYSICAL QUALITIES AS A UNION OF TEMPOS

The metaphysical qualities of a literary work of art are manifested in the objects represented, a quality which reveals the metaphysical reality which surrounds us in an indescribable atmosphere far from grey and opaque daily life. The artistic and the metaphysical, of different a nature, form an inseparable unity, where the metaphysical is the aim of the artistic and the artistic is an instrument of the aesthetic. Here the terms metaphysical and aesthetic are used interchangeably, since metaphysical qualities are manifested in the aesthetic values present in art. This is something lacking in scientific writings as these are not called upon to be works of art and normally do not have

metaphysical qualities and, in the remote case they do, this is merely by chance as the aim of scientific texts is to disseminate or communicate the results of scientific research.

The metaphysical is not the property of objects but depends on the psychic state of the subject. The metaphysical is the sublime, the impacting or the sad which breaks into ordinary life; it is a discordant note in the daily routines of life, illuminating our existence due to something which stands out beyond all else. The origin of the metaphysical is found in the different, in that which contrasts and differs from the ordinary, which breaks into quotidian reality. Whether this is an enchanting or a frightful experience is irrelevant; the key lies in the significant and extraordinary. In its specific form, the metaphysical cannot be circumscribed within the purely rational; it surrounds us to reveal the profundity of existence which normally goes unperceived and to which we are normally blind. In the metaphysical mysterious and hidden meaning is revealed as the height of existence. According to Ingarden:

“These ‘metaphysical’ qualities, as we like to call them, revealed from time to time, are what makes life worth living, and, whether we wish it or not, a secret longing for their concrete revelation lives in us and drives us in all our affairs and days. Their revelation constitutes the summit and the depths of existence” (Ingarden, 1998: 342).

It is existence, being and eternity which is revealed to us in these concrete aesthetic moments, placing us at the centre of what is manifested. It is as if we live in constant wait, longing, desiring that from time to time, even for a fleeting moment, life is revealed resplendent before us; it does not matter if this frightens us, if it makes us feel small and insignificant, if we see ourselves contingent. We want life to surprise us, we want a moment of plenitude that reminds us that life is worth living (Ruíz, 2006: 159). Metaphysical qualities are resplendent moments of life which banish our routine and meaningless existence although there are degrees of intensity, and a work of art cannot be understood in its entirety.

As we have mentioned, it is difficult to define the metaphysical and its effects with any precision or exactitude, difficult to understand and experience this quality which, in a certain way, makes us treasure it all the more. Aesthetic impact consists in being entirely in the world and at the same time beyond it. It is neither purely rational nor passionate. Pedragosa defines it so: “In the aesthetic experience we do not perceive a world different from the world of perceived objects, but this same world is perceived differently: with an

intensity of the *here and now* where perception takes place” (Pedragosa, 2013: 271). There is no magistral formula nor is it the same for every person. The metaphysical is a mystery which affects us entirely, overwhelming and helping us understand ourselves: “To understand oneself is to understand oneself in terms of the text and receive from it the conditions of a self different from the self reading the text” (Ricoeur, 2000: 204).

The realisation of the metaphysical in ourselves is, as proposed by Ingarden, a special grace which is granted at some moments in our lives. Unfortunately, the desire for the metaphysical does not necessarily lead us to it and may even be an impediment to experiencing it. During the course of our lives there are situations in which the metaphysical becomes apparent in strange and varied ways, affecting us even when we do not experience it entirely. Hence the longing for the infinite of the aesthetic, the engine of many of our actions, especially the drive for philosophical understanding and artistic creativity.

Ingarden suggests that the truth of a work of art is not a condition of the possibility of its existence. A work is not considered art if it lacks metaphysical qualities, which also inhibits the possibilities of polyphonic harmony (Ingarden, 1998: 355 and 432). Literature connects to our existence, permitting a pleasurable and serene contemplation summoning our feelings and emotions. It is precisely in today’s world, in which we are overwhelmed with information, that works of art which connect us with mystery and quietude are more necessary than ever: “Art, in particular, can give us, at least in microcosms and as a reflection, what we can never achieve in real life: the calm contemplation of metaphysical qualities” (Ingarden, 1998: 344).

The work of art should make space for the world, open towards it. In art, the effort to articulate an explanation and understanding is permanently ongoing, where interpretation is a dialectic of understanding and explanation which goes beyond the immanent meaning of the text itself. Art consists of expressing being. Being supposes the union of time and memory. Being implies the actualisation of potential, making what we read, see or hear have meaning in first person. To do our thing. This is the hermeneutic attitude. If we delve into the concept of the metaphysical as a branch of philosophy dedicated to the study of nature and the causes or origins of any aspect of the real, we understand that metaphysics is the basis or origin of all else, the foundation of all the other sciences or fields of knowledge throughout history.

But the metaphysical would not exist unless the literary did not connect in some way to the human, having within the text a manifest anthropology in which my being is recognised and transcended. In this sense, Ricoeur affirms that emotional experience can only be expressed through language, and how we pass from desire to expression. In a certain sense, what we desire or want takes form in expression. There is no emotional experience, no matter how disguised, dissimulated or distorted it may be, which cannot be revealed in the light of language and thus express its meaning and so permit desire to enter the sphere of language (Ricoeur, 2000: 203).

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