

EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS IN ROMAN INGARDEN'S ONTOLOGY

MAREK ROSIAK

University of Łódź, Poland

Abstract. Ingarden conceives ontology as a *philosophia prima*, which deals with being as purely possible (it complies with the essentialistic tradition of Duns Scotus and Wolff). It is an intuitive (*anschaulich*) and a priori analysis of the content of the relevant ideas (*rein apriorische Analyse der Ideengehalte*). It consists of three parts: existential, formal and material ontology. Existential ontology deals with the possible modes of existence (*Seinsweise*). Problems of factual existence pertain to metaphysics, which is a separate branch of theoretical philosophy, based on ontology.

An object in the most general sense is a tri-unity (*Dreieinigkeit*) of matter, form and mode of existence, which are its main or first-order abstract moments. Matter consists of the components of an object, which are qualitative in the most general sense. Form is an absolutely non-qualitative mutual relation (organization) of the material components of the object and the mode of existence is the possible positive or negative determination of certain external conditions of the object's existence. However, existence itself is not relational: it is only given to us through certain relations. That is why we can best know the weakest, most conditioned, purely intentional mode of being. On the other hand, we know absolute being, which is existentially strongest, only negatively, as something not conditioned at all.

1. Division of the constitutive moments of an object

nonrelational moments	relational moments	
	inside the object	transcending the object
MATERIAL	FORMAL	EXISTENTIAL

Tab. 1

According to the division of moments (see Tab. 1) ontology has an existential, formal and material part. Of these three, material ontology remained only a project, but problems of existential and formal ontology are investigated in the first, and the remaining two volumes of Ingarden's opus magnum, *The Controversy over the Existence of the World*, respectively. It was written in Polish during the Nazi occupation of Poland and rewritten in German, with some important changes, only after the war was won. Vol. III appeared first in German as *Über die kausale Struktur der realen Welt* and was posthumously translated into Polish. The existing English translation contains about half of the content of vol. I.¹ While his ontology in general has been characterized as one of the most significant works of our time (J.M. Bochenski), existential ontology is the peak of this achievement. At the same time it is an „open system”, containing „places of indetermination”, as it were. It can evolve and develop in many directions. In what follows I will try to show some possible lines of development of the original system.

A mode of existence, being an abstract moment of an object, is analyzable into further abstract moments of the second order: existential moments (*existentialia Momente*). There are four pairs of main existential moments and three pairs of additional moments characterizing the peculiarity of temporal being. Elements of each pair are opposite and some of them are contradictory. The task of existential ontology is to discover possible existential moments and determine all their possible combinations.

¹ A concise presentation of some basic concepts of Ingarden's philosophy, together with a sketch of his life and a review of his works can be found in Mitscherling 1997.

2. Main external conditions of being

A conditioned by B (A≠B)		On the side of the conditioned factor (A)	
		with regard to the content (Sosein) of A	with regard to the existence (Dasein) of A
On the side of the conditioning factor (B)	Final, effective component of the complete sufficient condition	A heteronomous with regard to B (A's content determined by B)	A derivative with regard to B (B contains the supplementation of the effective condition of A's existence)
	Intermediate non-effective necessary condition	A dependent with regard to B (necessity of supporting A by a separate B)	A inseparable with regard to B (necessity of coexistence of A with B in one whole)

Tab. 2

3. Descriptions of the main existential moments

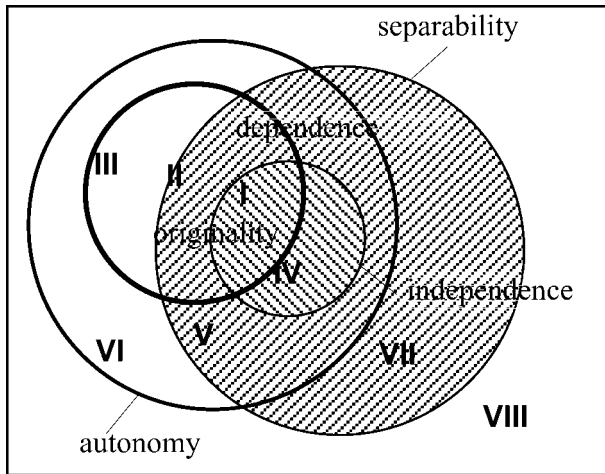
1. x is existentially autonomous (<i>seinsautonom</i>)	x is immanently qualified in itself (has its existential foundation in itself)
1'. X is existentially heteronomous (<i>seinsheteronom</i>)	x is not existentially autonomous
2. x is existentially original (<i>seinsursprünglich</i>)	x has the effective condition of existence in itself
2'. X is existentially derivative (<i>seinsabgeleitet</i>)	x is not existentially original (i. e. can exist only as produced by some other being)
3. x is existentially separable (<i>seinsselbständig</i>)	x can exist as a separate unit (i. e. not only within some broader whole)
3a. x is existentially independent (<i>seinsunabhängig</i>)	x is existentially separable and does not have to coexist with another existentially separate being
3a'. x is existentially dependent (<i>seinsabhängig</i>)	x is existentially separable but not independent
3'. x is existentially inseparable (<i>seinsunselbständig</i>)	x is not existentially separable

Tab. 3

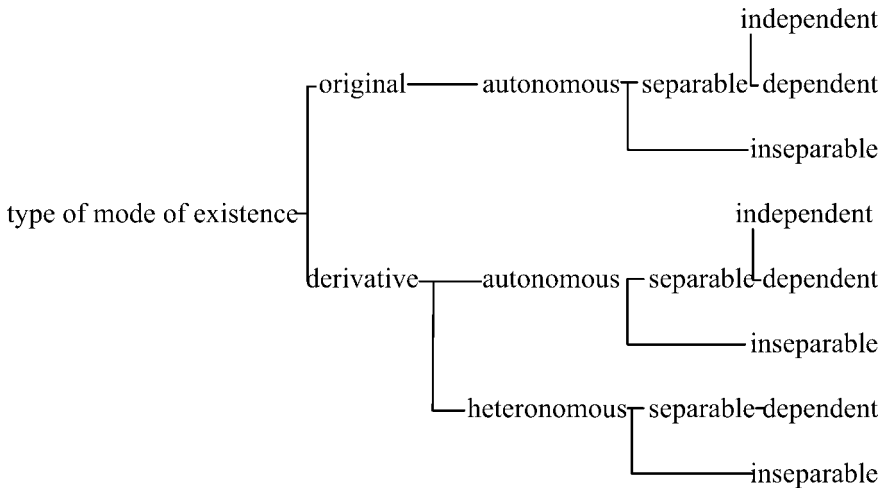
**4. Original consequences of the descriptions
of the main existential moments**

1. originality \subset autonomy	containing its own effective condition of existence implies containing its own existential foundation
2. independence \subset autonomy	having an external existential foundation implies being dependent on it or even inseparable from it
3. independence \subset separability	cf definition of independence
4. dependence \subset separability	cf definition of dependence

Tab. 4



Diag. 1a. Original combinations of the main existential moments



Diag. 1b. Original tree of combinations of the main existential moments

At first glance existential moments may seem to be monadic predicates (see Tab. 3) but in fact they are binary relations of conditioning (see Tab. 2) or negations of such relations (cf. the description of the second element in each pair of the main existential moments in Tab. 3). This is especially important in the case of the relation of existential derivability. The difference between existential originality and non-derivability is at work when the procedure of listing possible solutions of the realism-idealism controversy starts. The world can be non-derivative of pure consciousness and still not original (such solutions are termed weakened or modified realisms). It can be derivative of the so-called „third factor” (in particular God). Following this line of thought we arrive at the conclusion that some derivative beings could be produced only by the „cooperation” of several factors. It is like the construction of scaffolding by a team of cooperating workers – in principle no single man can do it. Consequently, two notions of derivability can be distinguished. If X is derivative of Y and Z together we can say that it is weakly derivative of Y (or from Z) alone and strongly derivative of Y and Z cooperating (acting together). Consequently, weak and strong non-derivability can be distinguished: X is strongly non-derivative of Y iff it is produced neither by Y alone nor by cooperating factors including Y. And X is weakly non-derivative of Y iff it is not produced by Y alone (in this case it could still be „co-produced” by Y together

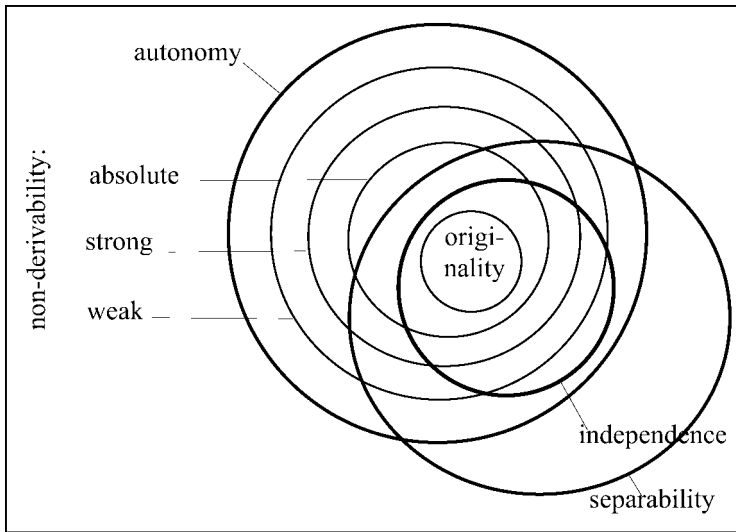
with some additional factors). Let us note that the weak derivation of X from Y implies the weak non-derivation of X from Y as well. If X is strongly derivative of Y_1, \dots, Y_n , then it is strongly non-derivative of anything else.

The producing factor(s) can exert their action only when certain prior necessary conditions are fulfilled. You cannot start building a house if you have not collected materials for construction. Neither can you do it if the plans of the construction do not exist (at least in your mind). In this way the action of the builder is only the last factor completing the sufficient condition of the construction. And still another case should be taken into account: a being can have certain necessary conditions of existence (it can be dependent or even inseparable) while not being even weakly derivative of anything. It seems that this is the case of at least certain – if not all – ideas. Now the third notion of non-derivability should be introduced: X is absolutely non-derivative iff it is not weakly derivative of anything (this, of course, excludes strong derivation as well). Absolute non-derivability is still something less than full originality because an original being, containing in itself the whole sufficient condition of existence, has to be absolutely independent and consequently absolutely separable as well.

5. Supplementary observations on the relations between the main existential moments

1. originality \subset absolute independence	cf definitions of originality, independence, absolute, strong, weak non-derivability and autonomy
2. originality \subset absolute non-derivability	
3. absolute non-derivability \subset strong non-derivability with regard to any x	
4. strong non-derivability from x \subset weak non-derivability with regard to x	
5. weak non-derivability from x \subset autonomy with regard to x	

Tab. 5



Diag. 2. Originality vs. different kinds of non-derivability
(with regard to the same object)

One can see that there is a certain inconsistency in Ingarden's description of the originality/derivability pair: original being is characterized on the one hand as containing the full sufficient condition of existence in itself and on the other hand as not derivative of anything else. In fact, these conditions are not equivalent: the first implies the other but not vice versa. In the first, stronger, sense (which, I believe, is the proper one) an original being has to be independent. In the other sense it can be dependent or even inseparable, which is a clue that here we have only absolute non-derivability instead of originality.

The three notions of non-derivability, as well as the narrower notion of originality (see Diag. 2), can be effectively applied in distinguishing possible solutions of the realism-idealism controversy. First, the world (W for short) can be an absolute being containing the moment of existential originality in its mode of existence. In this case the world would be absolutely independent and thus separable. Second, the world can be absolutely non-derivative instead of existentially original. In this case it does not have to be absolutely independent. It could be only relatively independent of pure consciousness (PC for short), or, of some „third factor“² (F3) only. And it

² Ingarden clearly has God in mind.

could be dependent on both of these factors as well. As independent or dependent the world has to be separable from the relevant factor of its dependence or independence. For example, both independence and dependence of W on PC imply its separability from PC. Third, the world can be strongly non-derivative of PC and strongly derivative of F3 or vice versa. This means that it is just a derivative of one of these two factors. Needless to say, the same combinations of these new cases with independence, dependence and inseparability as above are possible. Next, the world can be weakly non-derivative of PC and at the same time weakly derivative of it. This means that W is weakly derivative of F3 as well. In other words, W is co-produced by PC and F3. Here we have again the same variants with regard to independence, etc., as above.

When there are only two possible existential sources of the world, PC and F3, we have no more possible combinations of existential moments in the mode of existence of the world. But even within these limits certain interesting cases can be found. For example let us mention the possibility that the world is strongly derivative of PC or of F3. This means that it can be produced either by PC or by F3. Of course, if in fact the world exists and has been produced in the sense of strong derivability by, say, PC, it was in fact not produced by F3. But these facts are irrelevant with regard to the pure ontological possibilities we are investigating. This case was not taken into consideration by Ingarden, who nevertheless introduced a parallel notion of multivocal (vs. univocal) inseparateness.

Existential moments understood properly, i.e. as relational, can be combined either as directed conversely (see Tab. 6) or adversely (see Tab. 7). When treated as monadic predicates they can be combined only conversely, but even then a certain ambiguity occurs. When we say that some X is both, say, derivative and inseparable, we can tacitly assume that it is with regard to the same Y or not. In the first case Y would produce X as its own inseparable part, while in the other case some Y would produce X as an inseparable part of some other Z. Once Michelangelo produced the shape of the young David in a damaged block of marble. Now thousands of bodybuilders produce titanic shapes in their own bodies. This difference is by all means applicable to the problem of the possible existential status of the world. Instead of one possible solution, which Ingarden calls realistic-unitive creativism (*realistischer Einheitskreationismus*), we have four solutions when PC and F3 are taken into consideration. The world can be derivative and inseparable from PC, the same with F3, but it can be derivative from F3 and inseparable from PC (an interesting case, it seems) or vice versa.

Possible combinations of adversely directed existential relations were never systematically investigated by Ingarden. Nevertheless, he was practically forced to do this in due time because of the very nature of his own approach to the realism-idealism controversy (and his very careful manner of study as well). When he meets a case where both W and PC are derivative he realizes the problem of mutual production in general. He solves it negatively a vista, without considering the more general problem of adversely directed existential relations. He encounters this problem again when one of the related objects is derivative and the other is inseparable. In this case we must determine whether X can be produced by Y, which is inseparable from X itself (or dependent on it). Ingarden answers this negatively as well. Both investigated cases could have suggested to him the more general observation that if Y is strongly derivative of X, it cannot reciprocally condition X in any way, i.e. X can be neither derivative of, nor inseparable from, nor dependent on its own product. Judging the whole body of his existential ontology, one can suppose that he was quite close to this discovery. I think that he almost pronounced this rule when he said that actuality (one of the temporal moments) means reaching the relative peak of existence. Being on top in this context means in my opinion not being conditioned by one's own products, which, as not already actual, are „below the top”.

The results of systematic investigation of conversely and adversely directed existential relations and their negations are presented in Tab. 6 and 7 respectively.

6. Possible combinations of conversely directed existential moments

x regarding y		SUMMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF MOMENTS						
		heteronomy	autonomy	inseparability	separability	dependence	independence	
originality		0	1	0	1	0	1	originality excludes all external conditions
absolute non-derivability	non-derivability	0	1	1	1	1	1	all types of non-derivability imply autonomy and allow combinations with independence/dependence and separability/inseparability
strong		0	1	1	1	1	1	
weak		0	1	1	1	1	1	
derivability		1	1	1	1	1	1	derivability allows all combinations
independence		0	1	0	1			independence implies autonomy and separability
dependence		1	1	0	1			dependence implies separability excludes originality
separability		1	1					separability allows all combinations
inseparability		1	1					inseparability excludes dependence/independ. and originality
"!" marks negation of A relation								autonomy allows all combinations heteronomy excludes independence, non-derivability and originality (hence implies derivability)

Tab. 6

7. Possible combinations of adversely directed existential moments

Positive Part		y regarding x				SUMMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF MOMENTS
		heteronomy	inseparability	dependence	derivability	
x regarding y						
derivability of:						derivability cannot be mutual or directed adverse
autonomous x		0	0	0	0	heteronomy and autonomous product cannot condition
-heteronomous x		0	1	1	0	its own existential source at all
dependence		1	0	1		dependence on something inseparable excluded ex def.
inseparability		1	1			there remains only mutual dependence and mutual inseparability
heteronomy		0				heteronomy cannot be mutual

Tab. 7

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