Chapter 5
The Nature of Ordinary Objects

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Abstract The purpose of this paper is to propose a characterization of ordinary objects, considered as something. To do this we are proposing to start from the theory of cultural objects proposed by Roman Ingarden. According to Ingarden, cultural objects such as churches, musical works or paintings are objects dependent on both physical objects and intentional acts. This gives them a particular ontological status other than physical objects, abstract objects, or as simple mind projections. Cultural objects have a specific mode of being that Ingarden calls the purely intentional mode of being. We are hoping to show that it is possible to extend this theory to all ordinary objects. In other words, we are hoping to show that ordinary objects are entities dependent on the mind while being partially based on entities independent of the mind. Ordinary objects have the purely intentional mode of being.

The purpose of this paper is to propose a characterization of ordinary objects. By ordinary objects we mean the objects of our everyday world, the objects we perceive or interact with. Among these objects we find artifacts such as tables, computers, cars; social objects such as universities, driver's licenses, credit cards; cultural objects such as paintings, books, churches; inanimate natural objects such as stones, mountains, stars; and living organisms such as plants, trees, cats, humans, etc.

To do this we are proposing to start from the theory of cultural objects proposed by Roman Ingarden (Ingarden, 1973, 1989, 2013). According to Ingarden, cultural objects such as churches, musical works or paintings are objects dependent on both physical objects and intentional acts. They are objects that depends on entities that are mind-independent and at the same time are themselves mind-dependent entities. This gives them a particular ontological status other than physical objects, such as elementary particles, abstract objects such as propositions or universals, or as simple mind projections or imagined objects. Cultural objects have a specific mode of being that Ingarden calls the purely intentional mode of being.

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We are hoping to show that it is possible to extend this theory to all ordinary objects. In other words, we are hoping to show that ordinary objects are entities dependent on the mind while being partially based on entities independent of the mind. Ordinary objects have the purely intentional mode of being.

We will proceed in three steps:

In the first section we will examine the basic principles of Ingarden's general theory of modes of being. This theory is essential to the understanding of its characterization of cultural objects. We will see that modes of beings are structured by existential moments that express the different ways in which an entity may or may not depend on another entity.

Then in the second section we will examine Ingarden's theory of cultural objects. We will see that cultural objects have a particular ontological status. We will analyze the different ways in which a cultural object can depend both on other objects and on intentional acts.

Finally, in the last section we will show why it is possible to extend this theory of cultural objects to all ordinary objects. If this is the case, then living organisms as well as inanimate objects and cultural objects share the same mode of being: the purely intentional mode of being.

5.1 The Basic Principles of Ingarden's Theory of Modes of Being

Roman Ingarden's theory of modes of being is presented in his main work *The Controversy over the Existence of the World*, (Ingarden, 2013). According to Ingarden there are several modes of being. To put it very simply, to say that there are different modes of being is not just simply to say that there are different kinds of things, but rather that there are things that do not exist in the same way. Ingarden distinguishes four modes of being:

1. The absolute mode of being
2. The ideal mode of being
3. The real mode of being
4. The purely intentional mode of being

1. The absolute mode of being is the mode of being of entities that could exist even if nothing else existed. This mode of being is God's mode of being.
2. The ideal mode of being is the mode of being of entities that are mind-independent and do not exist in space-time. It is the mode of being abstract objects. This mode of being is the mode of propositions, transcendent universals, mathematical objects, etc.
3. The real mode of being is the mode of being of entities that are mind-independent exist in space-time. It is the mode of being physical objects. According to

Ingarden this mode of being is that of elementary particles, stones, trees, living organisms, etc.

4. The purely intentional mode of being is the mode of being of mind-dependent entities. It is the mode of being intentional objects. This mode of being is the mode of cultural objects, social objects, fictional objects, etc.

Ingarden's thesis is that modes of being are not simple but have a structure. They are structured by what he calls existential moments:

> Modes of being aren't regarded as primitive and unanalyzable. They have a kind of internal structure that helps us to understand ontological dependencies in which entities enjoying a given mode of being are involved. Moreover, the combinatorial idea makes it possible to construct many modes of being out of a relatively small number of existential moments, which makes the resulting dependence network ontologically transparent and cognitively accessible. (Chrudzimski, 2015, p. 1).

Existential moments structure modes of being. There are forms of ontological dependence that entities possess within each mode of being. Ingarden distinguishes four different pairs of opposite existential moments:

(a) autonomous - heteronomous
(b) originality - derivativeness
(c) self-sufficient - non-self-sufficient
(d) independence - dependence

5.1.1 Existential Autonomous and Existential Heteronomous

This first pair of existential moments express the ontological dependence and independence of an entity on the mind:

> An entity (in the sense of any something at all [irgend Etwas überhaupt]) exists autonomously (is existentially autonomous) if it has its existential foundation within itself. And it has it within itself if it is something that is immanently determined within itself. On the other hand, an entity is existentially heteronomous (exists heteronomously) if it has its existential foundation ⌜ outside of itself ⌝. (Ingarden, 2013, p. 109–110).

An autonomous object is an object that has its existential foundation, in this sense it exists in itself. A heteronomous object, on the other hand, derives its existence from something external to it. In this sense it exists by virtue of something else. The distinction between autonomy and heteronomy allows Ingarden to distinguish (purely) intentional objects from other types of objects. A heteronomous entity is an entity created by an intentional act and which is dependent on intentional acts. Churches, statues, paintings but also fictional characters or imagined objects are heteronomous objects. On the other hand, the absolute object, i.e., God, ideal objects like universals and propositions, and real objects like trees and cats are autonomous objects.

5.1.2 Existential Originality and Existential Derivativeness

This second pair of existential moments expresses the ontological dependence and independence of an entity on a creator:

> An entity is existentially original if, in accordance with its essence, it cannot be produced [geschaffen] by any other entity. In contrast, an entity is existentially derivative if it can be so produced. If an original entity exists at all, that is only because it is incapable of not existing in virtue of its very essence – provided there is such an essence, and more precisely, such an ⌜ ideal "quiddity" [Washeit] as determines its nature [Natur] ⌝ (concerning which we render no decision here). And if it is so, then its own proper essence forces it to exist. That is to say, it somehow contains the source of its being within itself. It follows from this that if an existentially original entity does exist, it cannot be annihilated by any other object. That is to say, it is existentially durable [dauerhaft]. If, on the other hand, an entity is existentially derivative, then it is also inherent in its essence that it can or does exist in virtue of having been produced by some other object. (Ingarden, 2013 p. 118).

This distinction corresponds to the distinction "to be created" and "not to be created". An entity is original if it is not created by another entity, whereas an entity is derived if there is an entity that creates it. An entity that is original is necessarily autonomous. Among the autonomous and original objects, we find God but also abstract objects like universals. On the other hand, among the autonomous and derived entities we find real objects like mountains, humans but also real events and processes. Moreover, if an entity is heteronomous then it is also derived. Therefore, an entity cannot be both heteronomous and original at the same time. All cultural objects are therefore heteronomous and derived.

5.1.3 Existential Self-Sufficiency and Existential Non-Self-Sufficiency

This third pair of existential moments expresses the ontological dependence and independence between a substance and its accident.

> An entity is existentially self-sufficient if in accordance with its essence it requires for its being the being of no other entity which would have to coexist with it within the unity of some whole, or, in other words, if its being involves no necessary coexistence with some other entity within the unity of a whole. In contrast, an entity is existentially non-selfsufficient if, as implied by its essence, its being involves a necessary coexistence with some other entity (which may have to be quite specifically qualified in its material essence) in the unity of a whole. (Ingarden, 2013, p. 147).

To put it simply, an entity is self-sufficient if it can exist without belonging to something larger than itself. It is non-self-sufficient if it does not. Substances are the archetype of self-sufficient entities since they can exist without belonging to another entity while accidents are the archetype of non-self-sufficient entities since they cannot exist without belonging to a substance. God and abstract objects are self-sufficient entities. On the other hand, tropes are non-self-sufficient objects. Note that

cultural objects are in Ingarden's theory self-sufficient objects. This comes from the fact that they are intentional objects (and as such real individuals) and not properties of intentional acts.

5.1.4 Existential Dependence and Existential Independence

This last pair of existential moments expresses the ontological dependence and independence of the substances among themselves:

> Another important existential distinction still needs to be noted within the compass of selfsufficient entities. Namely, it is possible for an entity to be self-sufficient and still require, in virtue of its essence, the existence of some other self-sufficient entity for its own ⌜ continued subsistence [Fortbestehen] ⌝. We then refer to the first entity as existentially dependent. (Ingarden, 2013, p. 153).

The distinction between existential dependence and existential independence applies only to self-sufficient entities: substances. An entity is existentially dependent if it is a substance and if it needs another substance to exist. In the opposite case it is existentially independent. One of the examples given by Ingarden of an existentially dependent entity is of a father/son. A son is a son only because he has a father, and although the human being continues to exist when his father dies, the son as such no longer exists. Cultural objects are all dependent objects because as intentional objects they are dependent on the mind.

By combining these different existential moments Ingarden builds what we can call a structure of being. Our aim here is not to go into the details of this structure but simply to lay the foundations for an understanding of his theory of cultural objects.

This is what we will now focus on.

5.2 Ingarden's Theory of Cultural Objects

Ingarden's central thesis about cultural objects is that they belong to purely intentional modes of being. In this sense they are heteronomous and derivative objects. This characterization of cultural objects distinguishes them on the one hand from physical objects but on the other hand from mere projections of the mind.

Amie Thomasson clearly expresses this characteristic of cultural and social objects:

> Social and cultural objects such as money, churches, and flags present a puzzle since they seem, on the one hand, to be entities that clearly – in some sense – depend on minds, and yet, on the other hand, seem to be objective parts of our world, things of which we may acquire knowledge (both in daily life and in the social sciences), and which we cannot merely modify at will. But it is hard to see how any entity could exhibit both of those characteristics – if, on the one hand, we take their objectivity and mind-externality seriously, and consider them to be identifiable with physical objects, we find ourselves saddled with

> absurd conclusions about the conditions under which such entities would exist and persist and neglect their symbolic and normative features. If, on the other hand, we treat them as mere creations of the mind, they seem either reduced to phantasms that could not have the recalcitrance and impact on our lives cultural objects apparently exhibit, or we seem to be positing 'magical' modes of creation whereby the mind can generate real, mind-external objects. (Thomasson, 2005, p. 115–116).

The problem with the nature of cultural and social objects is that they seem to be neither physical objects (mind-independent) nor mere projections (creations of the mind). They are mind-dependent while having a part of objectivity. The thesis that Ingarden will then defend with respect to cultural objects will be a special form of realism opposed to both physical reductionism (the thesis that cultural objects are reducible to physical objects) and projectivism (the thesis that cultural objects are mere projections of our mind).

Our examination of Ingarden's theory of cultural objects will take place in three stages: first we will see that cultural objects are distinct from physical objects on which they depend, then we will see that in a certain sense they are intentional objects, and finally we will see that they depend on both physical objects and intentional acts.

5.2.1 Distinction Between Cultural Objects and Physical Objects on which they Depend

Ingarden distinguishes cultural objects from the physical objects on which they depend. This distinction is now well known it is the problem of material constitution (see Fine, 2003; or Rea, 1995). This problem is the problem of the link between the object and the matter that constitutes it. Let us begin by simply setting out this problem. Let us consider a piece of clay that a sculptor is going to fashion into a statue. The piece of clay is the physical object. In fact, the piece of clay is itself an ordinary object that is made of particles. So, let us take as a physical object the mereological sum of the particles and call this object "Matter". Matter possesses its physical properties independently of us and is subject to laws independent of our will. Matter will then be modeled into a statue in the shape of cat. Let us call this statue "Ludwig". The story can go like this:

> At a given moment t0 there is a collection of particles in the form of a piece of clay, Matter. Then a moment later, at t1, Matter is shaped by a sculptor into a statue, Ludwig. Finally, at t2 Ludwig is crushed and only Matter remains.

This story seems to force us to make a distinction between Matter and Ludwig. Indeed, at t0 there is only one entity, Matter; then at t1 there seems to exist two distinct entities, Ludwig and Matter; and finally, at t2 there is only one entity, namely Matter. The moments t0 and t2 do not pose problem since at these moments there exists one and only one entity, Matter. But at moment t1 there seems to be two distinct entities which coincide (in this story we consider that Matter persists from t0

to t2 by remaining the same collection of particles). These two entities coincide because they are material objects that occupy the same spatial region at the same moments and that share exactly the same microscopic parts. To say that they have the same microscopic parts is equivalent to saying that these two entities are composed of the same molecules, the same atoms, etc. But these two entities are different because they have different properties. They have at least two different types of properties: different historical properties and different modal properties. These two entities have different historical properties since Ludwig "begins to exist" after Matter and "ceases to exist" before Matter. These two entities also have different modal properties because Matter can survive a crash, for example, whereas Ludwig cannot.

To put it differently, cultural objects are linked to particle collections but are not identical to them because they do not have the same conditions of persistence. To show this Ingarden takes the example of an architectural work: the cathedral of Reims (Ingarden, 1989, p. 262). The cathedral of Reims cannot be identified with the building because the building no longer exists while the cathedral still exists. This is due to the fact that the building is identified with the particles collection and that particles collection cannot survive the replacement of one of their particles whereas cultural objects can. This is due to the fact that one accepts the mereological essentialism for the sums of particles and not for the ordinary objects. Physical objects therefore do not have the same conditions of persistence as cultural objects.

Ingarden points out another difference between cultural objects and physical objects. Cultural objects possess sensitive qualities that physical objects do not:

> It is very probable that the physical, material object that forms the building is not endowed with 'sensible' qualities; that it is neither colored, nor hard, nor bounded by smooth or rough surfaces; that therefore in itself it also does not have the spatial shape which we encounter in concrete perception and ascribe to it in daily life. But . . . it is beyond all doubt that every architectural work of art is endowed with such qualities. (Ingarden, 1989, p. 263).

Ingarden's argument is that cultural objects have essential properties (sensitive qualities such as color, hardness, roughness, etc.) that physical objects do not possess. As Ingarden points out, the physical object (the collection of particles) "is neither colored, nor hard, nor bounded by smooth or rough surfaces; nor does it have the spatial form that we encounter in concrete perception and that we also attribute to it in everyday life».

So, we have a real distinction between cultural objects and physical objects. We will now see that this distinction is reinforced by the fact that, unlike physical objects, cultural objects have conditions of existence and conditions of persistence conditioned by the fact that they possess intentional properties.

5.2.2 The Existence and Persistence of Cultural Objects Are Intentional

Ingarden asserts that the existence of a cultural object depends on certain human attitudes and more specifically on acts of intentionality. For example, for a church to

exist, it is not enough for certain particles to be arranged in certain ways. There must also be a ceremony of consecration that, in a sense, "transforms" a mere physical object into a church. As Ingarden says:

> As long as it is only meant 'seriously' and carried out in the appropriate attitude (by the 'priest' and the 'believers'), the ceremony is performed in acts of consciousness which, to be sure, of themselves do not and cannot bring about a real change in the real world, but which do call into being a certain object that belongs to the environment surrounding the 'believers,' namely what we call a 'church,' or a 'temple,' and so forth. A determinately ordered heap of building materials is precisely what a 'church' is not, although this heap serves as its real basis (its bearer) and forms the point of departure of the act of consecration. (Ingarden, 1989, p. 259).

The physical object, namely the collection of particles, serves as the bearer of the cultural object. It is from this base that acts of consciousness (intentional acts) can be applied. These acts "cannot bring a real change in the real world", i.e., they do not create anything in the physical world independent of the mind but will make an intentional object appear. The church based on a physical object (a collection of particles) will exist when a serie of intentional acts will apply to the physical object.

The conditions of existence of physical objects and cultural objects are thus different. The existence of cultural objects depends on intentional acts.

But that is not all. The persistence of cultural objects also depends on intentional acts. Acts of consciousness are essential to the existence of cultural objects (not physical objects) and their persistence: for them to continue to exist it is necessary that the conscious acts that gave them existence continue to be accepted by "a mental community" (religious, artistic or class). Cultural objects are objects distinct from physical objects by not being physical objects themselves. They are purely intentional objects.

5.2.3 The Double Dependence of Cultural Objects

Intentional objects are objects dependent on the mind (of intentional acts). However, by asserting that cultural objects are purely intentional objects, Ingarden at the same time refuses to make them mere projections of the mind. Cultural objects are not mere projections for the simple reason that we cannot create or modify them simply by imagination. They are therefore neither physical objects nor mere projections of the mind but depend on both acts of mind-independent entities. The question we must then answer is the following:

In which ways do cultural objects depend on mind and physical entities?

The first answer is to determine the mode of being of cultural objects. According to Ingarden, cultural objects are purely intentional objects. They belong to the following four existential moments: they are heteronomous, derived, self-sufficient and dependent. They are heteronomous in the sense that they depend on the mind (intentional acts), they are derivative in the sense that they are produced by another entity (the mind), they are self-sufficient in the sense that they are individuals

(substances) that are not parts of an individual larger than themselves, and they are dependent because they depend on another individual (the mind) for their sustenance.

Purely intentional objects are therefore dependent on the mind in these four ways. There are, however, two ways of being dependent on the mind. These two ways will distinguish cultural objects from imagined objects (and mere mind projections). Thomasson clearly summarizes Ingarden's thinking:

> But even with these dependencies on conscious acts established, there are crucial differences among purely intentional objects. First the dependence on consciousness may be direct, or it may be mediated. It is clear why Ingarden typically begins his exposition of purely intentional objects by discussing imaginary objects, since these are the simplest cases, insofar as they depend directly on (and only on) intentional acts,3 and thus are what he calls "originally purely intentional objects" or "primary purely intentional objects". But these originally purely intentional objects are distinct from those he calls "derived purely intentional objects", whose mind-dependence is mediated by mind-external entities that are, in turn, mind-dependent. Wherever the mind-dependence is mediated – as indeed it is with the case of most purely intentional objects, including works of art and cultural objects – the purely intentional objects in question depend not merely or exclusively on acts of consciousness, but also on other, non-mental entities such as physical objects or ideal concepts. (Thomasson, 2005, p. 123).

As Thomasson points out, Ingarden distinguishes two forms of dependence on the mind. Direct dependency and mediated dependency. Some purely intentional objects depend directly and solely on intentional acts, these are the imaginary objects. Ingarden calls this type of object purely intentional primary objects. Others depend on intentional acts but mediated by physical objects, these are the cultural objects. Ingarden calls them purely intentional derivative objects. This distinction is important for two reasons: the first is that it allows us, as we have just seen, to distinguish cultural objects from imaginary objects; the second is that it will allow us to establish the intersubjective character of cultural objects in relation to the pure subjectivity of imaginary objects.

To put it simply, purely intentional primary objects depend, to use Thomasson's terms, rigidly on subjective intentional acts for their existence and persistence. The attribution of intentional properties to these objects is the product of a private and individual act of consciousness. In this sense they are entirely subjective and are accessible only to the person performing the intentional act. This is the case with imaginary objects. The chair that I am imagining right now depends solely on an intentional act, in that it is a primary object purely intentional, and depends rigidly on this intentional act, in that it depends solely on my intentional act. All these properties and its conditions of existence and persistence depend solely on a private intentional act, mine. On the other hand, purely intentional derivative objects depend generically on collective intentional acts. In this sense they are intersubjective objects. The attribution of intentional properties is the collective product of a range of public intentions and practices rather than an individual and private act of consciousness. Thus, as long as these properties can continue to exist independently of the maintenance of a particular act of consciousness, purely intentional objects

that depend on them can also exist. They are in a sense independent of a particular subject but dependent on subjects.

This generic dependence:

> ... allows the purely intentional objects to free themselves, so to speak, from immediate contact with the acts of consciousness in the process of execution and thus to acquire a relative independence from the latter ... Through this shift in their ontic relativity these objects gain a certain advantage over primary purely intentional objects. For a while, the latter are 'subjective' formations, in the sense that in their primariness they are directly accessible only to the one conscious subject who effected the act that created them, and while in their necessary belonging to concrete acts they cannot free themselves from these acts, the derived purely intentional objects, as correlates of meaning units, are 'intersubjective': they can be intended or apprehended by various conscious subjects as identically the same. (Ingarden, 1973, p.126).

It is this generic dependence that is the sign that cultural objects exist and are not mere imagined objects, mere illusions, or projections. Indeed, generic dependence implies a form of resistance of cultural objects to the individual mind. I cannot modify a cultural object the way I modify an imagined object because a cultural object does not depend only on me. Cultural objects are therefore purely intentional objects that depend in a mediated and generic way on intentional acts. But they also depend on entities outside the mind, physical entities. These physical entities that found the cultural objects possess the mode of being real. They are autonomous entities, i.e., mind-independent. Cultural objects are all based on physical objects. Literary works are based on phonetic and typographic formations. Musical works are based on scores. The image is based on painting (the real canvas covered with paint); the church is based on a building. In each case, the external foundation of the work of art makes these objects accessible to the public, although they are "purely intentional objects».

The cultural objects are thus doubly founded. Intentionality does not change the real world but is an essential foundation of purely intentional objects. We have thus seen that cultural objects belong to the purely intentional mode of being and depend in a mediated and generic way on intentional acts and therefore also depend on physical objects. Therefore, they are neither physical objects independent of us nor mere projections of our mind.

In the last section, we would like to extend this theory to all ordinary objects. To do this we must show that ordinary objects are mind-dependent.

5.3 The Extension of the Domain of Intentionality

Today there are two main theses concerning ordinary objects. The first one considers that ordinary objects are physical objects, that is to say spatio-temporal objects independent of mind. The second is the thesis that ordinary objects are mere projections of the mind, illusions: this thesis amounts to asserting that ordinary objects simply do not exist. Let us call the thesis that ordinary objects are physical objects

(which therefore belong to the real mode of being), the realism of ordinary objects (ROO). ROO is defended in by Crawford L. Elder (2004, 2011), Eli Hirsch (1993, 2002), Daniel Korman (2015), Katherine Koslicki (2010), and Ned Markosian (1998, 2008, 2015). On the other hand, let us call the thesis that ordinary objects do not exist the eliminativism of ordinary objects (EOO). EOO is defended by Cian Dorr (2002, 2005), Cian Dorr and Gideon Rosen (2003), Jeffrey Grupp (2006), Mark Heller (1990), Terence Horgan and Matjaz, Potrč (2008), Joseph A. C. Kamp (2009), Alan Sidelle (2002), Ted Sider (2011, 2013), or Peter Unger (1979a, b).

We would like to show that next to ROO and EOO there may exist a theory that, unlike EOO, ordinary objects exist and, unlike ROO, are mind-dependent objects. To do this we will first see that ordinary objects are distinct from the physical objects on which they depend, then we will see that in a certain sense they are intentional objects, and finally we will see that they depend on both physical objects and intentional acts.

5.3.1 Distinction Between Ordinary Objects and the Physical Objects of Which They Are Constituted

As we saw, the distinction between cultural objects and the physical objects on which they depend is one version of the problem of material constitution. This problem is a general problem that concerns not only cultural objects but in fact all material objects. As soon as an object is made of matter, we can distinguish that object from the matter that constitutes it. Indeed, the object and the matter, namely the collection of particles of which it is constituted, will never have the same conditions of persistence. The collection of particles is subjected to the principle of the mereological essentialism: from the moment when a collection of particles loses or gains a particle, the initial collection ceases to exist. On the other hand, an object can survive the loss or gain of a particle. A living organism continually gains and loses particles. The object and the matter which constitute it are thus distinct since they do not have the same conditions of persistence.

The problem of material constitution applies not only to cultural objects but to all objects and therefore to ordinary objects: a statue but also a car, a tree, a cat, a human are different from the physical object on which they depend.

5.3.2 The Existence and Persistence of Ordinary Objects Are Intentional

Ordinary objects cannot be identified with physical objects that constitute them. We will now see that they are mind-dependent and therefore are not themselves physical objects. To show this, we will follow the following reasoning:

(i) Mind-dependence is characterized by two phenomena: conventionality and arbitrariness.
(ii) Objects subject to vagueness are conventional and arbitrary objects
(iii) Ordinary objects are objects subjected to vagueness

So:

(iv) Ordinary objects are mind-dependent

(i) Let us begin by showing that mind-dependence is characterized by two phenomena: conventionality and arbitrariness. To show this, we will use the distinction between conventional and non-conventional objects developed by Mark Heller in his book: *The ontology of physical objects* (1990).

The basis of this distinction comes from an analysis of how we can characterize an object. To be more precise we have two ways of characterizing the identity, the conditions of persistence and the existence of an object. Either it is our conventions that allow it, or it is the physical structure of the world. By convention we mean here a human creation, a social decision that depends on language, perception, or knowledge. By physical structure of the world, we mean something completely independent of mind, language and knowledge. An object will be conventional if it is our conventions that set the relevant criteria and conditions for the determination of an object as an object. Conversely an object will be non-conventional if it is the structure of the world that allows us to set these criteria.

To make this distinction clearer, we would like to use an example of a conventional object formulated by Eli Hirsch (Hirsch, 1993, 2002).

Let us imagine that for some reason we decide to replace the word "car" by two words "in-car" and "out-car".

We can then set the criterion for the identity of in-cars and out-cars as follows. The term "in-car" will apply to any car that is in a garage, and when a car is partly in the garage and partly out, the term "in-car" will apply to the part of the car that is in the garage. The term "out-car" will apply to any car that is outside a garage and when a car is partly in the garage and partly out, the term "out-car" will apply to the part of the car that is outside the garage. In addition to this, we can set the criterion for in-car and out-car persistence as follows. When an in-car is taken out of the garage its size gradually decreases until it ceases to exist entirely, whereas a out-car gradually begins to exist and will grow to the same size and shape as the original in-car.

The moral of this little story is that inside and outside cars are conventional objects. They are conventional objects because it is our conventions that allow us to determine the identity, persistence and existence of these two types of objects. Indeed, it is not a new discovery about the physical structure of the world that makes us accept the existence of these objects, but rather a change in human habit. In-cars and out-cars depend on our language, on our decisions, in a word on our conventions.

Conventionality has an essential characteristic: arbitrariness:

> What is characteristic of conventionality is arbitrariness. This arbitrariness, as I am understanding conventionality, depends on the fact that a convention is the creation of humans. People make certain decisions, agree on certain strategies for behavior, accept certain propositions as true. That is all there is to a convention. If they had decided differently or accepted different propositions, then different conventions would have held. These decisions and acceptances are arbitrary in that they do not reflect any discoveries about the nature of the world; they reflect instead human preferences and whims. (Heller, 1990, p. 43).

Conventionality is characterized by arbitrariness, that is, by people agreeing to accept certain propositions as true. Here the meaning of the formula "agree" must be taken as broadly as possible. This agreement is arbitrary in the sense that it is a human creation, a decision, a strategy determined by human choices, whims, or preferences. It is not the structure of the world, the way the world is independently of us, that determines it. A conventional object is therefore in some way mind-dependent. Its existence and its conditions of persistence are at least in part dependent on conventions, therefore on acts of conscience (individual or collective). On the other hand, a non-conventional object is mind-independent, of our creations or preferences, and is not subject to arbitrariness.

(ii) We will now see that the objects subjected to vagueness are conventional and arbitrary objects.

To understand what vagueness phenomenon is, the simplest way is to examine the way it appears. To do so, let us look at the paradox also called the decomposition problem, or Unger/Heller problem.

Let us consider a particular object, a table. Let us consider that this table is composed of a finite number of particles. We will say that the predicate "table" or "is a table" applies to the collection of particles that make up the table. Now let us imagine that we successively remove one by one the particles of this table until there is only one particle left in the place of the table. We can describe this process as follows:

1. at the beginning of the process of removing particles from the table, the propositions "n particles make up the table" are true (for example if we remove three particles from the table, we can always consider that the remaining collection of particles still makes up the table);
2. at the end of this process the propositions "n particles make up the table" are false (for example if there are three particles left, we will consider that they do not or no longer make up a table);
3. there is no straightforward, clean transition from true to false proposals. In other words, there is no precise boundary between the last collection of particles that make up the table and the first collection of particles that do not or no longer make up the table.

The problem comes from 3). Indeed points 1) and 2) seem to pose no problem. However, point 3) comes back to the following question:

From how many particles removed the collection of particles ceases to compose the table and, by there, the table ceases to exist?

The problem comes from the fact that there seems to be no answer to this question and yet it is necessary that there is such an answer if the table is really an object. It is

this impossibility of an answer coupled with the need for an answer that causes vagueness. Indeed, in the problem of decomposition we start from the fact that there are cases of composition and cases of non-composition: cases of composition are the cases where, to take our example, the particles compose the table and cases of non-composition are the cases where the particles no longer compose the table or not. The question we are then asked is to know where the boundary between the last case of composition and the first case of decomposition is. It seems that this boundary cannot be determined precisely. And it is this indeterminacy that gives rise to vagueness.

In fact, there is a link between vagueness, conventionality, and arbitrariness. As Mark Heller points out, vagueness is an indication of conventionality. When an object is subjected to vagueness, when we cannot precisely determine its boundaries, the only solution we have is to specify the meaning of the terms involved. For example, the term "table" is a vague term, and it is for this reason that we cannot determine the space-time boundaries of a table. We will then specify this term by saying "is a table" is to be a collection of n particles where n is an integer. The problem that arises then is how to determine this number. Does the physical structure of the world give us the answer to this question? No. The choice of this number is in fact arbitrary, conventional; it depends on our conventions, our interests, etc. When an object is subjected to vagueness, we can affirm that this object is conventional and therefore mind-dependent.

(iii) Objects subjected to vagueness are thus conventional objects and thus mind-dependent. But it is the whole of the ordinary objects which are objects subjected to vagueness. We have seen that vagueness occurs when an object is subjected to the paradox sorite. But it is the set of ordinary objects that are subjected to this paradox. In fact, just as an object is subjected to the problem of material constitution because of the fact of being constituted by matter, an object is subjected to the paradox sorite because of the fact of being constituted by matter. To put it another way, ordinary objects are objects made of matter, and as such are subject to both the problem of material constitution and the paradox sorite.

Since this is so, then all ordinary objects are subject to vagueness.

iv) We can then conclude that ordinary objects mind-depend. Indeed, since the objects subjected to vagueness are conventional objects and ordinary objects are subjected to vagueness, ordinary objects are conventional objects. And since conventional objects are mind-dependent objects, then ordinary objects are mind-dependent.

5.3.3 The Double Dependence of the Ordinary Objects

If what we have said is right, then ordinary objects are mind-dependent objects. We can therefore argue that unlike ROO, ordinary objects are not physical objects, that is, they are not mind-independent objects. Does this mean, however, that, as EOO's

proponents argue, ordinary objects do not exist? The reason why EOO's proponents assert the non-existence of ordinary objects is the fact that they are mind-depend. Since they depend on the mind then they are projections of the mind and as such they do not exist. However, as we have seen with cultural objects, just because an object depends on the mind does not mean that it is necessarily a projection of the mind.

Ingarden's theory of cultural objects gives us the possibility to characterize ordinary objects in a new way:

Ordinary objects are purely intentional objects. They are heteronomous, derivative, self-sufficient and dependent. They are heteronomous in the sense that they depend on the mind (intentional acts), they are derivative in the sense that they are produced by another entity (the mind), they are self-sufficient in the sense that they are individuals (substances) that are not parts of an individual larger than themselves, and they are dependent because they depend on other individuals (minds and physical objects) for their sustenance.

Moreover, they are purely intentional derivative objects because they depend generically on collective intentional acts. In this sense they are intersubjective objects. As we have seen, it is this generic dependence that is the sign that ordinary objects do exist and are not mere imagined objects, mere illusions, or projections. Indeed, the generic dependency implies a form of resistance of ordinary objects to the individual mind.

Finally, just like cultural objects, ordinary objects belong to the purely intentional mode of being and depend in a mediated and generic way on intentional acts and therefore also depend on physical objects. They are therefore dependent on both physical objects (collections of particles) and intentional acts.

5.4 Conclusion

We wanted to show that Ingarden's theory of cultural objects can be extended to ordinary objects. If this is the case, then ordinary objects are neither physical objects independent of us nor mere projections of our mind but depend on both physical objects and intentional acts. This characterization of ordinary objects could be an interesting third way between standard realism (ROO) and eliminativism (EOO).

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