

Wit Szostak

Ingarden and Time

(A Fragment)

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The two photographs do not allow us to say much more with honesty. We could add a few details to the previous descriptions or refine our observations. But the rest is all conjecture and imagination, which can be supplemented by snippets of general history. The man shown in the photographs is hiding. He is the old man and the young man, but at the same time he is more than that and is neither of them. He is gone.

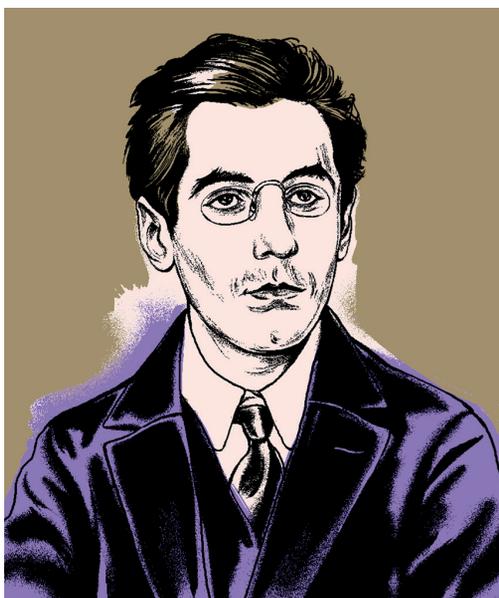
Yet perhaps the shared name, fingerprints and date of birth, the same biographical details, and the presence of the young man's experiences and memories within the experiences and memories of the old man, are not enough to conclude that it is the same person in both photographs? Perhaps time — those long forty-four years that separate the photographs — is too powerful a force to speak of the identity of these two men? How much of the young man remains in the old? What about the first heralded the second? What the young man saw as the present the old man sees as the past. What the young man saw as the very recent past, such as the moment just before he pressed the door handle of the pho-

tographic studio in Karlsruhe, the old man sees at best as a memory, or as an indistinct void where a memory used to be. The young man is probably not planning many of the things that the old man has accomplished in life and then simply forgotten. Those forty-four years connect the two men. Yet for neither of them do these years exist. For the first, they are not here yet, and he doesn't even know whether they will come at all, while for the second they no longer exist: they are gone.

The captions to the photographs allow us to state merely that the first was taken in 1916 and the second in 1960. It is only the story connecting these photographs that lets us add that the man in the first is twenty-three years old while the old man in the second is sixty-seven. The person whose image has been preserved in these two photographs is neither the young man of the first nor the old man of the second. He was young and he was old, but he was also a child, a middle-aged man and, finally, a man who was ten years older than the one in the second photograph when he died unexpectedly in 1970.

The man who is young in the first photograph and old in the second was never either of these for me. And this is a completely different story, unknown to him or to his relatives, who have kept the two meticulously captioned photographs. For me, he was the author of books, someone I never met and whose external appearance, despite the two photos, with which I have been familiar for years, has not embedded itself in my memory. When I call his name to mind, it is not the young man or the old man that I see, but book covers; what I remember is not his face but his ideas, his theories and the circumstances in which I read his works. I recall the people with whom I discussed them. And some of these people are also gone.

These are not just my first associations when I hear his name or see his photographs but my own first-hand experiences. I remember myself, many years ago, the person who, at roughly the same age as the young man in the first photograph, read his books, written over the course of those forty-four years between the two photographs. And that me is also long gone.



AGATA "ENDO" NOWICKA

Roman Ingarden (1893–1970)

Polish philosopher, university professor, member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAAS) and Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), a student of Edmund Husserl. Author of numerous works on phenomenology, dealing with with such issues as the problem of identity and the category of time. Also an amateur photographer.

This fragment comes from the publication *Scholars in Search of a Better World: 20 Tales from Poland* (PAS, Warsaw 2021), a collection of literary portraits of Polish scholars written by renowned modern writers, including Marie Skłodowska-Curie (by Izabela Morska), Bronisław Malinowski (by Ignacy Karpowicz), and Leszek Kołakowski (by Joanna Bator).

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The book
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