

Dr hab., prof. UWr Ilona Błocian

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Institute of Philosophy, Cassirer Center

University of Wrocław

**A Review of A. Ivanchuk's Doctoral Dissertation, *Consciousness in Transition:
Phenomenological and Psychoanalytic Inquiry*.**

The dissertation is composed of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion, with a total length of 202 pages, including the bibliography. The structure of the work refers successively to ontological considerations, problems of logic ("the logic of the unconscious"), language, corporeality, the multiverse of consciousness, and a recapitulation of the research results and further implications arising from them, culminating in a comprehensive synthesis. The structure is not symmetrical; it contains a three-part Introduction of 55 pages (compared to chapters that are shorter – 36, 18, 13...). There is therefore an overload of introductory sections, outlining the insertion to the field of research, and in the subsequent chapters, an overly extensive history of reflections on philosophical approaches to the problem of consciousness and conceptions of being – many of these areas of reference could, in my opinion, be omitted without detriment to the main reasoning lines. The structure is therefore complex and interesting, but it reflects a certain overload of the work in the direction of preliminary findings and certain predictions regarding the results of the research.

The work addresses a number of significant and complex philosophical and interdisciplinary issues; it has many advantages, but - in my opinion - also some shortcomings. The author demonstrates erudition not only in the field of philosophical writings, but is also a reader and expert on the texts of some representatives of the psychoanalytic trend and, what seems important to me, contemporary neuropsychanalytic, neuropsychological, and neurobiological approaches. He also shows a deep understanding of the specifics of psychotherapeutic processes. These are interesting references that fit into the overall discussion and support the psychoanalytic pillar of the work. So his work is not just another analysis of the conceptual structure of psychoanalysis, nor an attempt to incorporate phenomenological tools into it, but it is accompanied by the author's understanding of the liveliness and complexity of human experiences. In several passages, the author refers to examples of problems in therapy, e.g., in the works of M. Solms.

The work is a very ambitious undertaking; it is written in a philosophical polyphony and confronts it with problems from various areas of psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian one. There are also references to Freud's works, but they are relatively rare, given the attempt to identify convergent and divergent tools for understanding the activity of the mind and human behavior in phenomenology and psychoanalysis. In addition to well and freely reconstructed approaches of J. Lacan's conception, the work also refers to the research of M. Klein and D. W. Winnicott. This positioning and selection of areas of reference can be justified by the fact that it is precisely between Lacan's concepts (among others) and the approaches of E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, and M. Merleau-Ponty that connections can be seen or similarities can be grasped in reconstruction.

So what are the advantages of this work?

1. The work is an intriguing and audacious endeavor; it is exploratory in nature; the author endeavors to identify areas in which psychoanalysis and phenomenology converge and diverge are significant; he is striving for "a cross-complementation of the data from the studied approaches, specifically the philosophical extension of psychoanalysis and psychopathology. This approach entails a reinterpretation of these phenomena in search of a priori unconscious psychodynamic mental

constitutions, thereby addressing the limitations of phenomenology” (p. 45). While this area has attracted the attention of researchers, it is important to note that one cannot simply apply certain obvious, canonical methods of reconstructing and interpreting mutual relations in interdisciplinary dialogue. Along with psychoanalysis, the emerging fields of psychology, psychiatry, medical sciences, neurology, and anthropology are approaching philosophical reflection. In my estimation, the author, as a representative of the philosophical discipline, adeptly and meticulously reconfigures and navigates this interdisciplinary dialogue.

2. A significant benefit of the work is its integration of historical, traditional approaches with contemporary neuropsychanalysis (M. Solms, O. H. Turnbull), neuropsychology and neurobiology (A. Damasio, J. Panksepp). This is also particularly relevant in view of Freud’s own neurological specialization, his very early works, the significance of the *Project for a Scientific Research*, and the breakthroughs and decisive path towards understanding the specificity and uniqueness of mental phenomena and the psychological level at which they occur or unfold (“hiatus”¹). The author of the dissertation demonstrates competence in these fields and an understanding of their specificity and value in philosophical analyses and the development of neuropsychanalysis as such.
3. The boundary between phenomenology and psychoanalysis seems difficult for reasons clearly explained by the author – Husserl strives to understand the a priori structures of consciousness, while Freud strives to understand the unconscious as the basis of the structures of experience, especially neurotic disorders, pathologies, and the “language of neurosis”. The attitude towards psychology as a science, psychologism, and naturalism are very different here. However, the author, like many other researchers, such as Jung, attempts to identify the phenomenology of the experience of the unconscious and understand its “logic,” its kind of

¹ “The same fate would await any theory which attempted to recognize, let us say, the anatomical position of the system Cs.-conscious mental activity-as being in the cortex, and to localize the unconscious processes in the subcortical parts of the brain. There is a hiatus here which at present cannot be filled, nor is it one of the tasks of psychology to fill it” – S. Freud, SE, v. XIV, p. 174-175 thus expressing the abandonment of the hope that accompanied him in “*Project...*”

temporality (although Freud radically describes it as “timelessness”²), confronting the linear temporality of consciousness and the cyclical temporality of the unconscious, its retention, repetitiveness, its possible reference to multivalued logics (although here again Freud would say that the only principle that functions in the unconscious is the principle of “as-if” comparison and the intensity of desires and emotions (“logic of desire”)). The author presents the dilemmas in interpreting the relationship of the unconscious to time (though not all of them) and shows their specificity in his own way.

4. The primary discrepancy between psychoanalysis and phenomenology has been accurately identified and thoroughly analyzed. This analysis encompasses the conceptualization of the unconscious, its active structures, the issue of their transcendentalism, and the nature of such transcendentalism. Additionally, it delves into the problem of unconscious intentionality, albeit not in its literal sense, in comparison to the understanding of passive syntheses, retention, and the repetitiveness of behavior, response, and experience patterns. Nevertheless, there are no references to F. Brentano’s reflections in his *Psychology...*, despite the fact that the concept of the unconscious is a recurrent theme in that work³.
5. A significant strength of the work lies in the author’s insight into and understanding of the practical applications of psychoanalysis in psychotherapy, its principles of mental health, and its medical origins. The author explains this in several passages of the work: the goal of psychoanalysis is not knowledge for its own sake, but rather to examine the intentionality of the subject’s “retentive archeology” in order to “think differently, change their lived experiences and reduce the intensity of negative emotions or symptoms” (p.64). With regard to the problem of time, he could again find inspiration in Minkowski’s expression of the

² “The processes of the system Ucs. are timeless; i.e. they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all” – S. Freud, SE, v. XIV, p. 187.

³ For example, this distinction: “We use the term “unconscious” in two ways. First, in an active sense, speaking of a person who is not conscious of a thing; secondly, in a passive sense, speaking of a thing of which we are not conscious. In the first sense, the expression “unconscious consciousness” would be a contradiction, but not in the second. It is in the latter sense that the term “unconscious” is used here” – F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, transl. A. C.Rancurello, D.B.Terrell and L. L.McAlister, London-New York 1995, ft ++, p. 79.

goals of therapy -learning how to live and to breathe freely and spontaneously in time.

Other elements of the work in question are, in my opinion, more debatable approaches:

6. Through the tools of phenomenological insight, the author returns, as it were, to the problem of Freud's attempts to define the unconscious (but does not quote them, e.g., the text *Das Unbewußte* (1915)). This insufficient presence of Freudian approaches makes some of the author's theoretical peregrinations seem a little roundabout: e.g., the relationship of the unconscious to time. References to works and concepts of phenomenology and psychoanalysis are generally characterized by a certain choices, and the principles of selection are not entirely clear—why does Lacan's thinking dominate, and not Freud's? The latter's works are cited, but rarely, and the final parts of the text mention the ideas of M. Klein and W. D. Winnicott, but psychoanalysis is, after all, a set of numerous conceptions. As a result, the reconstruction does not address Freud's concept of the unconscious, which includes its essential features, features that can be considered demarcational. The meaning of the unconscious, understood as an evolutionarily inherited sphere organizing the activities of the psyche, also falls away, as it is strongly criticized by Lacan, as do other post-Freudian approaches that strongly emphasize these evolutionary-biological axes. At the root of this lies a certain multiplicity within the conceptions of the unconscious themselves (also in philosophical thought), many different types of them. They can be traced back to G. W. Leibniz, for example, and there are studies that place the beginnings of reflection much earlier (including B. Dobroczyński, H. F. Ellenberger). These divisions within the conceptions of the unconscious have also been noted and organized (Sz. Wróbel). The author of the dissertation decided that Lacan's concept would be best suited to reconstructing the problem and it can be said that if we take into account the so-called "automatic" aspects of the unconscious (the unconscious as a "machine"), then indeed his conception comes closest to attempting to discover the eidetic structures of experience.

7. The title of the work has a very general, broad scope and range – it is actually consciousness in terms of psychoanalysis and phenomenology; in the former – rather - the unconscious, to which, with certain reservations, the application of phenomenological methods of analysis of acts of consciousness and their structures extends/expands. Is this approach successful? Partially - yes, because of the central place given to the concept of the unconscious in philosophical analysis – and above all, the attention paid to the problem of the transcendental nature of its structures.
8. Lack of broader consideration of the concepts of E. Minkowski (references to the philosophy of Husserl and Bergson⁴) and L. Binswanger (although he is mentioned). The areas between phenomenology and psychoanalysis (primarily Binswanger) or psychiatry (Minkowski) were explored. These areas attracted the attention of philosophers (M. Merleau-Ponty and J.-P. Sartre (mentioned in the dissertation)). “The phenomenologist uses a categorical frame of reference; [he] attempts to reconstruct the inner world of his patients through an analysis of their manner of experiencing time, space, causality, materiality, and other categories (in the philosophical sense of the word)” (H.-F. Ellenberger⁵). I think that their works would prove to be crucial here and more closely related to the author’s analyses, deserving more attention than other more distant approaches, thanks to which he built fragments of his constructions. In Binswanger’s concept, one can find many elements that the author points to in other contexts: specific ways of understanding the unconscious as a dynamic process of organization, rather than a “separate state” or a “system,” as it is often contrasted in Freud’s approaches (because there are many of them and it is impossible to think of a monolithic, homogeneous way of understanding or defining them), the problem of incorporating certain tools of Husserl’s phenomenology (“passive synthesis”), existential a priori, therapy that seeks ways to free oneself from “thematic” domination and make one’s own choices (here, significant similarities to Sartre’s problem of “original choice”) and the fundamental themes of Dasein in its creation

⁴ E. Minkowski, *Lived Time. Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies*, Evanston 1970.

⁵ H.-F. Ellenberger, “Phenomenology and Existential Analysis,” in R. May, E. Angel, and H.-F. Ellenberger, eds., *Existence*, New York, 1958, p. 101.


of the world -project (here with similarities to the approaches of Erich Fromm, whose works are very rarely mentioned; even within the problem of dreams – “Daseinsanalyse considers dreams as a specific modality of intentional, private life which, in a certain sense, “directly” expresses, through images, the specific world-projects”⁶).

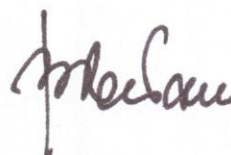
9. There is also a lack of certain consequences that phenomenological psychiatry – an area similar to the author's considerations – had in the form of R. Laing's concept and how it influenced the formation of the idea of anti-psychiatry, and then most likely also the new assumptions of post-psychiatry.

Despite all the possible shortcomings, I think that this work is a valuable attempt to deepen and continue further analysis of the relationship between phenomenology and psychoanalysis. I consider its attempt to engage in dialogue with literature in the fields of neuropsychanalysis, neuropsychology, and neurobiology to be a particular asset. This is an area that is rarely explored in relation to psychoanalysis itself.

I also appreciate the attempts to establish a dialogue with the ideas of the great philosophical traditions.

The assessment is positive and I recommend that the candidate be admitted to the next stage of the doctoral degree award procedure.


Ilona Błocian



⁶ R. Vitelli, Binswanger, *Daseinsanalyse and the Issue of the Unconscious: An Historical Reconstruction as a Preliminary Step for a Rethinking of Daseinsanalytic Psychotherapy*, “Journal of Phenomenological Psychology”, 49 (2018) 1–42, p. 28.