

Ian Verstegen

## Arnheim and Ingarden on the Ontology of the Arts

### 1. Introduction

During a large part of the twentieth century, Roman Ingarden (1893-1970; Graff & Krzemien-Ojak 1975; Dziemidok & McCormick 1989; Mitscherling 1997) and Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007; Verstegen 2005) were the most important representatives of their respective traditions in aesthetics: Ingarden of phenomenology and Arnheim of Gestalt psychology. We know that there are historical links between Gestalt psychology and phenomenology – links which are even more evident in recent work demonstrating the mutual indebtedness to Brentano of both (Smith 1994; Ash 1995) – but neither Ingarden nor Arnheim ever cited the other nor discussed the other's work in print. How, then, do these two figures bear comparison, if at all?

The historical links between Arnheim and Ingarden are particularly active. They are “theoretical cousins” in the sense that both of their teachers were, themselves, students of Carl Stumpf. Arnheim's teacher Wolfgang Köhler was Stumpf's student in Berlin while Ingarden's mentor Edmund Husserl was Stumpf's student much earlier in Halle. The approaches of Arnheim and Ingarden strongly follow those of their teachers because Husserl was primarily interested in the formal ontological aspect of Stumpf's work while Köhler was primarily interested in the experimental psychological aspect of Stumpf's work (carrying on, in fact, as an expert of *Tonpsychologie*).

Being younger than Ingarden, it is likely that Arnheim had read his work, although he never cited it. Ingarden was of course much more isolated. The primary reason that they did not seek each other out was the strength of the Gestalt and phenomenological traditions when they wrote. Arnheim was teaching at the New School for Social Research, one of the strongholds of phenomenological thinking in the United States where Aron Gurwitsch and others taught, and would have felt confirmed by the cogency of a general Gestalt-phenomenological platform for research. It is only today, when the intellectual landscape has changed so tremendously, that we see the need to seek out the bolstering influence of one thinker upon another.

At first sight, it is not altogether clear how Ingarden's neo-Aristotelian “Austrian” realist project can dovetail with Arnheim's more organic Gestalt approach. How-

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ever, it is my contention that the two were actually undertaking endeavors of a very complementary nature. I furthermore contend that a comparison will yield the ways in which both Arnheim and Ingarden can enlighten the other's enterprise, and perhaps suggest a stronger, more unified approach. In general, Ingarden is descriptivist, putting under analysis those works of art that he sees. Arnheim, on the other hand, always extracts out of his own analyses a normative element, seeking to make ontological generalizations about different classes of individual modalities, or modalities themselves.

In the following I will consider various theoretical questions and the ways in which they were answered by both. I will then be led to identify the similarities and differences and, if possible, to suggest a reconciliation. The result will be a view of Ingarden's purely ontological project closer to artistic practice, and for Arnheim, a degree of rigor and change of terminology that puts his work back squarely into the Brentanist tradition.

## 2. Wholes and Founded Qualities

In general, Arnheim and Ingarden rely on differing ontological principles which, however, are not incompatible. Berlin Gestalt psychologists like Arnheim understand a Gestalt as a special kind of whole, and phenomenologists like Ingarden, as a founded quality. In seeing a work of art as a whole, Arnheim stresses the synchronic all-at-once aspect. Ingarden's account of the ontology of the work of art explains its rich stratification and displays how different strata are more fundamental than others.

The basis of Berlin Gestalt ontology is Köhler's *Die Physischen Gestalten* (1920) and Wertheimer's *Zu dem Problem der Unterscheidung von Einzelinhalt und Teil* (1933/1945; c.f. Smith & Mulligan 1982; Smith 1988/1994). Contrary to Ehrenfels (1890) original discussion of gestalten as qualities arising above fundamentals, Wertheimer, Koffka and Köhler stressed a Gestalt as a special kind of whole, a process elaborated by Arnheim himself (1960). Wholes are super-summative, meaning that they have qualities different from the individual parts. It was Köhler's pupil, Edwin Rausch (1937), who sought to improve Köhler's formulations by devising several elaborations upon the theme of removal and separation, thus clarifying super-summativity.

The Gestalt view differs from the essentially Aristotelian view of Brentano's followers in that a "gestalt" is an existentially dependent moment existing alongside or above the separable fundamenta. Ingarden's work departs directly from the line begun by Brentano, Ehrenfels, Stumpf and above all Husserl. His masterwork *The Controversy over the Existence of the World*, contains many important extensions of concepts of existential and formal ontology that are presumed in his discussions of works of art (Ingarden 1964-5; Smith 1978; Simons 1992).

Ingarden discusses different works of art as constituted of a variety of strata, which are levels of reality, each existentially founded on lower levels. Upper strata emerge over lower strata.

A compromise between the two viewpoints was made by Rausch, who reassessed the two meanings of Gestalt (Rausch 1937; Smith & Mulligan 1982, §6; Smith 1988). Rausch showed, in Smith's (1988/1994) words, how:

“...a complex, in order to be a Gestalt, must have certain special characteristics; that is, it must possess precisely certain ‘Gestalt qualities’ - which now, however, are not supernumerary entities, as on the Ehrenfels view, existing alongside or above the *separable fundamenta*. Gestalt qualities are, rather, conceived by Rausch as being in a certain sense intrinsic to the Gestalt which has them. Moreover, Gestalt qualities are merely one special type of whole- or complex-quality. Other complex-qualities might be, for example, the quality of being a one-dimensional continuum, the quality of being a purely summative whole, or - in the manner of Stumpf - some other formally or materially specific quality between these two extremes. We shall indeed talk not of complex-qualities but rather of (non-distributive) properties of wholes in general (of properties which are such that they hold only of wholes *as wholes*: they do not distribute to the several parts, as does, say, the property of being extended, or of being made of inorganic material)....” (272-3).

I shall take inspiration from Rausch in the following, to the degree that I am not just ontologizing Arnheim, to make his work more rigorous in an Ingardian vein. Instead, I am viewing both theorists as a two-way street. Indeed, it will be useful both to strengthen the idea of stratification in Arnheim's theory and the over-all quality of aspects in Ingarden's, and indeed to see their interdependence. Ingarden's notion of stratum can be enlightened with the more explicit theory of Hartmann, according to whom “stratum” refers to “building above” (*Überbauung*) relationships as opposed to “overforming” (*Überformung*) relationships. The two are explained by Roberto Poli (1998):

“Whereas by ‘overforming’ is meant that every category can constitute the ‘matter’ of a higher category, the term ‘building-above’ denotes a very different type of conditioning. In this case, the higher stratum requires the lower one only as its *external basis of existential support*, but not as matter to be supraformed” (2030).

Thus, the aspects of the novel, say, have the lower strata as an external basis of support but are not built up into a new kind of substance, as is the case with biology which is “overformed” of chemical material. The novel or other work of art has more in common with the relationship between sociology and psychology.

In a Rauschian vein, it is very interesting to note with Peter Simons (1994) that Ingarden's use of stratification is in fact more or less metaphorical to the degree that it mimics real works of art. There is no real differentiation between aspects of objects and the objects themselves. As Simons writes, “There is a clear sense in

which, despite their heterogeneity, the various components of the literary work are all alike: namely their existence as purely intentional objects” (137). Simons’ observation raises the possibility that it will be rewarding to pass back and forth between strata-like elements in works of art and their whole-qualities.

### 3. Art versus Physical Object

In spite of their respective ontological ideas, for both Ingarden and Arnheim works of art have peculiarities over and against real objects. For Ingarden, the work of art first of all owes its existential foundation solely to the acts of the artist. Unlike a scientific theory, which departs from observation of the real world (and thus has a ‘double’ ontological foundation), the work of art has no foundation in real objects. Thus the work of art is not a physical object (with one important exception below), but neither is it a mental object. Only the intentional objectivities projected by the experiencer of art are mental. The work of art is ideal to this, it is a *derived intentional objectivity* and it is in this sense that a work of art is a “purely intentional object”. It is, however, only in the former that the work has its “ontic basis,” so that it may be actualized in consciousness.

Ingarden (1962/1989) has said that “a schematic formation having places of indeterminacy (*Unbestimmtheitsstellen*) must be a purely intentional object” (131). The ontological determinants of a work of art are only those that are projected in the acts of the artist. Once the work is complete, they exist as a “schema”. They are also, however, cumulative, so that the temporal unfolding of some work is a constructive process. In a work of fiction, for instance, all other determinants – the out of doors outside of a described interior – are indeterminate.

Arnheim, too, sharply distinguishes the work of art from reality. He says that science portrays in theory (real) forces while art presents forces themselves as one (fictitious) view of reality. He calls the mistake of identifying artistic objects with real objects the “axiom of realism” (1972/1986). Arnheim, like any Gestalt psychologist, does not confuse the physical work of art, the “geographic” object, with the aesthetic work of art, the “behavioral” work of art. As far as actual and derived intentionality of the work is concerned, Arnheim (1986) might regard the former as the work experienced-plus-modifying conditions and the latter as the “objective percept.” From Ingarden’s Husserlian perspective this is frankly psychologistic but we can charitably regard it as phenomenological and ready for incipient ontologization.

Ingarden’s ontological determinants are descriptive; any work of art of any style can have a detail determined or not. Arnheim, on the other hand, stresses the differences that separate kinds of works of art or styles. Like Ingarden’s projection of ontological determinants, Arnheim (1957/1966) speaks of “accidents” or relations of cause and effect that are variably manifested in a work of art. Great-

er accidents, determinants in Ingarden's system, as for example details about daily life, might mark the nineteenth century Realist novel. Thus, Arnheim (1974), furthermore, speaks of the "level of reality" of the work of art, indicating the general level of determinacies, which is different from Ingarden's "schema." Whereas the schema is directly ontological referring to indeterminacies, the level of reality is instead related to the underlying abstract structure of a work of art. By extending the patterned quality of Ingarden's indeterminacies, we will find that Arnheim's intuitions can be played out in a very rigorous way.

#### 4. Two Ontological Classes of Works of Art

Armed with the similar conceptions of determinants and accidents, it is not surprising that both Ingarden and Arnheim have nearly identical ways of proving the difference between two ontological classes of works of art, the spatial and temporal. This is none other than the venerable problem raised by Lessing in his *Laokoon*, and Ingarden's and Arnheim's solutions are instructive.

Ingarden provides his distinction in the context of a discussion of the order of sequence of the literary work of art, but it is essentially a proof of two classes of works of art. Ingarden (1931/1973) says that:

"Every phase of the literary work...shows moments within it which have their foundation outside themselves in moments of a different, "earlier" phase. . . 'Earlier' is what we call the phase that contains founding moments that are founded for another phase, while 'later' is what we call the one that contains elements that are founded in elements of another phase" (310).

Every subsequent phase of a literary (and as Ingarden later recognized in a note, any *temporal*) work is one-sidedly dependent on earlier phases, which found the subsequent phases. Ingarden goes on to identify such works as "quasi-temporal." Arnheim (1978/1986) has discussed the problem a number of times. Most recently, he has formulated the distinction between static and temporal forms in the following way:

"What distinguishes the media...is that in music, literature, film, etc., the sequence is inherent in the presentation and is therefore imposed as a constraint upon the consumer. In the timeless arts of painting, sculpture, or architecture, the sequence pertains to the process of apprehension only: it is subjective, arbitrary, and outside the structure and character of the work" (70).

Arnheim goes on to suggest the procedure of variation – changing the sequence of any temporal work – with which one can prove whether or not there is ontic dependence of moments on sequence of any particular work of art.

I want to stress that the distinction of a class of art works was accomplished with what (at least in Ingarden's case) is used perhaps too sparingly as the basis of a theory of fiction. Indeed, Roberto Poli (1998) notes that the idea of indetermi-

nacy is “generalizable to the ontologically and cognitively fundamental problem of the degrees of freedom of the object represented” (206). As Ingarden suggests obliquely at various times, points of determinacy and indeterminacy are found at this elementary level. For instance, Ingarden (1962/1989) says that “the range over which...places of indeterminacy are possible appears to be much broader in the picture than in the literary work” (222). Thus one could, for instance, say that static works of art have points of indeterminacy in event-character. In the same way that we cannot ask of a novel, “how many wives did Macbeth have?” we can ask “how sad is Rodin’s *Thinker*?” It is in this spirit that Arnheim (1980) asserts that

“if one wishes to know whether Toulouse-Lautrec’s misshapen prostitutes are good or bad, underprivileged or evil, the painter can only direct one to the novelists, dramatists...who dwell in time” (175).

Of course, temporal works of art have corresponding points of indeterminacy in character of state. It is for this reason that Arnheim (1974, 378) further asserts that static and temporal classes of works of art have inherent moments of identity in permanence and change.

One could go further, however, and overlay upon the classes of static and temporal works of art a further distinction between classes of works of art in their sensory – visual or aural – aspect (Arnheim 1935/1957). A different class thus could contain both static and temporal works of visual art. Here what unites them is the natural concreteness of vision which ensures that certain points of determinacy are always given in such works of art. Conversely, artful noises would have a peculiar indeterminacy in this regard. Perhaps, then, we could speak of a sort of concrete/adverbial (Arnheim) in/determinacy of visual and aural works of art.<sup>1</sup> If we accept the above ontological distinction, it is possible to characterize the deviation away from such a standard class of objects. It is interesting that such a characterization exists both for Ingarden and Arnheim. Since Ingarden does not generally regard a class of “temporal works of art” like Arnheim, he would not strictly apply the term yet. But in the case of standard objects of art, he identifies “borderline cases” (*Grenzfälle*) which deviate from the standard case. In the same way, Arnheim (1938/1957) uses the term “hybrid forms” (*forme ibridel zusammengesetzten*).

I want to dwell on Arnheim’s use of hybrid for a moment because he uses it in three senses which all differ from Ingarden’s single sense of a deviation from a standard class of pre-existent (genetically standard) cultural objects. In the first sense a hybrid exists for Arnheim as the deviation from a pure modality type, a notion he developed in collaboration with the artist Robert Sowers (1984, 1992).

<sup>1</sup> Kendall Walton has suggested that these loosely translate to *de re* and *de dicto* distinctions made by philosophers.

A modality type exists above mere culturally existent objects (stable as they may be) and the hybrid deviates from this modality, itself, not from a particular practice. In the second sense a hybrid exists when a complex work of art is unsuccessful in combining different modalities. Finally, a hybrid exists when any work of art is not purely artifice, or in Ingarden's usage, purely determined by the acts of the artist. Such a case would be the dancer's use of her own body. I shall discuss these aspects further below.

### 5. Individual Modality Types

One must always guard against interpreting Ingarden's definitions of genetically standard works of art as timeless categories. Yet many of his formulations, in spite of a seeming limitation to standard genetic cases of works of art, seem to be universal definitions. Thus where the idea of an over-arching modality type seems contrary to Ingarden's careful, local method of investigation (especially in the case of any visual and temporal work of art), at other times it is suggested.

Since no such concept as a modality type exists decisively for Ingarden, I will only mention it briefly. According to the Arnheim-Sowers (1984, 1992; c.f. Arnheim 1993) theory, there are abstract classes which material works of art either embody or fail to embody. Instead of departing from established cultural objects like Ingarden, these categories are said to be always implicitly present. The Arnheim-Sowers theory only accounts for three abstract classes of spatial arts, but following Arnheim's (1938/1957) earlier casual observations, three more classes may be extended into the temporal arts. Of the spatial arts, Arnheim and Sowers distinguish three ideal modalities, (1) the image, (2) the object and (3) the architecture. Unlike in the case of the spatial modalities, Arnheim has only indicated the temporal modalities casually. In his "New Laocoon" Arnheim indicated three modalities of (1) the spoken word (*gesprochenes Wort*), (2) the image in motion (*bewegtes Bild, sichtbare Handlung*) and (3) the musical sound (*Musik*). There has been great resistance in aesthetics to the idea of a modality's or medium's "specificity" or "essence." Indeed, Arnheim has been criticized for defining the essential nature of the film in *Film as Art* (Carroll 1988). One must, however, distinguish between an ontological description of the degrees of freedom of a mode or medium, its 'pull' that all artists recognize as they work, and the normative question of whether a work of art is good because it is *true* to its mode or medium. Here, Ingarden's method may be helpful, because just as I earlier noted how the notion of indeterminacy could be mobilized to understand the general degrees of freedom of a level of reality could be defined, so too could a "**region**" of reality – the pictorial, the sculptural and the like. Let this stand as an invitation to Ingardenian phenomenologists and ontologists and in the following, I will simply oppose these abstract classes to Ingarden's concrete formulations.

## 6. The Ontology of the Picture

We begin first with the picture. Ingarden begins his ontological discussion by distinguishing between the painting and the picture. The painting is the physical object and the picture is the aesthetic object (in the sense given above). According to Ingarden, a picture consists of three strata, (1) the aspect stratum, (2) the object strata and (3) the literary theme. Different aspects build up the projected objects and evince a literary character.

The indeterminacy of aspects and objects is a direct measure of their ontological completeness. A completely indeterminate work bearing almost no aspects (and therefore no objects) ceases to be a picture. The degree of literary and ultimately metaphysical qualities increases according to the determinateness of the projection. Therefore, Ingarden (1962/1989) says that, "...in pictures with a literary theme the metaphysical qualities, so to speak, find more opportunity to occur" (p. 191).

Arnheim, for his part, defines the picture as a general class of objects which points the way that Ingarden's picture could gain a categorial identity. Instead of identifying it with representation, he less determinately identifies it with a function of "envisagement." Arnheim, too, demonstrates how accidents build up objects of greater and greater determinateness. Arnheim, however, demonstrates the way in which too much determinateness kills off metaphysical qualities thus asserting that an overly realistic depiction of a saint no longer embodies "saintliness." He agrees with Ingarden that some determinateness is necessary, but also affirms that too much is the negation of art (Arnheim 1959/1966).

A good test of the theories of Ingarden and Arnheim would lie in how they deal with a particular medium like photography. In a section of *Ontology of the Work of Art* entitled, "The habitus of reality," Ingarden discusses the dual nature of photographs. On the one hand, the photographed object is sometimes seen improperly as the object itself, and not as an image. On the other hand, in the aesthetic experience the photograph is usually taken as real (the real fictional object) until it becomes "too" real, and the aesthetic experience ends. Ingarden's discussion mildly takes it for granted that there is a causal effect of reality on photography (objects in photographs have the same ontological completeness as the photographed objects) and that, as long as the aesthetic experience continues, then this is ignored.

Arnheim (1974/1986; 1993/1996) holds the same view, but develops it much further. According to Arnheim, there is no question that photography may be used artistically, but when we see an artistic photograph of a person, there is a greater chance that the experience will be non-aesthetic and that the matter-of-fact attitude will overpower the aesthetic attitude. Arnheim uses this to point out that photography is limited artistically as an artistic medium. For instance, as art-

ful as a Man Ray photograph may be, the ontological completeness of its objects overpowers this aspect. We see a still-life, but can only notice the brand-name of the cigarettes in the picture that were manufactured in France at a determinate time and place. Arnheim has suggested the ontological method of variation for photography. Look at a photograph as a painting, he says, and decide if it can live up to the quality of a painting. It is only because it is telling us about real things that we put up with the shapelessness of the photograph. Thus, it is a hybrid and gains its interest as part picture, part reality.

## 7. The Ontology of the Sculpture

Ingarden has not formally treated sculpture, except for a couple of brief references. Of course, as in the previous case of the picture, it is certain that he would distinguish between the physical object – the statue – and the work of art or the sculpture. As G. David Pollick (Dziemidok & McCormick, 255-81) reconstructs, it is clear that it would have a structure similar to that of the picture. That is, it would have (1) aspect, (2) object and, possibly (3), a thematic stratum. This is revealed in one of Ingarden's (1931/1973) fragments:

“...if one seeks to realize an abstract figure in sculpture, then it is only a transitional form between sculpture, which according to its nature is a form of representational art, and architecture, which is quite completely free from the representational function” (300-301).

As in the case of the painting, aspects build up representational objects. Both are “presentational” arts.

Like Sowers (1984, 1992), Arnheim (1989/1992) defines a sculpture as the concrete visual embodiment of tactual experience. As in the case of painting, this more open formulation seems to be more appropriate. It remains neutral to the question of representation. A sculpture does not, in Arnheim's view, differ from architecture in its representational function, but in that it does not serve to define a mode of habitation. Therefore Arnheim conceives of a hybrid object-building as something like an Egyptian pyramid or a Neolithic dolman, not a non-representational sculpture like a mobile by Alexander Calder.

It is important that Ingarden would regard sculpture, as he does architecture, as non-schematic, because its ontic foundation is in a real thing. This sounds much like Arnheim's understanding of hybrid as materially real object. There is, however, a crucial difference. Arnheim (1984) agrees that the physicality of sculpture (and architecture) is “ontologically embarrassing” but asserts that, “the existential discontinuity does not interfere with the dynamic effect” (320). Contrary to Ingarden, Arnheim considers the aesthetic aspects of painting and sculpture to be no different. Ingarden's general ontology can be upheld and sculpture is no counterexample.

### The Ontology of the Architecture

Ingarden (1962/1989, 255-303) has given a detailed discussion of the work of architecture, which compares favorably with Arnheim's formulations given in his book, *The Dynamics of Architectural Form* (1977). Ingarden, once again, distinguishes between the "real building" and the architectural work. As suggested by the quotation above, Ingarden does not regard architecture as a "presentational" art. It has, therefore, only two strata: 1) the aspects which build up (2) the single object.

Again, Arnheim and Sowers define architecture by its presentation of a mode of habitation. In comparison, Ingarden seems somewhat ambivalent as to whether he means this when he speaks of "functionality." Thus Arnheim would disagree with Ingarden's (1962/1989) suggestion that "even a monument (an obelisk, say) can be so formed that it is an architectural work" (275). One has to posit the mode of habitation because sculpture and architecture are not sufficiently distinguishable by apparent size or representational function. Arnheim (and Sowers) both discuss how both buildings and sculpture can look like either owing to their scale. It is the proportion of the scale relative to man (i. e., by relating as a place of habitat) that is crucial in this regard.

### 8. The Ontology of Works of "Visual Action"

I have already indicated that Ingarden's discussion of temporal, visual arts only exist as a complex web of similarities and differences with very few positive statements with the majority identifying some aspect or other as "on the borderline between the arts". For the sake of a better symmetry with the preceding sections (and also in some deference to Arnheim) I have somewhat awkwardly called the works of art of this section those of "visual action."

According to Arnheim, there are various manifestations in which visual action can come about. It is either enriched as in dance or film or subordinated as in the theater. In my own development of Arnheim's theory (Verstegen 2005), I have come up with two different conceptions of visual action. The first lies in enriched spatio-temporally continuous action, and the second in enriched spatio-temporal non-continuous arts. Dance can be seen to be of the first category. Film and animation are of the second. This distinction has many advantages over Ingarden's discussion in simply splitting the contributions of different modalities to a complex work of art (and recognizing it as a complex work of art) and then concentrating on the individual contribution of each. In spite of this, Ingarden's and Arnheim's discussions of the theater and the film still bear comparison.

In his discussion of the theater, Ingarden (1931/1973) calls the theater a borderline literary work. In an illuminating discussion of stage direction, for instance, Ingarden (1962/1989) points out how the staging of the literary work with onto-

logically determinate actors and props violates its original (literary) schematic nature (301). Arnheim (1938/1957), too, calls the theater a hybrid. He also regards the problem of staging to be central to its definition. In certain plays, “staging” is so elaborate that it becomes literary enrichment, itself. Like Ingarden, Arnheim believes that the falsification (and impossibility) of staging points to the fact that a play is a literary work that only *permits* being staged but does not *call for* it.

Following the discussion of painting vs. photography, Ingarden and Arnheim nevertheless have vastly differing conceptions of the film. Ingarden calls the silent film “abstract,” and confines his discussion to the sound film. He says that the silent film began like the play and with sound became more “filmic.” He asserts that,

“...one can successfully make [a silent film] only when what is presented contains no interpersonal situations or actions, that is, when the film brings to presentation either an individual human in solitude or an extra-human world...” (Ingarden 1962/1989, 330).

Almost all of this is ridiculous to Arnheim. He regards the silent film as not abstract at all, in fact it is more ideal than the sound film. As for the sound film, Arnheim rejects it as a hybrid also in the sense that it cannot satisfactorily reconcile itself with speech (but I cannot discuss complex works of art). It breaks in his words “aesthetic laws.” Finally, for Arnheim, film began “filmic” and moved toward the theater! I cannot go into this controversy further, but can merely point to Arnheim’s works on film for a fuller elucidation of his views.

## 9. The Ontology of the Musical Work

Ingarden devotes approximately half of his *Ontology of the Work of Art* to music, and this half was also issued as a book (Ingarden 1962/1989), 1-133). Unfortunately, no such treatment exists for Arnheim. Nevertheless, we shall be able to draw some comparisons and conclusions. Because of the unique nature of the musical work of art, Ingarden has to qualify the application of his general principles to this specific case. He first denies that the musical work of art can be identified with its notation. When one examines written notation (where it exists), one finds that it is “riddled” with places of indeterminacy in which the performance actually “fills” all of these out.

This then points to the question of whether the musical work of art is identical with its performance. Ingarden also rejects this because when the composer actually oversees its performance (if at all) and finds it perfect (if at all), this only encompasses a great many determinacies, but not all. Those others that make them different performances in the first place still remain.

Arnheim explicitly rejects the identification of the musical work of art with its notation in his review of Nelson Goodman’s *Languages of Art*. Here he does not

use his concept of accident (in the sense that Ingarden regards the notation as indeterminate) but in this spirit he does challenge that “if...a chemist treated the formula for air as the air and the various concoctions we breath as mere impurities, he would be rightly accused of taking the score for the music” (Arnheim 1969, 697). Arnheim suggests that unlike real air, the chemical notation lacks “accidents” or is indeterminate in Ingarden’s sense.

Ingarden says that a musical work of art is not stratified (Ingarden 1962/1989), 27-46; Dziemidok & McCormack, 233-254). It is inherently so indeterminate as a medium that it cannot even project objects (or its appropriate objects are so few). Ingarden thus believes that program music is a borderline case of the musical work of art. Although Arnheim does not exactly frame his discussion of music in ontological terms, he would agree that music is not properly stratified. His theory, which can be called Schopenhauerian in idealizing abstract content, similarly considers program music to be a hybrid. This is a further demonstration of the ‘adverbial’ character, or radical restriction of determinateness, of music.

### **10. The Ontology of the Literary Work**

With the ontology of the literary work of art we move into the center of Ingarden’s concerns and away from that of Arnheim in the visual arts. As we well know, Ingarden originally distinguished between four strata of the literary work of art: (1) the sound stratum, (2) the aspectual stratum, which then gives rise to (3) the object stratum and finally (4) the meaning stratum. Arnheim would surely regard sound as an important stratum in the literary work. One could also discern, after Ingarden, traces of a stratum of objects (and aspects), of meaning and finally of metaphysical qualities. But independently of Ingarden, Arnheim has already insisted upon a visual stratum. This lacuna has been noted of Ingarden’s theory before, and Barry Smith writes that Ingarden “has been waylaid by the tradition from Aristotle to Husserl, of assuming a special intimacy between speech and thought” (Smith, 1975; c.f. Shusterman in Dziemidok & McCormick, 131-57). Arnheim’s writings, both on graphological and iconic aspects of literary works of art have made this clear.

Of all the aspects of Ingarden’s theory, certainly his theory of fictional objects is one of the most sophisticated in all of philosophy (Ingarden 1965, ch. 9; c.f. Smith 1979, 1980; Thomasson 1999). Arnheim cannot be expected to address the issue with the same degree of ontological acumen; however, he has made reference to the problem of the “ontological limbo of spirits” (Arnheim 1998).

### **11. Interpretation**

Based on such a strong emphasis on ontology in Ingarden and Arnheim, one can see that what is possible in any interpretation of a work of art is largely dictated

by its structure. The critic must be concerned with the “level of reality” that the detail of the work will support. At this point, Ingarden and Arnheim give remarkably similar outlines to the reading of works. Expounding Ingarden’s theory, Henryk Markiewicz (Graff & Krzemien-Ojak 1975) gives four tasks for the literary scholar:

- (a) Establish places of indeterminacy.
- (b) Determining eliminable vs. unspecified indeterminacies.
- (c) Establishing the variability range.
- (d) Analyzing the aesthetic qualities arising from the indeterminacies.

Invoking the Gestalt law of simplicity, Arnheim (1966) affirms that the reader can only enrich fictional objects, if:

- (a) it further develops the content of the text along structural lines set down by the author, and
- (b) it does not go beyond the highest degree of concreteness compatible with the style of the particular writing (277).

Both believe that there is an inevitable process of “filling out” the work. The sympathy between Ingarden and Arnheim is further brought out in a pair of passages which bear a great symmetry. Each is an exhortation to the reader to follow the text and take the ontological determinacies and indeterminacies seriously. Ingarden (1968/1973) writes of:

“The less cultivated reader. . . who is interested only in the fortunes of the portrayed persons in, does not pay attention to the prohibition against removing such places of indeterminacy and turns well-formed works of art into cheap, aesthetically irritating gossip about the persons by garrulous expansion of what does not need to be expanded” ( 304/293).

Similarly, Arnheim (1989) gives the following scenario:

“Suppose a great writer were a tribesman, ignorant enough not to know the connection between pregnancy and conception. And suppose he wrote a play or novel whose network of causal arrows did not include the fact of the father’s paternity. Would the wife’s child be nevertheless the son or daughter of the father? Most certainly not. The biological tie, if introduced into the story by a busy reader, would add a wholly new vector that would overthrow the characters and their relations. It would destroy the work” (318).

Like Ingarden, Arnheim makes it clear that the intentional objects of a work of fiction have a real ontological status that is not simply a matter of our variable readings.

Arnheim does other kinds of structural exercises, providing the interesting problem of seeing a picture as a photograph and vice versa or reading a fictional work as non-fictional and vice versa. Once one reports a work as non-fiction, in read-

ing it certain expectations are lax, and accidents are more acceptable to the work itself. A fictional work composed like a non-fiction work, however, can disappoint one. Arnheim (1989) says, for instance, that, “Gottfried Keller’s nineteenth century novel *Der grüne Heinrich* cannot afford its length, mainly because no necessity holds the chain of events together” (223).

## 12. Conclusion

It should be clear that from a broad perspective Arnheim and Ingarden view the aesthetic dimension in essentially the same way. They are aesthetic realists who uphold the reality and structuredness of the work of art. They conceive of the work of art as a fictional or intentional object lacking in the accidents (Arnheim) or determinacy (Ingarden) of the real world and therefore lacking in potential content. Many of their analyses of the structure of individual genres of art bore striking similarity and they thereby believe that epistemological questions ought to be kept strictly separated from ontological questions. Arnheim, however, addressed certain problems like the structure of architecture with more sensitivity to the genre itself, while he could not match the subtlety of Ingarden’s analysis of fictional objects.

What my results suggest is that it is useful to approach Ingarden and Arnheim through a unified ontological approach, best represented by Edwin Rausch, which allows for both classical Berlin and Graz (and other variants) of ontological structure. As for Ingarden and Arnheim specifically, it will be useful to press Ingarden’s idea of (in)determinateness as a firm foundation for portraying ontological questions. Arnheim, however, shows how to move Ingarden’s project beyond mere ontological description of genetically standard works of art, and how to consider the ontological characteristics of abstract modes and individual ideal media.

## Summary

Roman Ingarden and Rudolf Arnheim have rarely been discussed together, least of all for their ontology of art. By excavating common commitments deriving ultimately from similar phenomenological and Gestalt commitments, it is possible to show the way in which each can inform the other’s work. Writings of both authors are carefully compared on the notion of wholes and founded qualities, art and physical objects, and various ontological classes of art objects. The result is a view of Ingarden’s purely ontological project closer to artistic practice, and for Arnheim, a degree of rigor and change of terminology that puts his work back squarely into the Brentanist tradition.

**Keywords:** Gestalt theory, phenomenology, ontology, mereology.

## Zusammenfassung

Roman Ingarden und Rudolf Arnheim sind selten gemeinsam erörtert worden, schon gar nicht in Bezug auf ihre Kunst-Ontologie. Durch Freilegen gemeinsamer Bekennt-

nisse, die sich letztlich von ähnlichen phänomenologischen und gestaltpsychologischen Aussagen ableiten lassen, kann gezeigt werden, auf welche Weise jeder etwas über das Werk des Anderen mitteilen kann. Schriften beider Autoren zur Auffassung von Ganzheiten und fundierten Qualitäten, von Kunst und physischen Objekten und diverser ontologischer Klassen von Kunstobjekten werden sorgfältig verglichen. Im Ergebnis zeigt sich auf der einen Seite bei Ingarden ein rein ontologischer, eng an der künstlerischen Praxis orientierter Ansatz, auf der anderen Seite bei Arnheim eine Strenge und ein terminologischer Wandel, der seine Arbeit voll und ganz in die Tradition Brentanos einordnet.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Gestalttheorie, Phänomenologie, Ontologie, Mereologie

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**Ian Verstegen**, (b. 1969) is Director of Graduate Studies at Moore College of Art & Design. He is an art historian specializing in the early modern period and also writes on aesthetics and philosophy. He is the author of *Arnheim, Gestalt and Art: A Psychological Theory* (2005) and editor of *Maurice Mandelbaum and American Critical Realism* (2009).

**Address:** Moore College of Art and Design, 1916 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA  
 E-mail: [ianverstegen@yahoo.com](mailto:ianverstegen@yahoo.com)